

How to Lead a Shiva Minyan

These are the things that have no limits. A person enjoys their fruit in this world, and lives upon their principal in the world to come:

- honoring father and mother;
- performing acts of love and kindness;
- arriving at the house of study punctually mornings as well as evenings;
- showing hospitality to guests;
- visiting the sick;
- providing for the wedding couple;
- comforting the mourner;
- accompanying the dead for burial;
- and making peace among people.
- But studying Torah leads to all the others.

-Pirkei Avot

The Call:

- When a family has a loss and requests a shiva minyan, for any or all nights of shiva, Audrey Medvin will send out an e-mail to the Shiva Minyan Committee members asking for volunteers. Her e-mail is amedvin@shaariemeth.org. Whether you can volunteer or not, please respond to the e-mail at your earliest convenience.
- The e-mail asking for volunteers will include the name of the deceased, the names of the bereaved and the dates and times for shiva.
- We generally limit our radius to Monmouth County. However we do have congregants in Jackson and the Shore area. Please be open to travelling a bit farther every once in a while.

The Grief Case:

- If you are the first leader we may ask you to stop by the Temple to take a Grief Case to the shiva home. If you are not the first it will already be at the house. If you are leading the minyan on the last night of shiva please take the case with you and return it to the Temple. The case contains Minyan books and Kippot.

Arriving at the Shiva Home:

- Often, the minyan service will be called for 7:00 or 7:30 to allow people to come after work.
- Try to arrive 15 minutes before the service begins so that you can pay your respects to the bereaved. Often it is dark and it can be difficult to find your way to a person's home so make sure you have a GPS or good directions before you set out. Some minyan leaders carry a flashlight in the car to illuminate the numbers on the houses which can be hard to see in the dark.
- When you arrive the door will usually be open. Enter, find the mourners and introduce yourself.
- Ask for the Hebrew name of the deceased.
- Ask the mourners where they would like to hold the service.

Leading the Minyan:

- Men and women are included in the ten required to make a minyan according to Reform Judaism. If you do not have a minyan you may also decide to hold the service. It is not ideal but most important is allowing the mourners to say Kaddish. Be inclusive. Men, women, children, Jews and non-Jews are all welcome to participate.
- Hand out Books and Kippot.
- Ask everyone to silence their cell phones. Request that someone be in charge of answering the house phone should it ring during services.
- Identify which direction faces east. Mourners can often help with this or you may want to have a compass app on your phone.
- Stand in middle or front facing east.
- People can stand or sit. Most usually stand but if they are seated make sure to announce "please rise" and please be seated in the book."

The Service:

Start by reminding everyone we are here to perform a mitzvah by allowing the family to say Kaddish at home. Encourage participation by reminding everyone to join in reading and when you are chanting everyone is welcome to join you in the Hebrew or the transliteration.

Mihskan Tefila for The House of Mourning

1a Read "We are assembled..."

4a (Say "Please Rise") Chant Barchu

5a/b Read Maariv in Hebrew on 5a OR choose English on 5b and invite group to read with you.

6b Choose English reading: "All goodness.." OR "As you taught.." and invite group to read with you.

7a Chant Shema

8a (Say: "Please be seated") Chant V'ahavta

9b Read "There are times..."

10a Chant Mi Chamocha

11b Choose English: "Give us a place..." OR "In nature's ebb..." and invite group to read with you.

12a Chant Chatzi Kaddish

13a Say: (Say "Please Rise") "We continue with the tefila in Hebrew, pages 13a, 14a, 15a and 16a"

18a Say: "We continue silently reading, meditating and praying through the rest of the tefila from page 18-25. (When you have finished, please be seated)"

25a Sing Oseh Shalom

26a (Say "Please Rise") Chant Aleinu

27a Chant Bayom Hahu

28a Say: "We join in reading Psalm 23 together

28b-32b Choose a few readings to read to or with the group. Do not read everything!!

Pause to invite people to share memories or stories of the deceased. If you do this you may want to end by saying: "May the memory of _____ always be a blessing. We continue page 33a with El Malei Rachamim"

33a Chant El Malei Rachamim in Hebrew or read in English and include the name of the person in Hebrew or English

34a Recite Mourner's Kaddish

Conclude by saying "Erev tov!"