

The Family Sabbath Service:
Welcoming The Lord's Shabbat Together

By Mikhal Daniel

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Introduction

On the eve of the Sabbath [Friday evening], there is nothing more exciting than gathering around the table to welcome the Lord's Shabbat as a family, put away the cares of this world for a while, and deliberately take time to focus on both our Creator and the people who mean the most to us in this life. Doing so embodies and brings into tangible reality our verbal confessions that our God and family are truly first and foremost in our lives. If we cannot commit to act on these confessions in accordance with Yahweh's Word, and live in a way that demonstrates to our children a tangible, living, and fully contextualized Gospel message, then future generations will continue to be swept up in the ways of this world, forsaking their Lord and each other, and living in a state of unrecognized, perpetual fleshly bondage.

In a world that never seems to stop, in a culture that is too busy to hear the still small voice of the Creator, establishing deliberate methods and family traditions for welcoming the Sabbath can have a profound and lasting impact on the family unit as well as serve to strengthen a believer's relationship with their King. The Sabbath itself is the single most important foundational worship experience the believer can enter into that will deepen their walk with Yahweh and enable them to develop a true and lasting intimacy between themselves and their Lord. In addition, the Sabbath is the most critical element in all of Scripture capable of strengthening, protecting, and nurturing the bonds within a family unit. Such relational development can also extend to grandparents and extended family members who walk according to the Lord's commands. When an entire family including grandparents, parents, children and even extended family members begin to observe the Sabbath together they will create such a spiritually rich environment for their children to grow up in that it will prepare them for any challenges or temptations they may face in the future as the world draws ever closer to the time of the Lord's return.

For those of you who have not yet discovered the beauty and wisdom of developing your own family traditions to welcome the

Sabbath, I pray this resource will be a blessing to you, and that it will have a lasting impact for generations to come.

Having come out of the world and the “world’s system of Christian religion,” and having returned to the Father’s will and wisdom for teaching our children His ways on the Sabbath and Appointed Times of Yahweh, I am absolutely convinced that establishing and incorporating some form of the ancient traditions to welcome the Sabbath, combined with the specific needs of each individual family, is an important and vital aspect of teaching and passing on to future generations the truths of the Kingdom of Yahweh and His Messiah. While many Christians today are already hearing the Voice of Yahweh and returning to the ancient paths (See Jeremiah 6:16), and coming out of the world’s system of manmade religion, some will at first find it hard to understand the significant need to develop even a simple form of traditions and ceremony to welcome the Sabbath each Friday night. However, I want to encourage any of you who may have some hesitation to engage in anything formal or ceremonial by saying that adding formal or ceremonial aspects to worship need not quench the Spirit and our freedom to move with the Holy Spirit within a structure. The formal aspects are not rigid rules, but outlines to provide some measure of structure through which the Holy Spirit can flow. I think you will find that even a simple family Sabbath service can truly enhance your time together and provide a wonderful, enjoyable, and teachable experience for everyone.

For example, my husband and I were pleasantly surprised to find that even though we would read and had read verses about the Sabbath a million times, having those verses as part of our Sabbath service allowed us to hear them as if for the first time at the end of certain difficult weeks when we really needed the reminder about why we were doing what we were doing, and how important it really is in our lives. Having put together a family prayer service booklet like this one (called in Hebrew a *Siddur*) it allowed us to take specific time to refocus, at the end of each week, on what truly is the most important thing in our lives (our God and our family). Had we not used our family prayer service booklet (*Siddur*), we

would have missed those opportunities to hear God's voice in our lives through a simple reminder found in His Word.

