



Likrat Shabbat -

Preparing for your Shabbat Experience

וְהָכִינוּ לְבַבְכֶּם אֶל־יְהוָה וְעָבַדְתֶּם לִבְדּוֹ

Prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only

- 1 Sam 7:3



Since it is a special day of rest, preparations for Shabbat normally occur throughout the week, and especially early on Friday (or sometimes on Thursday, if the household's schedule is tight). The house is cleaned, the food is cooked, and other chores are finished up so that everyone can relax and enjoy the sanctity of time apart from their normal routines. In order to make Shabbat a time of rest (*menuchah*), holiness (*kedushah*), and joy (*oneg*), it's a good idea to plan ahead!

Planning for Shabbat

First, you may want to invite friends over to join you for Shabbat. It is especially worthwhile to invite over those who are needy or who would otherwise be alone during this special time.

Next, plan your Shabbat meal. This often includes doing some shopping and getting the items together before Thursday. Traditional Erev Shabbat (Friday evening) meals include fish, chicken, and roast beef - or you can go vegetarian. Be sure NOT to serve ham or any food that is unkosher for your shabbat meal!

It is strongly recommended that you read the weekly Torah portion to be spiritually prepared for Shabbat. The Jewish sages actually recommend reading the portion through twice before Shabbat begins on Friday evening. Since this involves a bit of study on your part, make allowances in your schedule to find the time for your reading.





Setting the Shabbat Table (Shulkhan Arukh)

The Sabbath Table normally will include the following items:

- A Tzedakah Box
- Candle holders and Shabbat candles (at least two of each)
- A clean tablecloth
- Fresh flowers or other decorations
- Kiddush cup(s)
- Wine or grape juice
- Challot (two loaves) with challah plate and a cover
- A challah knife
- Salt (to be sprinkled on the challah before eating)
- A handwashing basin with decorative towel
- A siddur or shabbat song book



For after Shabbat (Havdalah):

- Kiddush cup(s)
- A Havdalah Candle (blue and white braided)
- A Besamim box (spice box)

(Note: Holiday items such as Tzedakah boxes, Sabbath candles, Kiddush cups, etc., are at your local Jewish bookstore; challah and kosher wine may be found at a Jewish grocery store.)

The Shabbat Table should be ready - and the meal prepared - no later than Friday afternoon, well before sundown (in the Northern Hemisphere, this is normally no problem during the spring and summer, though fall and winter days are short!) In other words, after sundown on Friday evening you should be able to entirely relax and enjoy the fellowship of the coming Sabbath.