

What Is Shabbat and Why Is It Celebrated?

Shabbat (Strong's word H 7676, meaning "intermission; rest; repose") is a fundamental day of celebration to God. Known as "Sabbath" in English, it is the first of **8 Festivals of God**, as delineated in **Leviticus 23**. These Levitical Festivals are to be times of great celebration, a "holy convocation" commemorating what God has done, what He is doing, and what He will yet do in the future. They typify God's redemptive plan for mankind, with Shabbat being the first, and therefore, foundational observance. By studying and observing these festivals, we not only honor God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), we learn of His nature, and how he would have us live our lives. Romans 12:2 says

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect". NASU

Shabbat is a weekly opportunity to "**renew your mind**" with the things of God, so that your walk with God in the upcoming week will be strengthened and encouraged.

Of the variety of Shabbat's meanings, "rest" underlies them all. It celebrates the miracle of Creation, and the time of rest that followed (Gen. 2:2-3, and Ex. 20:11), during which we focus on our God as Creator, Father, Counselor, and Deliverer (instead of the common, created aspects of daily life). Psalm 92 describes the ideal heart of Shabbat observers ...

Ps 92:5-6 - "For, Adonai, what you do makes me happy; I take joy in what your hands have made. 6(5) How great are your deeds, Adonai! How very deep your thoughts!" CJB

This awe-inspiring "time-out for God" takes the form of prayer, praise, worship, and study of His Word (Bible).

- We share our concerns and questions with each other, always searching for God's answers to our questions (Acts 17:11, Matt. 22:29, Mark 12:24, Luke 24:32, Luke 24:45, Rom. 15:4, 1 Tim. 4:13, 2 Tim. 3:16).
- We sing and dance, making a joyful noise to the Lord (Ps. 66:1, Ps. 81:1, Ps. 95:1, Ps. 98:4, Ps. 100:1).
- We encourage each other in our Faith in God and His Son, Yeshua (1 Thess. 4:18, 1 Thess. 5:11, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:9, Titus 2:6, Heb. 3:13, Heb. 10:25).
- We seek to build each other up as willing servants (Acts 20:32, Eph. 4:11-12, Jude 20, 1 Cor. 14:12, Rom. 15:2).
- We reverently seek the awesome presence of God (1 Chron. 13:8, 1 Chron. 16:11, Ps. 105:4, 2 Chron. 7:14).

In doing these things as a celebration to God, we "**keep**" (***that is, "properly observe"***) the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:8 and Dt. 5:12), and we honor God, as He requested in Lev. 23:3. He (God) will in turn honor and bless us by teaching our hearts, minds, and spirits of Him and of His Calling on our lives.