When our family first began to keep the Sabbath, I printed up a type of "cheat sheet" for my husband that I have now developed more fully into this family guide. At that time he and I were not sure what to do exactly and he was still learning the traditional blessings that were said even in the days of our Messiah. And of course, those traditional blessings took on greater significance for us as Believers because Yeshua pointed out that the elements of the fruit of the vine and the bread would forever memorialize His death (and resurrection) until His return (1 Corinthians 11:25-26).¹

What I have seen over the years is that those who fail to deliberately and strategically welcome the Sabbath in the manner that our Messiah Himself did and according to some of the long standing traditions and methods developed and established by the ancient people of Yahweh, these people will often also fail to truly enter the Lord's rest on that day altogether. Not only do they ultimately fail to make any sort of recognizable distinction for themselves and their families to acknowledge publically the difference between the common work week and the holy, set apart time of the Sabbath, but they will struggle to consistently enter into the Sabbath on both a spiritual and mental level, even if they physically and externally cease from their labors. The Lord commands that we worship Him not simply in Truth, by the letter of the command (as though the letter is some end in itself), but in Spirit as well, according to the full Spirit in and behind those commandments that can easily get overlooked if one is not careful.

In other words, one can stop physically working, but one's mind and heart can stay focused on the cares of this world. For example, a husband or wife may ignore the children and sit around watching television all day on the Sabbath, and while they have not "technically worked" on the Sabbath (thus meeting the letter of the command), they have failed to engage their family and God according to the Spirit of the command, nor have they taken advantage of the opportunity God has given them to be a light, a

strength, a teacher, and a friend to their family, friends, and neighbors.

It is my hope that this family Sabbath service guide will help enhance your ability to develop your own family traditions and create a spirit of worship in your home each week as well as provide a forum to bring others to your Sabbath table to engage in “Table Evangelism” as you simply “be who you are in Yeshua” while welcoming the Sabbath each week with your family.

Please note that I have added a significant amount of endnotes throughout the service, particularly for those who have never seen nor attended anyone’s home Sabbath service before, in order to provide you with ideas, thoughts and background about the various elements I have added to this family Sabbath service booklet and that I have utilized with my own family personally. Feel free to incorporate other family traditions and ideas as the Lord leads you.

As you now set out to begin to literally walk in the ancient footsteps of our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus), may you and your family be blessed mightily in your efforts and may you bare significant fruit for the Kingdom of Yahweh in your life and in your family.¹

Mikhal Daniel

¹ While this booklet is geared toward families with both parents and children, I mean no offense to anyone who is single or those who are single parents. Please note that anyone using this resource should feel free to make any adjustments necessary to the service based on their own specific situation.

Sabbath 101

If you have purchased this resource then I assume that you have already felt convicted by the Holy Spirit to begin keeping the Lord's Sabbath according to the Biblical definition of the term (meaning from Friday at sundown until Saturday at sundown, see Genesis 2:3) but you are now looking for help as to the practical aspects of what to do to enter into this holy, set apart time and make it a special and unique occasion for your family. Therefore, I need not seek to convince you as to the importance and validity of the 4th Commandment. However, this section will provide you with the basic concepts of what "keeping the Sabbath" is all about and provide you with a list of verses to study as you seek to understand and weed through the long history of what actually constitutes obedience to the Torah commands themselves and what really only constitutes the extra "fences" that were added by various Jewish groups throughout history that are not necessarily biblical or necessary to fulfill Yeshua's example of how God intended us to understand and keep His Sabbath in its simplicity.

As you study each of the texts that discuss how God defines the Sabbath and what biblical fences He places on us to help us guard that time for our family while also spending time with Him, try to read and understand these various texts first within their own contexts. Consider how the various commands related to the Sabbath applied to the audience and the implications of each related to that time in history. Next, look at the meaning of the terms used in the culture and time that they were given, not just in relationship to modern uses of the same English terms themselves. In other words, when someone in biblical times said the term "cook," what did they understand that to involve versus what the term "cook" might involve in 21st Century American English. Based on this approach, prayerfully ask the Lord to help you understand the principles and implications that each of these Scriptures had for their audience and also have for us today, particularly considering the historic understanding of the text within Judaism as well as the life of Yeshua and His disciples and their personal examples. In this way you can make changes to your life and schedule in a

manner that is based as closely to Scripture as possible, and in accordance with the principle, “what would Yeshua do (or not do)” if He were here with me today.

