

SHABBAT
FROM
CELTIC DAILY PRAYER



Northumbria
COMMUNITY

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CELTIC DAILY PRAYER

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edition

The Shabbat liturgy in this booklet is published, along with other prayers, liturgies, meditations and daily readings from the Northumbria Community, in *Celtic Daily Prayer Book 1: The Journey Begins*.

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The logo for Northumbria Community features the word "Northumbria" in a large, stylized, black script font. Below it, the word "COMMUNITY" is written in a smaller, black, all-caps sans-serif font.

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SHABBAT

Why Shabbat?

We need to stop. We are made that way. If we don't stop, eventually we break down. That is why we are commanded to experience Sabbath. It is right up there with telling the truth and not killing anyone. For 24 hours in each week we are to stop. (Wait, better make that 25 hours to be on the safe side, in case it gets eaten into, chipped away at or gradually eroded.) God commands it not as a way of pleasing Him, but as His gift to us.

The danger is that we turn Sabbath-keeping into another thing to do, and become rigid about what we are resting from rather than relaxed. (We may choose to keep the computer turned off, have a rest from the TV, avoid chores or having to drive anywhere. What is helpful for you? Sleeping longer? Or taking off to go walking in the countryside? Weekends can be filled with family, social events, sports or even conferences! They continue to be the time when most people have more flexibility.)

The key to really opening up 'Shabbat' is this: '*Carry no burdens on this Sabbath day.*' We take time on a Friday evening to stop, let all the stress and struggle and worry and responsibility slip from our shoulders. Even the

things we need to pick up again later are carried more lightly because of this decision to stop.

The scripture counts each day as beginning at dusk, so Friday-into-Saturday was the Sabbath. Celtic Christians respected the Sabbath as ‘entering into the rest’. (Read Leslie Hardinge’s *The Celtic Church in Britain* for all the clear evidence of this.)

Keeping Sunday as ‘the Sabbath Day’ has a rather different history. We think of ‘doing one’s duty’ by going to church, wearing stiff collars and Sunday-best, avoiding worldly music, or focusing on ‘improving’ reading... For those who ‘do’ church, Sunday can be far from restful. Sometimes it becomes so exhausting anyone would need a week to recover!

Whether the ‘day off’ is Saturday, Wednesday or whenever, we need it.

These prayers honour the centuries-old traditions of stopping, lighting candles, loosing burdens, sharing bread and wine and a meal together. Enjoy them. Breathe them in. Receive the gift.

We are sometimes asked how the Shabbat liturgies could be adapted for use by someone on their own, and obviously it's hard to be prescriptive. One Jewish perspective would be that 'the alone He sets in families', which means that families could take the opportunity to offer hospitality to those who'd otherwise be on their own. Certainly a Shabbat meal tends to be one of the nicest meals of the week and is taken in an unhurried way. People who are alone may also consider using that as an opportunity to invite others to eat with them.

Some discussions about single people and Shabbat suggest lighting a candle early if you were going to be going out and leaving it burning in a safe place so the Shabbat light is already lit to welcome you on your return.

When we have men's groups together for a weekend, and want to keep Shabbat, we will often invite a woman to bless us by lighting candles for us, then leaving us to it. The women really do preside over these prayers, and it's a shame not to celebrate and honour them in this way wherever possible. But being creative about these things is part of the joy – legislating about them really isn't!

The Welcoming of Shabbat

Prayers read by individual women, taking turns.

** indicates a change of reader.*

* Creator Spirit

mighty wind of God,

You brood over our lives,

and speak new life into our chaos.

* Blessed is the Holy One, our God,

who kindles light in the darkness,

and who sanctifies the Sabbath.

One woman lights a single Shabbat candle (or pair of candles, if that is already your family custom) on behalf of everyone.

* Your Sabbath

celebrates the flowering of creation,

the wedding of our hopes

to Your divine yearning.

In the light of Your holy Sabbath
each day is holy:
in the overflowing of Sabbath joy,
each moment is sacred.

All women:

**Blessed be God
who gives us the Sabbath
and leads us to the waters of stillness.**

* The day is not a day but an attitude,
a disposition,
a rest in the human heart.
So carry no burdens on this Sabbath day,
rather, when God rests in you,
so you also rest in Him.
And when God does His work in you,
so you also do your work in Him.

All women:

**Welcome the day,
receive the gift.
Remember the Sabbath and keep it.
It is made for you:
your freedom,
your joy,
your healing.**

**Blessed be God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,**

* who restores our soul
and commands us to rest.

Then during this song, 'Shabbat Welcome', (or some similar piece of music), we each allow all the burdens we carry to slip from us, and consciously cast down and cast off any that persistently try to remain attached... Let go! ... Let God! ... Shalom!

Song

Light the candle, keep a Sabbath to the Lord.

Light the candle, come, be restored.

Light the candle, welcome the day.

Receive it ... hold it ... treasure it.

Welcome the day,

welcome the day.

Light the candle as the evening falls.

Loose your burdens, look to the Lord.

