

## Shiva Tips For Mourners

The purpose of this document is to provide helpful suggestions of things people may need and steps one may take to prepare for a Shiva. You can have a meaningful Shiva with nothing on this list and remember, you are not throwing a party. The most important part of a Shiva is to...

### **Tips For Before The Shiva:**

- It is best to delegate as much as possible when planning a Shiva. Try to find 1-2 friends who you can put as “point people” to do many of these logistics.
- People will come forward asking if there is “anything they can do.” They mean it. So don’t be shy about sending them to that friend who can delegate.
- If you need additional volunteers to help, we have lay leaders we can tap as extra “human-power” to help with set-up, clean-up, etc. While we can’t guarantee their availability, we will do our best to help you find someone.
- If you will be having Shiva directly after services, it’s not a bad idea to find a friend who can get your house ready while you are at the cemetery.

### **Shiva Rituals:**

*There are many Shiva rituals. View them as tools that may help bring you comfort or focus you. Choose some, all, or none:*

- Have your first meal after Shiva with an egg, bagel, or lentil since they are round and a symbol of the cycle of life.
- Put out a pitcher of water for people to wash their hands before heading into the Shiva house. You will leave it on your stoop.
- Cover your mirrors
- Light a memorial candle
- Find a low chair or stool for the mourner to sit on
- At services, some in our community choose to speak about the deceased. You can choose people ahead of time or open the floor, but it is good to decide ahead of time what you want.
- Although one does not sit shiva on Shabbat, many in our community make a special effort to come to services to hear their loved one’s name read.
- If you are worried you will not have enough people for the minyan, please let Rabbi Katz know. It is much easier to gather people ahead of time than look for a minyan in the moment.

If you need help gathering any of these supplies, please ask Rabbi Katz

### **Shiva Food And Supplies:**

*These are things you can ask friends to do and bring when they ask “is there anything I can do?”*

- The clergy will bring everything you need for Shiva services. These include prayer books and kippot.
- Don’t be shy about using disposable plates and silverware rather than doing dishes later.
- Potential food items include:

- Fruit/vegetable/cheese platters
  - Sandwich platters
  - Bagels/lox/cream cheese
  - Desserts
  - Cold Beverages
  - Coffee/tea/milk/sugar
- If you get in a bind the synagogue has coffee urns and chairs you can borrow (provided we do not need them for a program).
  - A few other tips:
    - Have extra toilet paper and tissues around in the bathroom so you don't have to worry about refilling it.
    - Designate a room for coats and direct people there so you don't have to take them.
    - Put extra garbage bags near the cans. If someone offers to help, ask them to keep an eye on them.
    - Buy extra freezer bags and plastic containers because you will have extra food.

**After The Shiva:**

- Many places will take your extra food. Try the following:
  - Mesh (<https://www.wearemesh.org/> - unopened food only)
  - Toni's Kitchen (<https://toniskitchen.org/> - unopened food only)
  - Human Needs Food Pantry (non-perishables only)