

THE SHABBAT CEREMONY

What do I need to do to Prepare for Shabbat?

Table Setting:

- Glasses for each person for the *Kiddish (blessing of the wine)*
- Small Plates for Bread
- Special Plate for Bread in two pieces
- White Napkin to cover the bread
- Salt Shaker
- Butter (optional)
- 2 candles (preferably white)
- Lighter or 3rd candle (*servant candle* to be lit before sunset and left on the table)
- Bible: Select a Shabbat Psalm having to do with Creation (e.g. Ps. 24, 92 or 95-99)
- Pitcher of Water and paper/plastic cups for self serve



Food/Drink:

Wine/Grape Juice
Loaf of special Bread

Blessings: Here are four kinds of blessings that can be done:

Children:

Pick a Bible person with a particular character trait that applies to each child. During the service the father/mother will bless each child referencing the chosen Bible character/trait.

Couples

Husbands bless their wives individually or share a blessing between the men for all wives present and visa versa. (We have a sample blessing already prepared that can be used)

Single Adults

Singles can be directed to pray for their parents or special friends or nieces/nephews.

Aaronic Benediction ends the service: This can be chanted in Hebrew or spoken in English either by the leader/father or together as a group.

Note: We have the blessings/explanations for each blessing written out. The order is: (optional hand washing) 1)Candle lighting 2)Wine(Kiddush) 3) Bread 4) Scripture 5) Blessing of the people

A short lesson of 5-10minutes is optional and can be done before, during or after Shabbat, and dinner.

Dinner: We like to do a pot luck dinner including hors d'oeuvres before Shabbat (especially with children), and Dessert later after the lesson, Shabbat and Dinner.

A Messianic Shabbat Outline for Gentiles

(You will need 2 candles/lighter; wine or grape juice; bread broken into two pieces and covered with a white cloth or napkin; salt; Bible; blessing sheet) This format takes about 30 minutes to complete.

Note: Red Question marks refer to Children's questions on page 5

?1-Shabbat means rest. God designated it to be the 7th day of the week. It begins Friday Sunset and ends on Saturday Sunset. (The Biblical Day begins at Sunset) Some churches celebrate the "Sabbath principle" on Sunday along with their tradition of worship on Sunday.

SHABBAT GREETING: "Shabbat Shalom" (May Sabbath Peace be with you)

The only Biblical directions for how to do Shabbat is to REST and not KINDLE A FLAME (perhaps suggesting no work for the man and no cooking for the woman). To avoid kindling a flame, in Jewish homes a "servant" candle is lit just before sunset which will be used later to light the Shabbat candles. I believe this and the actual timing of Shabbat is optional for Gentiles who may prefer to light the candles as the ceremony begins. We are honoring the Sabbath not trying to copy Shabbat tradition. Shabbat is informal and joyous not legalistic. Therefore it is up to each group to design their own way to celebrate Shabbat. Questions and observations are welcome from the participants.

(This is a format we find meaningful and flexible enough for other groups to use based upon the Jewish traditions associated with SHABBAT. Suggested prayers are in bold type with talking points to explain the meaning of each step from a Messianic perspective. If children are present, they can ask questions that signal various teaching points (see Question Marks (?) with the questions written out at separate page for the kids)

I. Cleansing Prayer/Hand Washing: Purpose – To prepare our hearts to focus on God and leave the concerns/stresses of our daily lives in God's hands. This can be done in various ways using a basin, pitcher and towel but it should be done in an attitude of serving one another.

II. Mother lights the candles:

- The mother lights the candles because she brings light into the home. (light candles)
- **?2-**We light **two candles** because the 4th commandment says to first, "Remember Shabbat" and second, "keep it Holy".
 1. In the Genesis account of creation, the Bible says that "on the 7th day God FINISHED HIS WORK." That infers that He did something on that day. What did He do? He created SHABBAT – an appointment God made to spend time with us on a weekly basis. While all creation was GOOD; man and woman were VERY GOOD; SHABBAT is called HOLY (Gen. 2:1-3). There are no Jews and

Gentiles at this point, so we believe all creation should acknowledge this gift. Exodus 20:8 admonishes all people to “Remember the Sabbath”.

2. The 4th commandment in Deut. 5:12 says to keep the Sabbath Holy and is directed to the Jews in that context, but as Gentiles grafted in, we can choose to keep the Sabbath Holy. We have freedom as to how we do that.