In the end, one personal fail safe I often use is to pretend that everyone in the world was keeping the Sabbath; therefore, I evaluate my decisions of what I will or will not do based on that type of scenario. For Americans, consider how everything is closed on Christmas morning, thus preventing you from doing many things you might do during a “normal” work week. Such a situation is what “should” happen if everyone were being obedient to Yahweh. Furthermore, try to gauge your decisions of what you will or will not do based on the principles you derive from your own diligent study of the biblical texts. For example, if everyone was keeping Sabbath then I would not have the opportunity to go “shopping,” therefore, shopping would clearly be something not in keeping with those who wish to say they are obedient to the Sabbath. Outside of purchasing necessary life saving medicines, there is not much that we truly cannot “live” without for a short twenty-four hour period of time. Not spending money on the Sabbath is specifically dealt with in the Prophets, and is clearly indicated based on the principles taught therein, but of course, life saving or specific health related purchases would be a valid exception.²

The problem that often occurs is that we do not know exactly how and to what extent that we should define certain biblical terms in relationship to our modern world. While going to “work” (the place where you advance yourself and collect an income) would clearly not be in keeping with the Sabbath, determining what exactly constitutes the term “work” beyond that base definition, according to the Scriptures, is much more difficult. While most everyone can agree that going to a job or doing something that you get paid income to do would fall under the definition of “work;” going beyond that limited definition is where each of us must seek the Lord and set our own family boundaries or “fences” as to what we will and will not engage in on the Sabbath. While these fences may not be necessary for every family, each couple should agree on a set

of standards or basic principles they will establish so that they do not feel they are violating either the letter of the command or the Spirit of the command. Sometimes we can meet a technical requirement (letter of the law), but miss the spirit of the command. Whereas other times we clearly violate the letter, and therefore, have no hope of meeting the spirit of the command. In all cases, we should strive toward a balance of both meeting the technical minimum of the command so that we can actually claim that we are even seeking to be obedient and then allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in our efforts to “guard” the Spirit of the Sabbath by only engaging in those things that are in keeping with the Spirit and principle of the command. The reality is that our Sabbath observance is never going to be perfect, nor will it be easy to keep exactly the way we would always hope. We must simply set our hearts to do the best we can and realize that there will be practical difficulties at times; therefore, we must learn to give ourselves a little grace in the process, but always walk with a clear conscious and high motivation to serve and walk humbly before our Master.

What is most important to understand as you begin this life changing transition is to give yourself time to adjust as the Holy Spirit empowers you step by step and victory over the flesh by victory over the flesh. Pray that the Father will help others see the heart behind what you are seeking to do, and that He would also open doors for you to not have to violate His Sabbath any longer in whatever capacity may be holding you back during your transition.

Here is a list of verses to study and consider as you seek the Lord for guidance in keeping His Sabbath:

Genesis 2:3 and the surrounding context
Exodus 16:23-29; 20:8-11; 31:13-17; 35:2-3
Leviticus 23:3; 25:4-6
Numbers 15:32f
Deuteronomy 5:12-15; 30:8-20
Nehemiah 9:14; 10:31; 13:15-22
Isaiah 56:2-8; 58:13-14; 66:23
Jeremiah 17:21-27

Ezekiel 46:1

Amos 8:5

Psalms 92:1 (A Song for the Sabbath Day)

Matthew 12:1-14; 24:20

Mark 1:21; 2:23-3:4; 6:2

Luke 4:16; 4:31; 6:1-9; 13:10-16; 14:1-5; 23:56

John 5:9-18; 7:22-23; 9:14-16

Acts 1:12; 13:14; 13:42-44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4

Colossians 2:16 and the surrounding context (i.e. let no non-believer judge you)

