

Spiritual Preparation for the Sabbath

I always look at Sabbath as a new beginning. No matter what has happened during the week, I am going to keep an appointment with the King, my Father. He will not only make everything right, He will also give me the strength to take on another week, but first I must spend time with Him.

In ancient times kings had the power of life and death over their subjects. Today we have no true king, and the concept of what this really means has escaped us. In Biblical times if we were summoned before a king we wouldn't appear before him disheveled or unprepared for whatever purpose we were called. We would want to look our best. We would wear our finest clothes, they would be clean and pressed. Well, we have been summoned by a king - the King of the universe and creator of all things, and He is jealous for our attention this day of all days. So we clean and scrub and prepare, and get all of our work out of the way so that we can fully concentrate and spend time with him. But let us not forget that He is a king who can also see the inward, as well as the outward. While we're with Him, are we mentally planning what we will be doing at work the next week, school lessons for our children, wondering if that sale will be still be on after Sabbath? You see, preparing to meet with Him takes some spiritual preparation as well. We need to let lose all of those things that keep us from being with Him fully, and worshiping Him as He deserves.

So what can we do? We pray, asking him to cast out these worldly thoughts so that we can be closer to Him. Have you strayed during the week? Scripture says a righteous man sins seven times a day, but he does not stay in his sin. (Proverbs 24:16; Psalm 37:24) Confess your sins and repent. Ask Him to speak to you through His Word. How often do we sit on Sabbath reading the Parahsa, Haftarah, and New Covenant without really *reading* them? You know what I mean. His Word should be a delight to us.

I will delight myself in your statutes. I will not forget your word. Tehillim (Psalms) 119:16

I have started making sure that everything is complete 20-30 minutes before candle lighting so that I can spend some time in prayer. You would not believe how much this changes things for our family. Usually it is rush to clean, rush to cook, rush to make sure everyone is doing their work, and then rush to the table to begin. Is this the way we want to start His day? By stopping and acknowledging the Father, repenting of sin, and asking for His blessing we stop the madness and ready our hearts and minds to receive Him. This is also good for your children, and helps them to understand that this is a set apart time.

In the same spirit of taking time to pray and confess before Sabbath, it was also customary to fast on preparation day as well. The Didache¹ is an ancient writing dating back to very early in the second century. It is thought to be the teachings of the talmidim (disciples) of Yeshua, and it is also full of Torah. In the Didache we are advised to fast on the fourth and sixth days of the week. Preparation day is the sixth day. In Judaism the bride and groom fast the day of wedding. It is the couple's private Yom

Kippur. We are only half a person and not complete until we marry. The bride and groom are coming together as echad - a unified one. The fast is to confess and ask forgiveness of sins done in the past so that they may begin their new life with a fresh start. After the ceremony, the couple is taken to a private room, where they break their fast. This private time is guarded carefully by the same two witnesses who stood with them beneath the canopy.

John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and they came and asked him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?" Yeshua said to them, "Can the groomsmen fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can't fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day. Mark 2:18-20

Yeshua is our bridegroom, and Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a rehearsal for the world to come. Fasting is part of the preparation for the time when He will return for us. Of course not everyone can fast: those with medical conditions, pregnant, or on certain medications. If you do decide to fast use caution because unlike Yom Kippur - this fast is not a day of complete rest. You're going to be working and getting ready for the Sabbath, so use caution. If you are unaccustomed to fasting, you may try to fast only solid food, and take in liquids, or fast in some other way.

Please do not mistake what I am saying. No where in Scripture does it say that we are commanded to fast on preparation day. However, Yeshua does tell us that while we are awaiting the bridegroom's return we need to be fasting. If it is something that you decide to do, then you will be blessed by it.

1.If you would like to read the Didache it can be found at this website
<http://reluctant-messenger.com/didache.htm>