(Hold up candles for the Blessing): **“Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified the Sabbath as a special day of rest. We praise you for your mighty creative act that brought light out of darkness and your miracle of redemption through Jesus who is the light of the world. “(mother covers her eyes and says) “As I cover my eyes, may we be reminded that before Messiah opens our spiritual eyes we cannot see your glory. But as I spread the light (use sweeping motion with hands from the light to her body), may the Holy Spirit spread Your light throughout this group (home) on this Sabbath day.”**”

III. Father blesses the Fruit of the Vine (Kiddush): Either wine or grape juice can be used. **?3-**In the Bible, **wine** is a symbol of joy (Ps. 104:15). It is also a symbol of blood (Gen. 49:11). Drinking it reminds us that Messiah Jesus gave His blood as atonement for sin and that through Him we have entered into the covenant with God and received His Spirit which is our greatest source of joy. The word Kiddush means sanctification. We have been sanctified by the blood of Jesus (Mat. 26:27-28). We are also reminded that Jesus’ first miracle was to create wine from water.

(Hold up wine/juice for the Blessing) **“Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.”** (all drink together)

IV. Blessing of the Bread:

- **?4-**Explain that the **white cloth** reminds us that when God provided Manna in the desert, it appeared as frost to the people. As we uncover the bread, we are reminded that God revealed the true identity of Jesus in His resurrection and ascension.
- **?5-**There are **two pieces** because God provides for our needs today and also tomorrow so we do not have to work.
- **?6-Salt** the bread (or shake some on the side of the bread plate) because the Bible tells us to offer salt with our grain offerings (Leviticus 2:13). The Salt reminds us of our salt covenant with God (Numbers.18:19) in that:
 1. Both preserve us
 2. Cleanse and heal us

3. Seasons us (we have a word in season Col.4:6)
 4. Is very valuable (in the ancient world)
- Notice the similarity of the Bread and Fruit of the Vine to our communion. Whenever we eat or drink or cook (salt) we are to be mindful of God's provision.

(hold the bread up for the Blessing): **“Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”** (pass the bread to share among the people)

V. Scripture reading from Psalms (traditional selections include: 24, 92, 96-100)

VI. Blessing the Men and Women (see Appendix A4)

VII. Blessing of the children: Each woman will name all their daughters, or special girls God puts on your heart, until all are finished. The men will do the same for the boys in their lives. (Have someone recite the Blessing that follows from 2 Tim.3:15)

“May these children named from the babes to adults, know Your Holy Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

(If a meal follows, a brief blessing of the food may be inserted here)

Questions for Kids to Ask as Part of the Shabbat Service

(Cut and distribute questions among the children present. Direct them to watch for their question number during the Shabbat service for their cue to ask.)

- ?1. What does SHABBAT mean?**

- ?2. Why do we have 2 candles instead of one?**

- ?3. Why do we drink the fruit of the vine when celebrating rest?**

- ?4. Does the cloth on the bread have to be white?**

- ?5. Why is the bread broken into 2 pieces?**

- ?6. Why do we salt the bread?**

Blessing the Men/Women

Women Bless The Men (Psalm 112: 1-7)

(Assign bullet points to be read by the women at the table)

- Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed...
- Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion...
- Surely he will never be shaken; the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.
- He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

(women read together when NOT all adult participants are married couples) *Father, we thank You for each man here tonight. We thank You that You have raised them up to be men after Your own heart. Father, lead them, guide them and give them Your continual wisdom to do all that You have called them to do. I pray that You will anoint them, endowing each with Your abilities. I bless them, in Jesus' name. Amen*

(women read together when all adult participants are married couples, inserting the name of their husbands) *Father, I thank You for _____. I thank You for giving him to me as my husband, (and as the father of our children). I thank you for his love. I thank You that You have raised _____ up as a man after Your own heart. Father, lead him, guide him and give him Your continual wisdom to lead his family and do all that You have called him to do. I pray that You will anoint him, endowing him with Your abilities I bless him, in Jesus' name. Amen*

Men Bless the Women (Proverbs 31:10-12,25-30)

(assign bullet points to be read by the men at the table)

- Who can find a virtuous woman? For her worth is far above rubies
- Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.
- She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her... Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

(Men read together when NOT all adult participants are married couples)

Father, we thank You for each woman here tonight. We thank You for raising each one up to be a Godly woman. We ask You to cover them with long life, divine health, and Your destiny. They are not only a light in the world, but also a light in our Christian community. Equip each one to do what you have called them to do. In Jesus' name, we Bless them. Amen.

(Men read together when NOT all adult participants are ALL married couples) *Father, I thank You for _____. I thank You for allowing me to be married to her. (I thank You that _____ is the mother of our children). What a gift she is to my life and to Your Kingdom. Father, I cover _____ with long life, divine health, and Your destiny. In Jesus' name, I Bless her. Amen.*

A Recommended Booklet on Shabbat Celebration

Shabbat Shalom – A Christian guide to Understanding the Sabbath by Dr. Richard Booker (1998) is a guide for Christians to understand the history of Shabbat along with instructions of how Gentiles can observe Shabbat. It is short (only 48 pages) and easy to read. Contact information:

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