

## **How To Maximize Shabbat At Home**

Sarah and I would like to share with you some thoughts and discussion points relating to our current situation.

We now face the reality of a truly unusual and hopefully unique Shabbat experience. We will not be going to minyan, there will be no groups for our kids and no kiddush in which to socialize.

We therefore face the choice to wallow at home in crisis mode or use the opportunity to reflect on our current predicament, spend quality time in conversation with our spouse/family/roommate and use the time to learn and daven in solitude.

If we are blessed to have children at home, this Shabbat provides an incredible opportunity for role modelling to our children what Shabbat means to us in a very personal way. If they see that we use the opportunity of no shul to sleep in and have a 'pajama Shabbos', then we will have missed out on a golden opportunity to share a unique shabbat experience with them and show them that Shabbat means more to us than simply going to shul.

Below are some suggestions to make this Shabbat both unique, memorable and uplifting for all the family.

### **1) Shabbat Candles**

For many of us, this will be a rare opportunity to be together with our spouse and family members for the lighting of the Shabbat candles. Let us use this time to stand together as we usher the peace which the Shabbat lights represent, into our homes and our community. Amidst the chaos and confusion that the world is experiencing, Shabbat can provide for us some welcome spirituality and tranquility as we shut off the constant news updates from around the world.

The time of lighting the Shabbat candles has long been regarded as an opportune moment for heartfelt tefillah, typically a mother praying for her family. This week as we welcome Shabbat let us use the time to direct our thoughts to those in need of refuah throughout the world and ask Hashem to keep us, our family and community safe from harm at this troubling time.

### **2) Tefillah**

Shul attendance is often cited as a characteristic of Shabbat observance but this week we can focus on the tefillot themselves, rather than the symbolic act of going to shul. Without a Chazan, Ba'al Tefillah or congregation setting the pace, this Shabbat offers us the opportunity to daven at our own individual speed. Let us use this opportunity to spend time on parts of davening that are less familiar to us, utilizing the English in a siddur if necessary, to help us connect with the prayers in a more meaningful way. The tunes which we associate with davening should not be ignored and can help us connect to davening, so don't be embarrassed to sing out loud even if you are not normally a chazan!

We will of course have to do without hearing Kriyat HaTorah, but we should certainly all read through the parasha (and maftir for Shabbat Para) in chumash. Without a kiddush to rush to, take the time to

explore the text with a commentary and gain a deeper insight in to the fascinating parasha of Ki Tisa. It is also a wonderful opportunity to learn with your spouse, children or even roommate in a relaxed and unique atmosphere.

### **3) Seudah Shlishit**

Seudah Shlishit provides the platform from which we ready ourselves to say goodbye to Shabbat and re-enter the world around us. On a Shabbat that we don't leave our homes, it could easily become forgotten and brushed aside. Who really wants to eat again anyway? Yet to ignore the symbolic third meal would be to miss an amazing opportunity for one last taste of the tranquility of Shabbat before we re-enter the world around us. One last taste of calm before the storm. For those who normally have seudah and for those who often don't, make this week the Shabbat where we sit and sing those inspirational songs that lift us in to the week to come and arm us with the hope and faith that we need to face whatever the week will bring.

### **4) For those with small children**

#### **A. Friday Night:**

- i. stand together for the lighting of the Shabbat candles and talk to the children about how this Shabbat will be different from normal and make a plan for what they would like to while at home for the duration of Shabbat.
- ii. Daven Kabbalat Shabbat together with the tunes the children know from school.

#### **B. Shabbat morning:**

- i. Daven together at a set time and in a set place in the home, with everyone in their Shabbat clothes.
- ii. During davening encourage the children to lead and sing the tefillot that they know.
- iii. Davening with our children outside of shul is not something most of us do regularly so we can use the opportunity to talk about tefillah, encouraging the children to engage in the conversation.
  - o Each family member can describe their favorite tefillah and why they connect with it.
  - o For younger children, go through the morning brachot and ask them which is their favorite and why.
  - o Ask the children what they are thankful to Hashem for and tell them what we are thankful for
- iv. Review the parasha with a quiz or games. Some ideas can be found at the following sites <https://www.aish.com/tp/?s=nb> , [https://images.shulcloud.com/512/uploads/youth\\_services/Parsha\\_Nation/Ki\\_Tisa/parsha-nation-packet-parshat-ki-tisa.pdf](https://images.shulcloud.com/512/uploads/youth_services/Parsha_Nation/Ki_Tisa/parsha-nation-packet-parshat-ki-tisa.pdf)