

KEEPING SHABBAT

**We keep the Sabbath day -
Shabbat - by spending time
with our Heavenly Father and
expressing our love to Him.**



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HOW TO KEEP SHABBAT WITH YOUR FAMILY

The command to keep the Sabbath holy has been a subject of controversy for years and many Christians have varying views on it. But one thing is undeniable. Setting this day aside to bless the Lord and to listen to His voice will always be to our benefit. It is not to earn God's love, which we know is impossible. But it is an opportunity for us to delight in it. It is a time to rest.

In the Hebrew calendar, a day runs from one sunset to the next. Therefore, we enter Shabbat with a festive evening meal on a Friday. The day of rest ends after sundown on Saturday.

Read on for a simplified summary of Shabbat traditions, which you can implement at your own home as followers of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.

The blessings and prayers included in this resource are Messianic - used in many homes of Jewish families who believe Yeshua is the Messiah. They may differ slightly from traditional rabbinical blessings and prayers.



ORDER OF SHABBAT

CANDLES

In a Jewish home, Shabbat starts with **lighting of the candles** right before the sunset on a Friday. It is not necessarily at mealtime. The lady of the household pronounces the blessing:

ENGLISH

*Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe,
who sanctified us with His commandments,
commanded us to be a light to the nations,
and who gave us Yeshua our Messiah, the Light of the
world*

HEBREW

*ברוך אתה אדוני, אלוהינו ומלך העולם
אשר קדשנו במצוותיו
ציונו להיות אור הגויים
ונתן לנו את ישוע משיחנו, אור העולם*

TRANSLITERATION

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu u'Melech ha'olam
Asher kidshanu be'mitzvotav
Tsivanu le'hiot or la'goyim
Ve'natan lanu et Yeshua Meshicheinu, or ha'olam*

SONGS AND PRAYERS

There are many beautiful and joyful songs that are sang at Shabbat dinners. You might be familiar with the prevalent *Shabbat shalom* tune or *Shalom Aleichem*, a hymn that invites the angels of the Lord to dwell with us at this holy time.

Here, we want to quote a song that is also a biblical blessing. The head of the household sings or recites over his wife words of *Eshet Chail* (Heb. “Woman of Valor”). The text is entirely based on the **31 chapter of Proverbs:**

*Who can find a virtuous wife?
For her worth is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband safely
trusts her, so he will have no lack
of gain.*

*She does him good and not evil
all the days of her life.*

*She seeks wool and flax, and
willingly works with her hands.
She is like the merchant ships,
she brings her food from afar.*

*She rises while it is yet night,
and provides food for her
household, and a portion for her
maidservants.*

*She considers a field and buys
it; from her profits she plants a
vineyard.*

*She girds herself with strength,
and strengthens her arms.*

*She perceives that her
merchandise is good, and her
lamp does not go out by night.
She stretches out her hands to
the distaff, and her hand holds
the spindle.*

*She extends her hand to the
poor, Yes, she reaches out her
hands to the needy.*

*She is not afraid of snow for her
household, for all her household
is clothed with scarlet.*

*She makes tapestry for herself;
her clothing is*

fine linen and purple.

*Her husband is known in the
gates, when he sits among the
elders of the land.*

*She makes linen garments
and sells them, and supplies
sashes for the merchants.*