What you will find in the verses above is a consistent theme and practice of every holy man or woman of God recorded therein. They all stopped their work, they rested, they fellowshiped and worshiped Yahweh with other believers, they engaged in evangelism, and they ate meals together. Do we ever see Messiah or any of the apostles doing anything besides these things on the Sabbath? No, we do not. **Therefore, we should let their example become the basis for our establishing the same vital Spirit of this commandment in our own lives.** I am fully convinced that if we are willing to do this we will be blessed in all that we put our hands to accomplish during the rest of the week, we will find protection from the Master in times of tribulation, and our families will bear beautiful fruit that will be a witness to future generations for years to come.

The Eve of the Sabbath Service
(Erev Shabbat Service)

Candle Lighting: 'The Family Signal'³



Mother [Or other female present] in English:⁴

Blessed are You oh Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who sanctifies us in His commandments,
And commands us to kindle the Light of Sabbath.⁵

In Transliterated Hebrew:

Baruch Atah Adonai⁶ (Yahweh) Eloheynu Melech ha'olam
Asher kidshanu, b'mitzvotav
Vetzivanu l'hadleek ner shel Shabbat

In Hebrew: [NOTE: Hebrew reads from right to left]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

Additional Prayers After Lighting The Candles⁷

Blessed are You oh Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who sanctifies us in His commandments,
And commands us to be⁸ a light to the world
In Yeshua HaMashiach [*Jesus the Messiah or Christ*].

Additional Prayers
After Lighting The Candles (continued)

Blessed are you oh Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who gave us the way of salvation in Messiah Yeshua, Blessed is He. *[Family and guests respond: "Blessed is He."]*

In Transliterated Hebrew:

Baruch atah Adonai (Yahweh) Eloheynu Melech ha'olam,
asher natan lanu et derech ha'yeshua b'mashiach Yeshua,
baruch Hu.

In Hebrew:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן
לָנוּ אֶת דֶּרֶךְ הַיְשׁוּעָה בְּמָשִׁיחַ יֵשׁוּעַ, בְּרוּךְ הוּא

Psalm 51:15 “Oh Lord, open my lips that my mouth may declare Your praise.”

Psalm 19:14 “May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, Adonai, my Rock and my Redeemer.”⁹

1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen people, the King’s *cobanim* (priests), a holy nation, a people for God to possess! Why? In order for you to declare the praises of the One Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

1 John 1:5-7 “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus (Yeshua) His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Additional Prayers

After Lighting The Candles (continued)

John 3:19-22 “Those who trust in Him (Yeshua) are not judged; those who do not trust have been judged already, in that they have not trusted in the one who is God’s only and unique Son. Now this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, but people loved the darkness rather than the light. Why? Because their actions were wicked. For everyone who does evil things hates the light and avoids it, so that his actions won’t be exposed. But everyone who does what is true comes to the light, so that all may see that his actions are accomplished through God.”

Psalm 119:33-35 “Teach me, oh Lord, the way of your Torah; keeping Your Torah will be its own reward for me. Give me understanding; then I will keep Your Torah; I will observe it with all my heart. Guide me on the path of Your commandments (*mitzvoth*), for in Him [*Your Living and Written Torah*] I take pleasure.”

Ezra 7:10 Because Ezra had set his heart to study and practice the Torah of God and teach in Israel Yahweh’s laws and rulings, so I(we) set my(our) heart(s) to study and practice Your Torah so that I(we) will be fully equipped to teach Your laws and rulings to all who seek to understand Your truth.

Why We Celebrate The Sabbath

God Established The 7th Day As The Sabbath and Commanded His People To Keep It:

Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 19:1-3, 30, & 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Genesis 2:3 “Then God **blessed** the **seventh day** and **sanctified** it, because in it He rested from all the work which God had created and made.”¹⁰

Exodus 20:8-11

“Remember the day, Shabbat,¹¹ to set it apart for God. You have six days to labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat for The Lord your God. On it, you are not to do any kind of work—not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property. For in six days, Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them; but on the seventh day He rested. This is why Yahweh blessed the day, Shabbat, and separated it for Himself.” CJB

The Messiah Kept The Sabbath As An Example For Us To Follow:

Luke 4:16 “And He (Yeshua/Jesus) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.”