As we honour Him, peace is restored.

Receive it ... hold it ... treasure it,
the peace of the Lord,
the peace of the Lord.

Light the candle, see its gentle flame.
Anxious thoughts recede – stillness will stay.
Like the candle burns, so love remains,
receiving, holding, treasuring.

Evening and morning say,
Welcome the day!

Shabbat

1. The lighting of candles

These prayers are only to be used by a woman (or girl): this is her privilege exclusively. A single candle may be used for simplicity, with one of the women present lighting it on behalf of all; but if you have enough candles and holders the following is the normal practice.

Each woman or girl lights a candle of her own, setting it in front of her (remembering to pray for, or give thanks for, her own mother). A married woman also lights another candle for her husband, and one for each of her children. A single or divorced woman, or a widow, will light only one candle, plus ones for any children she may have who are still living. If appropriate she could light an extra candle to commit to God a child she has miscarried or aborted, or a child who has died or been adopted. A widow could light a candle for her late husband.

The prayers over the lighting of the candles (the ones with the actions) are said by all the women and girls present.

The other prayers are usually said by the woman in whose home you are gathered, but any woman present may say them. A small girl could repeat them if desired.

Do all this as quickly or as slowly as you feel is appropriate to the occasion or suitable to your needs as a household. It need only take a few moments.

Blessed are You, Lord,
High King above all kings,
our Father for ever and ever.
Thine, O Lord, is the greatness,
the power, the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Lighting candles individually or together:

**Let Thy face, O Lord, shine forth upon us,
and be Thou merciful unto us.**

*Individually or together moving hands over the candles,
palms-down, with circular motion inwards towards the eyes,
three times:*

**The peace of God ...
and of Christ ...
and of the Holy Spirit ...
be upon us [*and upon us and our children*]
for ever more.**

Individually or together, covering eyes with hands:

**I do not think that I shall fear Thee
when I see Thee face to face.**

All together, removing hands from eyes, and looking at the candles:

Thou art our trust, O King of kings.

**I pray that no envy and malice,
no hatred or fear, may smother the flame.**

**I pray that indifference and apathy,
contempt and pride,
may not extinguish its light.**

**Be with us by day,
be with us by night,
and as darkness covers the earth
keep our lights shining brightly.**

**We are on a journey,
for our hearts have run before us
to Your kingdom;
once far off,
we have now been brought near.**

**See how good and joyful a thing it is to dwell
together in unity!**

2. The breaking of bread

These prayers should only be used by the menfolk, and a man or boy should have the bread or wine before him, breaking the bread and passing it to the next person. He may eat first or last as desired.

The same procedure is followed with passing and drinking the wine.

Taking the bread:

Blessed are You, Lord,
High King above all kings,
for through Your goodness we have this bread.
You have given us Your peace,
and set a hunger in our hearts.
Restore our strength.
Give new energy to tired limbs,
new thought to weary minds.

The bread is shared with everyone, usually with salt to sprinkle on it.

Taking the wine:

Blessed are You, Lord,
High King above all kings,
for through Your goodness we have this wine.
We thank You for Your loving kindness
which has filled our days
and brought us to this time and place.
May the wine restore our souls,
giving new vision to dry spirits,
new warmth to cold hearts.

The wine is shared with everyone.

3. Thanksgiving before sharing a meal

Food may have been prepared for the guests, or they may even have brought food as well to contribute to the shared meal, but in any case you should endeavour to sit at one table, and leave one spare place-setting, or one seat free. This is to welcome the Christ who comes in the guise of the stranger or 'unexpected' visitor. This reminds us that we long for the coming of Christ – His returning – and yet honour His presence with us. Also, it teaches us to treat with honour whoever may come and be given the place prepared as His.

Before eating:

Bless, O Lord,
this food we are about to eat,
and we pray You, O God,
that it may be good for our body and soul,

and if there is any poor creature
hungry or thirsty walking the road,
may God send them in to us
so that we can share the food with them,
just as Christ shares His gifts with all of us.

Havdala (end of Shabbat)

If the Shabbat prayers have been used to welcome a full 25 hours where burdens were laid down, you may wish to mark the transition into the busyness of another week. These rituals would be used on the Saturday evening. The period of rest is officially 25 hours, in case we should inadvertently short-change that time

And while we still can, we greet each other saying:

Shabbat Shalom

On special occasions each person may be invited to go and find a stone from outdoors and write the word SARANAM on it in red marker pen. The stones are piled to build a cairn or heap. Within a family you may wish to keep each individual's stones to use on another occasion.

If it has not been kept burning continuously, the Shabbat candle is now re-lit by one of the women.

If there is a cairn of stones a man, or all the men, say:

What do these stones mean?

When your sons ask you, you can say,

‘These stones speak of where we have come
from!

Each of us carried a stone;

it represents the life we live

– and all that we have celebrated and observed,
all that we have suffered, carried and endured.

This has been our life.

We lay it here, and honour it.’