*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:*

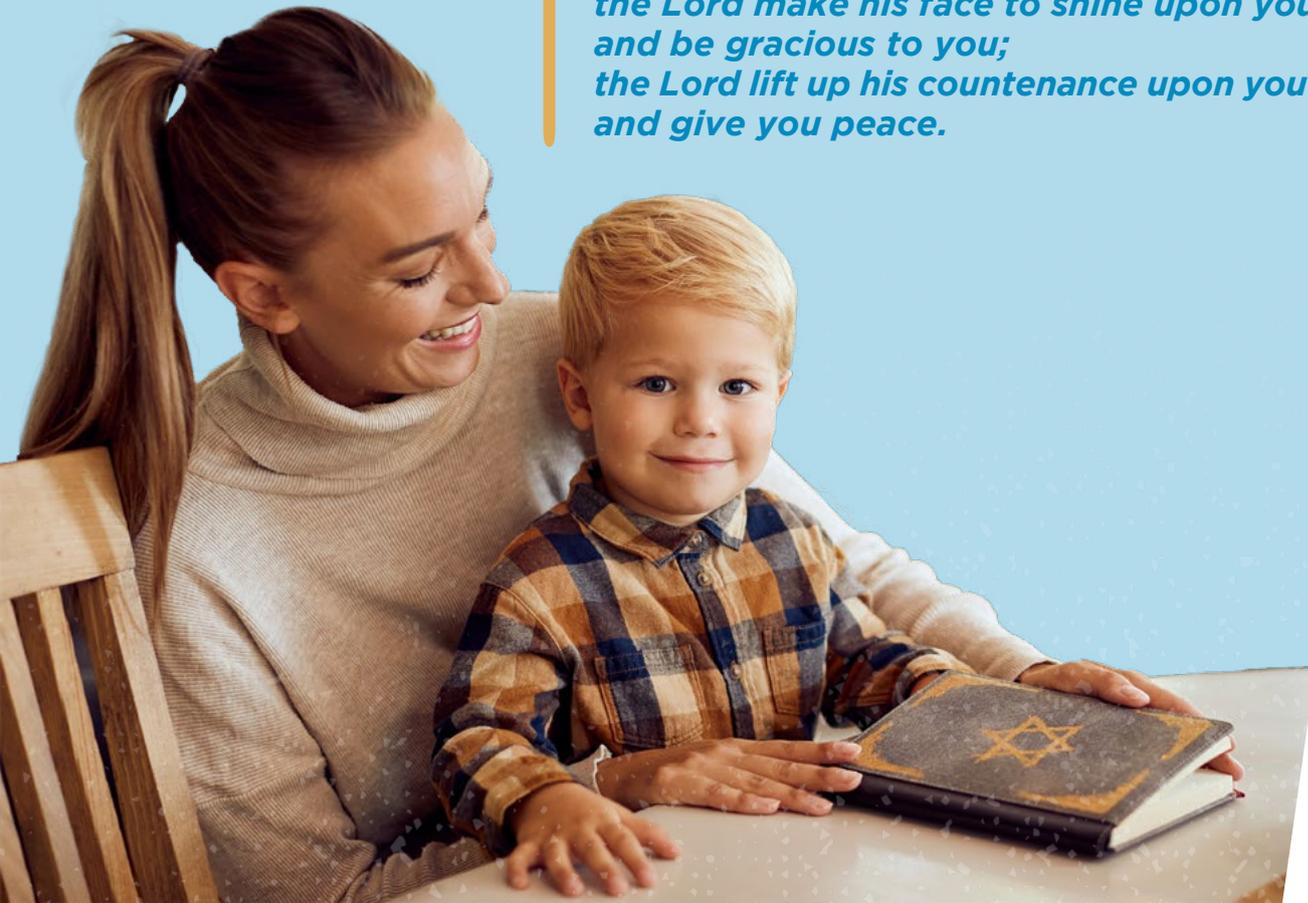
*“Many daughters have
done well, but you
excel them all.”*

*Charm is deceitful and
beauty is passing, but
a woman who fears
the Lord, she shall be
praised.*

*Give her of the fruit
of her hands, and
let her own works
praise her in the
gates.*

Eshet Chail is followed by blessings over the sons, to be like Efraim and Menashe, and blessings over the daughters, to become like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah. Often the father recites the Priestly Blessing over them, recorded in Numbers 6:24-26:

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.*



READING

As Shabbat begins, it is customary to open Scriptures on the story of creation. Read or sing the passage from Genesis 1:31-2:3:

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

WINE AND BREAD

The two blessings recited over food apply to wine and bread (in that order). The head of the household lifts a cup of wine and recites:

ENGLISH

*Blessed are You,
Lord our God,
King of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.*

HEBREW

ברוך אתה
אדוני אלוהינו
ומלך העולם
בורא פרי הגפן

TRANSLITERATION

*Baruch atah
Adonai Eloheinu
u'Melech ha'olam
Boreh pri ha'gefen*

Customarily, everyone takes a sip of wine from the same cup.