Sabbath Is A Sign Between Yahweh And Us, His People, Forever, That We May KNOW That Yahweh Is The One Who Sanctifies Us.

Exodus 31:12-17 “...You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Yahweh Who sanctifies you. Therefore, observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you...a perpetual covenant. It is a **sign** between Me and the sons of Israel forever, for in six days

Part of Endnotes for this Preview Section . . .

¹ Personally, having studied the text in depth and due to the predominance of internal and external evidences, I do not believe the “Last Supper” was a *seder dinner*, but a regular “leavened bread” Melchizedekian Covenant meal. However, I do believe there are numerous opinions on this matter, and I would not be dogmatic about the point in any case since there are some conflicting evidences. Ultimately, whether we are using the “Bread of Affliction” (unleavened bread) or the “Bread of Life” (leavened bread), both types have Messianic symbolic connections to the Messiah Himself and both can be utilized for their symbolism of Yeshua as our Bread of Life whose body was afflicted for our sake.

² Another issue that occurs often is the issue of dealing with meals when out of town or on vacation. In most cases, I have found that it is easy enough to plan to eat before sundown on Friday and have either the free breakfast at the hotel or purchase groceries to eat breakfast and lunch in our room or hotel, and simply wait until sundown to eat dinner out Saturday evening (or in some cases I’ve simply felt compelled to just skip a meal and fast and pray instead). However, there are times that you might be stuck in a situation in which you either have to starve or purchase food. In those cases, my husband and I have sometimes opted to purchase just food for consumption at that moment when we were not able to pre-purchase our meals. This is just one of those issues that you have to do your best, keep a clear conscious before Yahweh, and realize that the world does not honor God and therefore, our efforts will never be perfect so we just do the best we can and ask the Father for help and guidance when we are unsure or difficulties arise.

³ As you begin to keep the Sabbath you will note that depending on where you live, sundown can vary widely between the winter and summer months. Therefore, we learn to adjust our lives to God’s constantly changing times and seasons. For example, where we live sundown occurs during the winter as early as 5:00 PM and in the summer as late as 8:00 PM. So for practical purposes in the winter months the house is cleaned, prepared and the table set by 5:00 PM, but I often light a pilot candle to use to light the Sabbath candles after my husband gets home from work, which is usually by 6:00 PM depending on traffic. However, in the summer months, when sundown is so late, we simply start early and do our service directly after eating dinner, or we may eat dinner early, but not welcome the Sabbath by doing the wine and bread blessings and other blessings until closer to 8:00 PM.

Recently however; the Lord opened my eyes to a more healthful way of eating only twice a day near the third and ninth hours of daylight (note the correlation with the continuous (tamid) burnt offerings) when your digestion is optimal. [See Paul Nison’s website www.rawlife.com for more information detailed in his book, *The Daylight Diet: Divine Eating For Superior Health And Digestion*]. This has further altered our Friday evening (Erev Shabbat) mealtime. Now that my daughters and I eat our last meal around 3:30 to 4:00 PM at the latest, we now set the Sabbath table where we just eat the bread and drink the grape juice/wine, but if my husband has not eaten his last meal of the day, I will have something ready for him to eat during our service. When we have people over to eat dinner, since most people still eat late, we will feed them dinner and eat only sparingly or not at all whenever appropriate without causing offense, but since we are usually talking

and doing the service itself, most people do not even notice if I do not actually eat a full dinner with them.

