

## A Guide for Welcoming Erev Shabbat

*Remember the day, Shabbat, to set it apart for G-d. Exodus 20:8 CJB*

Welcoming the Shabbat into your home with family and friends each Friday night is one of the most joyous, blessed and eagerly anticipated times of the week. This guide is only a place to start from for celebrating Shabbat - which is to be a delight and not a burden – with many options for individual expression and creating unique family traditions. The pleasure of Shabbat with food and fellowship is a mitzvah, a G-dly deed, remembering the intent of the heart is as important, if not more so, than doing the act. According to Mark 2:27, *the Shabbat was made for man, not man for Shabbat* - a gift from G-d to us, His children.

You will need: Candlesticks with candles; a cup or goblet and wine or grape juice for Kiddush; two whole challah loaves, placed on a tray and covered with a cloth; a Tzedakah box. The table is adorned with a beautiful white cloth and with flowers a lovely addition. Enjoy this day totally devoted to our rest in Yeshua Ha'Mashiach, The L-rd of the Shabbat.

### Mitzvah of Tzedakah

Before lighting the candles and considering how G-d has blessed us, many embrace this custom of putting a few coins in the Tzedakah (Charity) box. This reminds us to consider the needs of others less fortunate with the money given to a charitable cause.

### Lighting the Candles

Shortly before sunset, the woman lights the candles as keeper of the light for her entire family. This ushers in the peace and blessing of Shabbat, a beautiful reminder of Yeshua as the *Light of the world*, that we are to be a light to our world, and Torah is *a light unto our feet and a lamp unto our path*. Traditionally, the woman covers her head with a scarf during the lighting - a reminder G-d is over her and she is submissive to Him.

There should always be at least two candles based on the commandments to *keep* (Deut. 5:12) and *remember* (Ex.20:8) *the Shabbat to keep it holy*, but more may be added. It is customary to use white candles that burn for 2-3 hours and are placed near the Shabbat meal table.

Once the candles are lit, she closes her eyes and, with her hands gently moving above the flames, motions the warmth towards her eyes three times. Then placing her hands over her eyes, speaks the blessing. While her eyes are still covered, it is a special time to also pray for her heart's desires – including for her family, the coming of Messiah, and others needing blessings and good health.

After uncovering her eyes, everyone is greeted with blessings for a good Shabbat.

### Blessing the Woman

Known in Hebrew as *Eyshet Chayil* – a virtuous woman, the husband reads Proverbs 31:10-31 out loud to his wife. As both hear it each week, the value of a godly wife is seen. The woman is inspired to become more like this scripture and the man understands the gift G-d has given him. Children learn the value of their mother and boys their future wife. After finishing the reading, the husband prays a blessing upon his wife.

### Blessing the G-dly Man

This important blessing gives recognition to the man as the spiritual leader and provider of the home. The wife reads Psalm 112 out loud to her husband and then prays for him. Other scriptures that express this can also be read.

### Blessing the Children

The parent places both hands atop the child's head, starting with the first-born, and recites the blessing. (Additional personalized blessings for boys and girls follow here.)

Then everyone may join hands and pray the Aaronic blessing out loud together.

### Additional Blessing for Boys

*Blessed is (his name) who shall not walk in the counsel of the wrong, and shall not stand in the path of sinners, and shall not sit in the seat of scoffers, But he delights in the Torah of Adonai, and meditates in His Torah day and night. For he shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither, and whatever he does, prospers My son listen to my words; Incline your ears to my sayings. Let them not depart from your eyes; Guard them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Watch over your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the sources of life. Turn away from you a crooked mouth; and put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look forward, and let your eyelids look straight before you. Consider the path of your feet, and all your ways are established. Do not turn to the right or the left; turn your foot away from evil. Houses and riches are the inheritance from fathers, but an understanding wife is from Adonai. May Adonai make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.*

### Additional Blessing for Girls

*Blessed is (her name) who is walking in the teaching of Adonai and who is seeking Him with all her heart! Trust in Adonai with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; Know Him in all your ways, and He makes all your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes, fear Adonai and turn away from evil. It is healing to your navel, and moistening to your bones. Esteem Adonai with your goods, and with the first-fruits of all your increase, then your storehouses shall be filled with plenty, and your vats overflow with new wine. May Adonai your Elohim be at your side, and He shall guard your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Guard the Commands of Adonai and live. Then when you walk your steps shall not be hindered and if you run you shall not stumble. Hold fast to discipline, do not let go; Watch over her, for she is your life. Do not forsake the Torah of your mother. Remember a capable wife is the crown of her husband. Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those loving it eat its fruit. He who watches over his mouth guards his being. Hate a lying word. Do not envy evil men, nor desire to be with them. The reward of humility is the fear of Adonai, riches, and esteem and life. May Adonai your Elohim make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

### **Kiddush – Blessing the Wine or Juice**

Fill the kiddush cup – an ornate silver or plain glass. Stand with everyone, hold the cup in your right hand and recite the blessing. Sit, drink at least half the wine or juice, and pour the rest into cups for those around the table or pass the cup for everyone to have a sip. This officially begins the Shabbat meal.

### **Netilat Yadayim – Washing of Hands**

Before eating a meal with bread, hands are washed and the special blessing recited. Each person pours water 2 or 3 times, first over the right hand, then on the left. Say the blessing as hands are wiped dry.

### **Ha Motzi – Blessing the Bread**

With all seated, the two challot loaves are raised and the *Hamotzi* blessing said. Cut the challah, dip it in salt, and have a bite. Pass around pieces for everyone to do the same. The two loaves represent the manna double portion on the day before Shabbat and salt is the Davidic Covenant in 2 Chronicles 13:5.

### **Oneg Shabbat**

*Oneg* Shabbat is a mitzvah to honor and pleasure the Shabbat – a feast indeed. Many Shabbat recipes are available on the internet. But the main thing is to eat food that will be enjoyed – delicious and festive. It is a special time for family and friends to be together celebrating the Shabbat spirit - singing, sharing fellowship and words of Torah.

### **Brkat Hamazon – Grace after the Meal**

The birchat hamazon ends this meal uniquely thankful for the weekly foreshadowing of the age of Messiah - a taste of the coming eternal Shabbat. The dinner table is an altar before Adonai where to live we partake of other sacrificed life forms. So rather than before, thanks is offered to G-d for His provision and care after meals are eaten. Shabbat Shalom.

01 Jan 2014