SHABBAT CANDLES

SHABBAT: CANDLES: MEANING

Shabbat: Candles: Peace of Home and Festive Feeling

The original purpose for lighting <u>Shabbat</u> candles was to enhance the peace of the home (<u>shalom bayit</u> --so that people could walk around without stumbling in the dark), and so <u>Shabbat</u> candles were lit where people would eat dinner Friday night. But we now rely on the idea that candles help provide a festive atmosphere.

SHABBAT: CANDLES: WHEN TO LIGHT

Shabbat: Candles: Earliest Time To Light

You may not light <u>Shabbat</u> (or <u>Jewish festival</u>) candles before <u>plag ha'mincha</u>. The candles must burn until at least dark (*tzeit ha'kochavim*) and someone must be there to see the light from the candles after dark.

SITUATION <u>Mincha minyan</u> begins at <u>plag ha'mincha</u>. You cannot light candles at home and still get to <u>mincha minyan</u> on time.

WHAT TO DO You must say *mincha* on your own (anytime from half an hour after mid-day until sunset). You will light candles after *plag ha'mincha* but before sunset and not join the *mincha minyan*.

Shabbat: Candles: Normal Lighting Times

In many countries, candle lighting time is 18 minutes before sunset.

NOTE In Jerusalem, many people have the custom of lighting candles 40 minutes before sunset.

Shabbat: Candles: Lighting with Delay until Sunset

Under extenuating circumstances, women may make a "condition" by saying "I am lighting *Shabbat* candles but not starting *Shabbat* until sunset" to delay *Shabbat* until sunset, when it will begin anyway.

NOTE Women should not routinely start *Shabbat* at sunset since the proper time for women to begin *Shabbat* is at candle lighting (typically 18 minutes before sunset).

REASON An opinion exists that <u>Shabbat</u> actually begins at 18 minutes before sunset; that is the origin of this time for women to begin <u>Shabbat</u>.

Shabbat: Candles: Latest Time To Light

You may not light after sunset (or after whatever time the entire community starts <u>Shabbat</u> if they start <u>Shabbat</u> before sunset).

NOTE If a woman lights candles after sunset, she not only violates *Shabbat* but she must light one extra candle on every subsequent *Shabbat* for the rest of her life.

SHABBAT: CANDLES: WHERE TO LIGHT

Shabbat: Candles: Lighting at Dinner Location

Light Shabbat candles wherever you will eat dinner.

NOTE If eating elsewhere, do not light *Shabbat* candles at your own home unless you will be home for some period of time after dark while the candles are burning (otherwise you have made a *bracha l'vatala*). You must see the candles burning for at least one minute after dark (*tzeit ha'kochavim*).

SHABBAT: CANDLES: WHO LIGHTS

Shabbat: Candles: One Person per Home Lights

<u>Shabbat</u> candles should be lit only by one person per home. Priority order: wife; then husband; then children. Girls should not be encouraged to light <u>Shabbat</u> candles except when no parent can.

NOTE Single people should light *Shabbat* candles in their homes if they will eat there.

Shabbat: Candles: Have Others in Mind When Lighting

Whoever is lighting the <u>Shabbat</u> candles should light for all other people who will be eating dinner in that home. So a host/hostess where you will eat should have you in mind when he or she lights <u>Shabbat</u> candles. However, it is customary for any married woman to light candles wherever she will eat. Unmarried women do not need to light their own candles (as long as the host/hostess has them in mind when lighting), but they are not prohibited from doing so.

SHABBAT CANDLES: HOW MANY TO LIGHT

Shabbat: Candles: Wives: Light Two (or More)

Wives should light two candles for <u>Shabbat</u> (and <u>Jewish festivals</u>), even though we say the blessing over "ner" ("candle" in the singular). Lighting any more candles than two is custom.

Shabbat: Candles: How Many To Light when Eating Elsewhere

A wife lighting *Shabbat* candles in a place other than her own home lights only two candles, even if she normally lights more than two candles in her own home.

Adding a Candle

If you missed lighting candles one *Shabbat*, the custom is to light an additional candle with your normal candles every subsequent *Shabbat* during your lifetime.

NOTE If you eat at someone else's home for <u>Shabbat</u> and they light candles for you, you do not (even as a custom) then add a candle to those your normally light on subsequent <u>Shabbats</u>.

SHABBAT: CANDLES: BLESSING

Shabbat: Candles: How To Do Blessing: Women

Here is the order for blessing over the *Shabbat* candles by women:

- Light the candles,
- Put your hands in front of your eyes (this a universal custom), and
- Say the blessing lehadlik ner shel Shabbat.

NOTE It is a custom to make requests at candle lighting, but *rabbinic* guidance may be helpful in how to structure the request.

Shabbat: Candles: How To Do Blessing: Men

Here is the order for blessing over the *Shabbat* candles by men:

- Say the blessing, and then
- Light candles.

NOTE If a *man* accepts/starts *Shabbat* when he lights *Shabbat* candles, he should cover his eyes and say the blessing AFTER lighting, as women do. Otherwise, he does not need to cover his eyes when saying the blessing.

Shabbat: Candles: Lighting with Wrong Blessing

If you said the blessing for <u>Jewish festival</u> candles instead of for <u>Shabbat</u> candles:

• Women may not correct themselves, but

• Men may say the correct blessing and light the candles.

NOTE If the *man* has already lit the candles before realizing that he had said the incorrect blessing, he should:

- Extinguish the candles,
- Say the correct blessing, and then
- Light again (assuming he has not yet started *Shabbat* and that it is not yet sunset).

SHABBAT: CANDLES: HOW LONG MUST BURN

How Long Must Shabbat Candles Burn

Shabbat candles must burn at least until dark and you have also eaten the bread of ha'motzi.

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