Overall, if I might give one piece of additional advice, there are times when eating before doing the ceremonial aspects of a service works best and there are times when we wait to eat until we finish the ceremony, but don't feel tied into either method. At times I felt it appropriate to let everyone eat right away after the opening blessing, and we pause in between our conversations to engage in the various blessings such as those said over the bread and cup. Remember, we are only truly commanded to bless God after the meal when we are "fat and happy". It is a "tradition" that Messiah upheld that we pray before our meals, and so we do; however, it is more challenging to remember to pray when you are full and satisfied and to this element we should seek to make priority more than preventing people who may be very hungry from eating before we engage them in our various ceremonies. Often they will enjoy the ceremony we provide much more when we let them get a few bites in first. In other words, RELAX, do not sweat the small stuff, and enjoy your time together as a first priority.

⁴ The mother or any other female present if the mother is not present (or if no females are present, then the Father or another male) lights the two Sabbath candles and then says the first prayer. If you want to do the traditional method for starting your Sabbath when lighting the candles then after lighting each candle, wave your hands out over/near the fire and then toward your face three times in a circular motion and end with your hands slightly away from your face as though covering your eyes. You may wish to cover your head when doing this ceremony if the Lord so leads you, but do what feels most comfortable for you and your family. Then with eyes closed say or sing the prayer indicated for this tradition. Lighting the candles themselves should commence before sundown, but if you are not ready to start your service before sundown, perhaps your husband has not yet arrived home from work, light a pilot light before sundown (meaning another candle that can stay lit for a while) and use that candle to light your Sabbath candles when you are ready to begin your service. In this way you do not have to needlessly "make or kindle a fire" when striking a match just to keep a "tradition" (even a beautiful one) even though the prohibition against kindling a fire on the Sabbath itself is somewhat vague (Exodus 35:3). Note: If you use a pilot light, be careful not to forget about it and burn your house down!

In any case, as a means of not needlessly violating that command in its simplicity, for myself, if I cannot light the candles before sundown and/or I cannot do a pilot light before sundown either, then I will forgo lighting the candles after sundown altogether so as not to let my tradition override a direct commandment of God, even though I may not fully understand all the implications of it Scripturally speaking.

To learn an excellent modern melody to the traditional candle lighting prayer, see <http://www.oybaby.com/> and purchase their first OyBaby video. The video also has a variety of beautiful songs and pictures that your children will love and that also provide a great background atmosphere for any holiday. Oybaby 2 is also great with additional holiday tunes and songs.

⁵ This prayer should be understood in symbolic terms with regard to the idea of a commandment to “kindle the Light of Sabbath.” In other words, there is no commandment in the Torah to light Sabbath candles, but Yeshua commands us to be a light to the world, so the light we light symbolizes our external acts that shine the Light of the World into the world and allow us to be a light to the world in regard to obeying God and observing His Sabbath. In addition, lighting Sabbath candles can be a beautiful tradition that provides a means of obeying Yahweh’s commandment to separate between holy and common. Thus we can use this candle lighting ceremony as a method of observing the command to separate time, giving a signal to the family that we have moved from the common work week and are now entering a holy, set apart time called the Sabbath.

⁶ You may wish to say Yahweh here rather than simply the traditional Lord/Adonai.

⁷ You may choose one or all of these additional prayers, or add your own freewill offerings here.

⁸ I like to pause slightly after saying “commanded us to be (pause)” and wait until the children say, “a light to the world!” then I continue “a light to the world in Yeshua HaMashiach, [Jesus the Christ].”

⁹ My version of this Psalm is taken in part from the Jewish Siddur’s translation of the same.

¹⁰ God made the 7th day unique from all other common days of the week when he blessed it and sanctified it; therefore, no man, nor any of man’s traditions, can UN-sanctify it, change it, or transfer that blessing and sanctification to any other day than the 7th Day.

¹¹ The word Shabbat is the correct Hebrew term for the 7th Day. The English transliterated term Sabbath means the exact same thing, it is just an English equivalent term. I use these two terms interchangeably throughout this book mostly just for stylistic purposes.