The traditional two loaves of bread represent the double portion of manna that Israelites received before Shabbat in the dessert. The head of the household lifts the *challah* loaves and recites:

ENGLISH

*Blessed are You,
Lord our God,
King of the universe,
who brings forth bread from
the earth.*

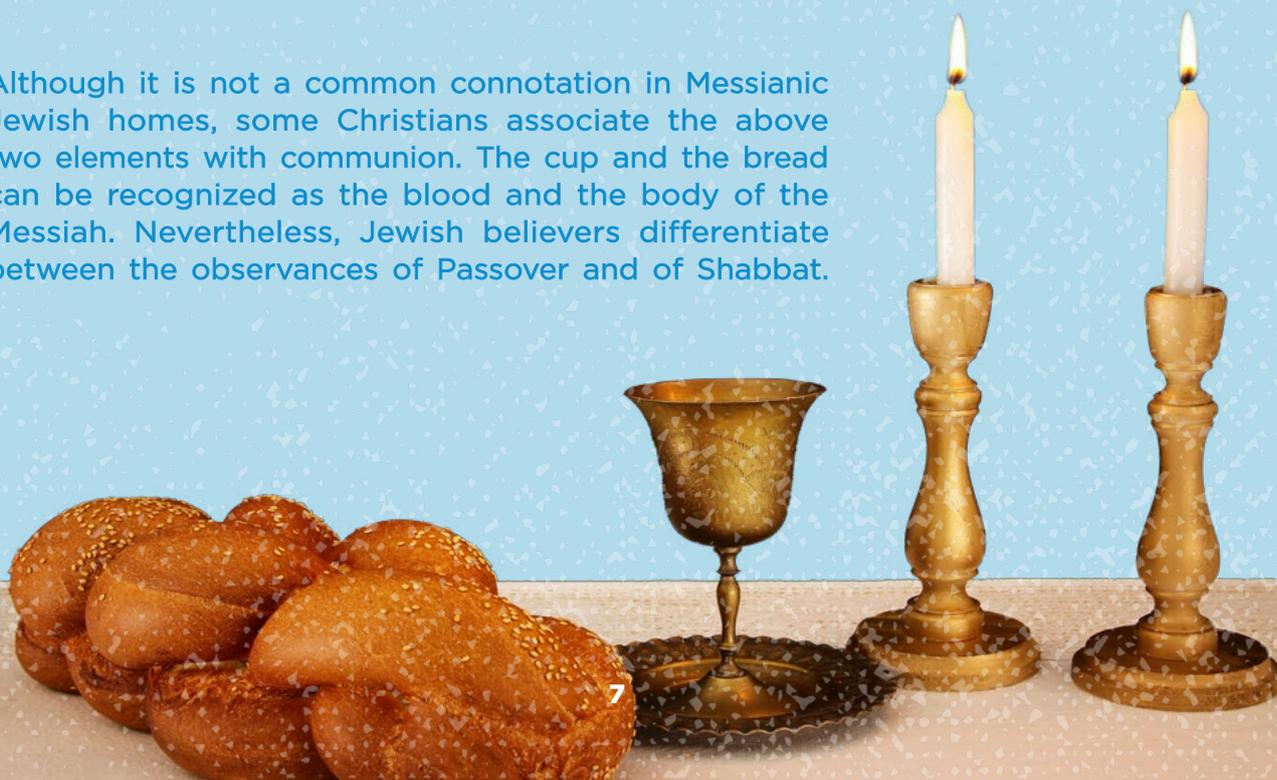
HEBREW

ברוך אתה
אדוני אלוהינו
ומלך העולם
המוציא לחם מן
הארץ

TRANSLITERATION

*Baruch atah
Adonai Eloheinu
u'Melech ha'olam
Ha'motzi lechem
min ha'aretz*

Although it is not a common connotation in Messianic Jewish homes, some Christians associate the above two elements with communion. The cup and the bread can be recognized as the blood and the body of the Messiah. Nevertheless, Jewish believers differentiate between the observances of Passover and of Shabbat.



THE MEAL

Now is the time to enjoy your Shabbat meal and company. We thank God for the ones we are with and for His provision!

BLESSING AFTER THE MEAL

In Christian homes, it is common to pray before the meal. But in some traditional Jewish homes you may hear about ‘benching’ – blessing God *after* you eat.

The word comes from the Yiddish term *bentshen*, meaning ‘to bless’. Important thing to remember is that Jewish people don’t bless the food – you always **bless God** for His provision! The origin of this tradition is also biblical:

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. (Deuteronomy 8:10)

‘Benching’ consists of four parts: giving thanks for the food, for the land of Israel, for Jerusalem, and for God’s goodness.

This concludes the traditional entering of the shabbat. May your Sabbath rest be peaceful and filled with the presence of God!

SHABBAT SHALOM!

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