

## Judaism spiritual aid : practicing the Sabbath

Getting ready for the Sabbath was the most important part, so that it would be a time to rest and a time to be with God. How I made sure everything was ready. I made sure that the laundry was done. I made sure that I vacuumed and swept my house. I picked up any mess. I did all the dishes.

For the Sabbath I tried to be as kosher as possible so I read up on their rules. I made sure during the Sabbath meal not to eat pork, not to eat dairy with poultry or beef. I got the rules from Judaism 101 website about the Kashrut: Jewish Dietary Laws. (<http://www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm>)

I looked up kosher meals online. I knew that I wanted two big meals. So I followed this recipe (<http://kosherfood.about.com/od/kosherpoultryrecipes/r/Chicken-Broccoli-Cashew-Stir-Fry.htm>) that I thought would go nicely for the Sabbath. I cooked rice before the Sabbath. I cut up the broccoli beforehand. I did not have any cashews so I put peanuts in the recipe instead. I cut up the chicken beforehand and put all the spices in with the chicken. This was going to be my dinner meal. I was going to have my crock-pot cook it. I was going to put in the chicken first. I would put it on high for 2 hours. Then add the broccoli and rice for the last 30 minutes. The other meal I planned was going to be lunch. I would put this in the crock-pot before the Sabbath began. I put in a roast, potatoes, and carrots in a crock-pot with salt and pepper. (I did not get kosher salt.) For breakfast, I thought I would be simple and have some cereal. For snacks, I cut up some peaches. There were also chips for if I got hungry.

Friday came and I was ready. I planned for playing memory with my children. Also I had some library books on hand to read to my children. Go on a slow walk with my family around the block. I thought to play a board game with my husband. I thought to read some scriptures from Genesis, the creation on Friday night, then on Saturday morning we could look up in my Bible all the words Sabbath and read them. Then later that afternoon we would have a time to read the stories of Moses and Noah, and sing Go Down Moses and the Arky, Arky Song.

I wanted there to be plenty to do because most of my regular Saturdays dealt with cooking, cleaning, doing homework, going on an outing, and watching TV. I wanted to make sure I could focus on God so I was going to do no TV, no talking on the phone, no working on the computer. I knew if I got bored I could always catch up on my needed sleep.

I made sure everyone knew my plans and why as a family we were doing this. I did not demand that my husband join me, knowing that he loves his electronics. But instead I told him what I was going to do, and asked if he would like to join me. It felt funny, but I was excited to go through this adventure with my family. I wanted to know what it felt like to be a Jew for a day. Before planning, I was not happy with all these rules. But because I planned my day I was at ease. Finally I was going to have a day of peace with God and my family.

With all this planning I was ready and so was the Sabbath ready. The rules had been sitting there waiting for my enjoyment. I had never stepped into the Sabbath with such preparation. Before this I had an arrogant view of the Sabbath. I had always thought of it as a day to watch TV. Then if the Sabbath was not for rest (watching TV) then the other reason was to force myself to read the Bible continuously for 6 hours. I have tried both these. My own Sabbath did not make me a happy person. The Sabbath I tried to watch TV all day long, it made me feel depressed and useless. I did not feel closer to God but farther away. When I tried to read the Bible all day long, I failed. I started reading it for the first 30 minutes or hour and stopped. I only had 30 minutes concentration available to me. I guess I was dreading the hours before me.

I am glad to be taking this class because I have seen the model of the Sabbath, not just some made up one that I conjured up in my head. Other people have rest because of the Sabbath now it was my turn.

The Sabbath is relaxing. It was good to read God's word. It was good to get my family involved in this day. It was a good thing I had some chips on hand because my son was ready to eat some. He does not eat meat much so he was ready for another source of food. The games did not take as long as I hoped. But then we played Legos and then played with some Barbies because my daughter enjoys that. We also got out the puzzles. It was hard for my husband not to want to make the walk out of exercise, but I think it was restful because we made the children walk and the children walk slowly.

My children did not like being read to out of the Bible very much. We changed the schedule of reading the Sabbath scriptures in the morning and moved it to during their naptime. So we read the children's version of Genesis and Moses. We went over briefly what it said in the Bible. It was good to sing "Go Down Moses" and the Arky, Arky song. I had a print out of it. It is always fun to see my daughter sing that song. She sticks her little finger out and says, "Let my people go!" She is so cute. Those are the only words she knows of the song. We also sang "He's got the whole world in his hands".

During my children's nap time we went over the Sabbath scriptures. In Exodus 16:23 it says not to bake or broil during the Sabbath. In Exodus 16:26 it says that there was no manna on the Sabbath so the day before the people had to collect a double portion of manna. Exodus 20: 8 says to keep the Sabbath holy. Then in Exodus 20:11 says that when God made the heavens and the earth, He worked for 6 days and on the seventh, the Sabbath He rested. So we need to follow His example and rest. Finally in Exodus 31: 13 God wants us to observe the Sabbath. We do this because it is a sign between the generations to come, "so you may know that I am the Lord who makes you holy." (NIV)

This reading did not take up all the children's nap time so I was able to rest myself. It was good to rest after playing all those games. After everyone woke up we read some books from the library. My children always enjoy picture books. Books are like TV to them.

I am not really into lots of rules. I like to do things without planning. This makes my life pretty unorganized. But when I organize it like during the Sabbath it really gives purpose to my day. It is not like any ol' Saturday that has no meaning. I did this for God. And I think God did this for me. I think I will really do this again. It is refreshing to have a day set aside without the loudest of TV. It is good to bond with my family and God. I do feel refreshed. I was ready to start work. I was ready instead of weeks before when I just procrastinated a day away every week.

Now I know that the Sabbath is good even though it is not something that my church does. I think I might encourage my pastor to look at having the congregation all do a Sabbath. It might be a way for our church to become revitalized.

If we can get past all the rules and understand the purpose to relax with God, the Sabbath is a good thing. I think I will be able to get more done because of my experience with God on the Sabbath.

Afterwards my house was messy. I needed to get my homework done and get back to regular life. But it was good. It was as if I had a vacation with God and my family. I did not have to worry about this day because it was for God. God was going to take care of my family.