

*Preparing a*  
**SIMPLE MESSIAH  
CENTERED SHABBAT**



A step-by-step guide  
on how to start keeping  
shabbat with your family

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# Why Shabbat?

In our constantly evolving society, characterized by perpetual motion, ceaseless creation, and unending consumption, the pace is relentless and demanding. This prevailing rhythm often results in a community that is frequently overworked, burnt-out, fatigued, and even plagued by anxiety.



## *Slow living*

Choosing to rest on the 7th day of the week is the antidote to an overworked, burnt-out and anxious lifestyle.

I have been nurtured in the practice of observing Shabbat throughout my life. While my approach deviated from the traditions of a typical Jewish household, the essence of resting on the seventh day became an integral part of my upbringing. It was a day characterized by the warmth of family, the camaraderie of friends, and the pleasure of good food—a perfect rejuvenation after a bustling week and a preparation for the productive one ahead.

*I wish for your family to discover the timeless wisdom embedded in this ancient biblical commandment, allowing you to carve out a sacred space in your heart for the beauty of Shabbat!*

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## Pre-Shabbat To Do List

1. Coordinate with family members on Shabbat activities, whether it's a shared meal, family game night, or reading together. Tidy up your living space to create an atmosphere of tranquility.
2. Plan a grocery trip for your shabbat meal ingredients, candles & fresh flowers for the table. Prepare your challah dough, let it rise and bake ahead. *Pro tip: Trader Joe's challah is your emergency backup!*
3. Print shabbat prayers for your family to recite together. Set the Shabbat table with care, including candles, a Kiddush cup, and a beautifully covered challah.

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. – Jesus

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# Welcoming Shabbat With Light

The sabbath begins at sundown on Friday evening. Before you serve your evening meal, invite your family to gather around the table a few minutes before the sun begins to set. Now you are ready to light your candles!



## *Lighting the Candles*

Lighting **shabbat candles** is totally optional but it does set the atmosphere for your shabbat meal. It creates a beautiful transition from secular time to sacred time.

Shabbat candles come in pairs of two, representing the dual commandments of remembering and observing the Sabbath. Their glow symbolizes the spiritual light brought into the home as the day of rest begins. *Two candle sticks of your desired decor will do. Try saying the prayer below or create your own personal prayer as you enter into Shabbat.*

### **Blessing Over the Candles**

Blessing: "Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat." (Translation: "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the Sabbath candles.")

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## *The Kiddush*

As the sun sets on Friday evening, marking the beginning of Shabbat, families come together for a special meal. A key component of this meal is the **Kiddush**, a ritual that involves sanctifying the Shabbat with a blessing over a cup of wine or grape juice.

## Holding the Kiddush Cup & Reciting the Blessing

Participants, often the head of the household, hold a cup of wine or grape juice. This cup represents joy, celebration, and the sanctity of Shabbat. The blessing acknowledges and expresses gratitude to God for creating the fruit of the vine, which, in this context, is the wine or grape juice in the cup. *Try saying the blessing below or create a prayer of your own.*

### **Blessing Over the Wine** *(optional)*

Blessing: "Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen." (Translation: "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.")

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Challah is a type of braided bread. It represents the manna that fell from heaven to sustain the Israelites during their time in the wilderness. It is a symbol of God's provision and sustenance.

## Challah & Reciting the Hamotzi Blessing

Having two challahs specifically for Shabbat is a symbolic practice. It harks back to the double portion of manna that fell on Fridays to provide for both Friday and Saturday, as the Israelites were not to gather manna on the Sabbath.

A blessing is recited over the challah. The person leading the meal, often the head of the household, recites the blessing and then breaks a piece of the challah, distributing it to those present. *Try this blessing or create your own.*

### **Blessing the Bread** *(optional)*

Blessing: "Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min haaretz." (Translation: "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.")



## List your shabbat priorities & create a delightful evening!

- 1. Quality Time with Family**

Shabbat is a time to cherish the company of family. The pace of the meal is unhurried, fostering an environment where everyone can relax and connect with one another.
- 2. Opportunity to Unplug**

Shabbat is a day of rest, and this extends to the meal. Many families choose to keep the meal technology-free, creating an environment where individuals can be fully present, focusing on the people around them rather than distractions.
- 3. Gratitude and Blessings**

Throughout the meal, blessings are recited, expressing gratitude for the food, the Shabbat, and the time spent together. This mindful approach enhances the sense of holiness and appreciation for the moment.







## *The Meal*

The Shabbat meal is a special occasion celebrated in a festive atmosphere.

Families gather around a beautifully set table, often adorned with candles, challah, and flowers.

## Delicious food, Stories & Torah

- In the past 20 years, the frequency of family dinners has declined 33 percent. In addition, a recent poll by YouGov found that 62% of parents with children under 18 wish they had family dinners “much more often” or “somewhat more often.”
- According to a recent study, Americans now spend a higher percentage of their food budget on restaurants (50.3%) than they do on groceries (49.7%).

Shabbat meals are not just about the food; they are an opportunity for bonding and spiritual reflection. It's a great time to share experiences from our week with one another. Engaging in discussions about the Torah portion (a section of the bible) is another beautiful way to feed our spiritual needs.

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“After completing the Shabbat meal, it is customary to recite **Birkat HaMazon**, also known as the Grace After Meals. This practice is a moment of reflection and gratitude for the nourishment received.

