

# SHABBAT - SABBATH KEEPING

## Supplies NEEDED

- Handouts (Background Info, Questions For Reflection, Activity)
- Bibles
- Small notebooks (1 per person)
- Pens

## - SABBATH KEEPING BACKGROUND INFO

- Read Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 16:26; Ex. 20:8-11.
- The seventh day is set aside for rest. 'Do not create', 'cease interfering with the world', and 'rest'. Rest is 'disengagement' from work because the work of creation is finished, and also 'engagement' with God as the deity is now present in His temple to maintain a secure and ordered cosmos.
- The Jewish Sabbath is characterized by joyful practices that include worship, meals and relaxation and the avoidance of work.
- Lauren Winner states that, 'if you stop changing creation for one day per week, you have the opportunity to remember that you are not the Creator, you are just a creature".
- Shabbat occurs from a few minutes before Friday sunset until the appearance of 3 stars in the sky on Saturday night.
- Shabbat is honoured with a day of preparation, including such activities as having a haircut, bathing, beautifying the home, and prayers.
- Shabbat is ushered in by lighting candles and saying prayers. Two candles are lit so that we will 'observe and remember'.
- Three festive meals are eaten, beginning with 'kiddish' and ending the following evening with 'havdalah'.
- Appropriate Shabbat activities are reading, studying, discussing scripture, worship, socializing, singing and sleep.

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## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What was the Sabbath like for you as you were growing up? What were your family's rituals? What wasn't allowed? What was special? Did the Sabbath feel any different from the other days of the week?
- Lauren Winner encourages the keeping of a 'robust Sabbath'. How does your Sabbath presently differ from the other days of the week?
- What elements of a Jewish Sabbath do you find attractive? Do you find difficult? Do you find unhelpful?
- The Sabbath is described as the 'joyful practices' of worship, special meals and relaxation with the avoidance of work. How are your present practices of Sabbath joy-filled? What changes might be needed to help you and your family experience more joy-filled Sabbath days?
- Sabbath is not only a time of rejuvenation, it is also a time to reorient ourselves towards God and our relationship with God. How might this distinction be helpful to you as you plan for upcoming Sabbath days? What is one thing you could do to nurture more fully your relationship with God through your attention to Sabbath days?

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## Activity - Plan Day Of Sabbath

- Using one of the notebooks provided record your thoughts and plans for a Sabbath day to come.
- Take some time to reflect on the ways you would like to see your present Sabbath practices change, be refined, be enhanced. Write down your thoughts. Be specific.
- Think about the demands on your time. What needs to be revised, shifted to another day and/or reconsidered to allow you and your family the time needed to experience a weekly day set apart from all work for worship, fellowship and rejuvenation? Write down the things you need to let go of, the things that might need to move to another day of the week, and the things that you might need to adjust in your schedule to honour the Sabbath. Be specific.
- Think about how you would like to experience the Sabbath day you are planning. Sabbath is to include worship, special meals and relaxation. What are the specific activities you would like to include in your Sabbath day? Write them down. Be specific.
- Think about the people in your life. Who needs to know that you are working towards keeping the Sabbath holy and set apart from all other days? Who would you like to share this Sabbath day with you?

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- Write a detailed description of your planned Sabbath day. Note the date, time frames for activities, names of those who will share the day with you, menus, prayers, songs and special preparations that must be done for you and your family to celebrate the Sabbath.
- Keep your notebook handy to reflect on your Sabbath day during and after it has happened. How was this day different from all the other days? Did you feel closer to God and/or experience God any differently on the Sabbath? Were you more attentive to other people? Were some things more easier or more difficult on this day? Was the rest of your week any different because you set a day for Sabbath apart from the other six days of the week?
- Continue to record your plans for your upcoming Sabbath days in your booklet. Adjust your Sabbath practices over time, working slowly, week by week, towards a practice of Sabbath keeping.