*Then everybody removes their individual stone and holds it
as the song ‘Saranam’ is said or sung:*

1. Saranam (Refuge)

Receive our thanks for night and day,
for food and shelter,
rest and play.

Be here our guest,
and with us stay,
saranam ... saranam ... saranam.

For this small earth of sea and land,
for this small space
on which we stand,
for those we touch
with heart and hand,
saranam ... saranam ... saranam.

In the midst of foes I cry to Thee,
from the ends of earth,
wherever I may be,



Re - ceive our thanks for night and day, for___ food and shel - ter, rest and play.



Be___ here our guest and with us stay, sar-a- nam, sar-a- nam, sar-a - nam._____

my strength in helplessness,
oh, answer me,
saranam ... saranam ... saranam.

Make my heart to grow as great as Thine,
so through my hurt
Your love may shine,
my love be Yours,
Your love be mine,
saranam ... saranam ... saranam.

For those who've gone, for those who stay,
for those to come,
following the Way,
be guest and guide
both night and day,
saranam ... saranam ... saranam.

2. A six-stemmed candle

With a light taken from the Shabbat candle a six-stemmed candle is lit. (These may be bought from any Jewish supplier, are found easily online or may be plaited from 'spaghetti' candles. An improvised substitute would be six small upright candles in a bowl of sand.)

Once all six wicks are lit, the Shabbat candle is removed and blown out. This tells us that the peace and prayer of Shabbat must be carried into the busyness of the next week.

Then a cup of wine on a bowl or deep saucer is filled to overflowing. The cup is passed clockwise from person to person to drink until it is finished. The joy of Shabbat flows into the week ahead. (The spilt wine in the dish/saucer may be reserved for extinguishing the six-stemmed candle if it becomes dangerous.)

3. The blessing of children

Then the blessing of children is said (or it may be sung to the tune of Sabbath Prayer from Fiddler on the Roof) and may include blessing of any children, and the children of anyone with you, even if those children are by now adults or are not present. They still get remembered, blessed and prayed for.

Each parent of any girls says in turn:

***(Name), my daughter
(and name, my daughter),***

Parents of any girls sing/say all together:

**May the Lord protect and defend you,
may He always shield you from shame.**

**May you come to be among His own a shining
name.**

**May you be like Ruth and like Esther,
may you be deserving of praise.**

**Strengthen *her*, O Lord, and keep *her* from all
hateful ways.**

**Daughter(s) of my heart,
in everything you do, may the Lord preserve you
from pain.**

Favour *her*, O Lord, with happiness and peace.

***We* give *her* back to you.**

Amen.

Parents of any boys present, together say:

**May God bless you, the God of Abraham, Isaac
and Jacob.**

They sing/say together:

Here, O Lord, our *son* await(s) Your blessing.

May *he* walk before You all *his* days.

**Everywhere *he* goes be Yours the Name *he*
*knows***

and may *he* come to know Your ways.

**Here we stand like Abraham with Isaac,
Saying to the Lord, 'Here am I'.
In everything, Amen,
we look to You again,
and bless *him* in Your Name,
our God.**

Each parent of each boy present says in turn:

***(Name), my son,
may the joy of God be upon you,
and on your face!***

4. A sweet fragrance

Now spices or incense will be lit. It can be in a special spice jar or with lit charcoal on a stone and grains of incense on top. When it is smoking, the plate of incense should be handed around clockwise so each person can waft it over themselves and breathe it in deeply. The sweet savour of Shabbat should linger on us as we walk into the world outside.

5. Recollection ('Best thing')

Everyone is given time to think through the last 25 hours or so since the Shabbat Welcome. What is their 'best thing'? (Sometimes the children will say, 'Can I have two best things?') Once everybody has decided, we go around clockwise and each in turn say what the best thought, experience or memory of the time has been.

If you prefer, the very first 'best thing' can be introduced with these words:

We give You thanks.

Your Name is near.

You're not just over there

or over here.

You're very near.

The image shows two lines of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first line contains the lyrics: "We give you thanks. Your name is near. You're not just". The second line contains the lyrics: "o - ver there or o - ver here. You're ve - ry near. (We give you)". The music consists of quarter and eighth notes with rests, and a double bar line at the end of the second line.

6. Anointing oil

Next a small bottle or saucer of oil is passed around. This may be olive oil, or some appropriate fragrant oil. A small amount is put on the heel of the hand and placed gently but firmly on the forehead of the person to the left. The words, 'Go peacefully' are said, perhaps with the person's name. The Shalom we have experienced is part of us, and goes with us.

7. The sweetness

Finally a bowl is passed round with parcels of 'the sweetness'. It may be sultanas, raisins, marshmallows, chocolate or small sweets, wrapped to open, trade with or consume. But the sweetness of this day and this time together becomes part of us and is carried with us.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Welcoming: Weston Priory, Vermont (adapt.)

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Song ‘Shabbat Welcome’ © Anna Raine from her CD *Ancient Paths*.

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Havdala; trad. adapt. Andy Raine except Cairn poem, blessing of children, ‘We give You thanks...’ © Andy Raine.