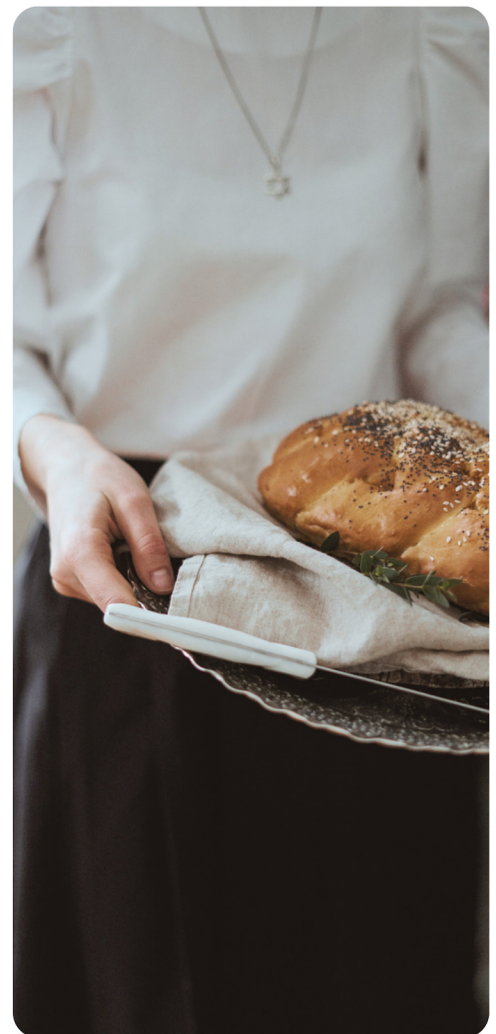
## Start & End with a Grateful Heart

Concluding your meal with a delectable dessert and a heart full of gratitude can provide a satisfying conclusion to your dinner. In traditional Jewish households, it is customary to express special blessings after the meal, acknowledging God as the ultimate provider. A heartfelt song of thanksgiving can also enhance this meaningful moment.

Consider the abundance of blessings in your life that enable you to prepare and share a family meal with those you cherish. This is a moment to be profoundly grateful for!

Pause and reflect: *What aspects of your life fill you with gratitude?*

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## Challah recipe

### Ingredients:

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 packet active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 large eggs
- Sesame or poppy seeds for topping (optional)

## Instructions

1. In a bowl, dissolve the honey in warm water. Add yeast and let it sit for about 5 minutes until it becomes frothy.
  2. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour and salt. Make a well in the center.
  3. Pour the yeast mixture into the well, add oil and 1 beaten egg. Mix to form a dough.
  4. Knead the dough on a floured surface for about 10 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic.
  5. Place the dough in a greased bowl, cover it with a clean cloth, and let it rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours or until it doubles in size.
  6. Punch down the risen dough, divide it into two portions, and shape each portion into a braided loaf.
  7. Place the loaves on a baking sheet, cover them, and let them rise for another 30-60 minutes.
  8. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C).
  9. Optional: Brush the tops of the loaves with egg wash (mix 1 egg and 1 table spoon of water) and sprinkle sesame or poppy seeds.
  10. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the challahs are golden brown.
  11. Allow the challahs to cool before slicing and serving.
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## What to do on Shabbat

1. **Rest and Reflect:** Set aside time for rest, reflection, and spending quality time with family and friends. *Scripture: Genesis 2:2-3*
2. **Avoid Work:** Refrain from activities that are considered work, following the example of God's rest after creation. *Scripture: Exodus 20:8-11*
3. **Attend Shabbat Services:** Consider attending a Messianic synagogue, home bible study group or joining a virtual Shabbat service to worship with a community. *Scripture: Isaiah 58:13-14, Luke 4:16*

“In the teachings of the Messiah, we find a profound understanding that the Shabbat was crafted for the well-being of humanity. His wisdom emphasizes the significance of not merely observing the day but utilizing it for the greater good. Scripture: Mark 2:27-28, Matthew 12:12

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# Three Health Benefits of Shabbat

1.

## **Mental Health**

“more frequent family dinners are related to fewer emotional and behavioral problems, greater emotional well-being, more trusting and helpful behaviors towards others and higher life satisfaction.” –Journal of Adolescent Health, April 2012

2.

## **Physical Health**

According to The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, kids and teens who share family dinners three or more times per week:

- Are less likely to be overweight
- Are more likely to eat healthy food
- Are less likely to engage in risky behaviors (drugs, alcohol, sexual activity)

3.

## **Spiritual Health**

Rest and Reflection: The observance of Shabbat is deeply rooted in the biblical narrative, particularly in Genesis 2:2-3, where God rested on the seventh day after creating the world. Keeping Shabbat involves a day of rest and reflection, acknowledging the divine pattern of work and rest.



## Conclusion and Next Steps

As the Shabbat sun sets and the candles flicker, you've embarked on a sacred journey—one filled with rest, reflection, and the warmth of loved ones. From the lighting of the candles to the shared melodies of gratitude, you've woven the tapestry of a meaningful Shabbat experience.

Ready to elevate your Shabbat experience? Discover more on [sweetjulian.co](https://sweetjulian.co) blog, where messianic faith, art and motherhood unite. Join our vibrant community by subscribing to [\*Shema Homeschool\*](#) or our [\*Pearls of Torah Podcast\*](#).



*Thank you!*

Shabbat Shalom  
Your journey to a  
deeper, more meaningful  
Shabbat starts here!

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