

Sabbath Gift

Scripture: Hebrews 4:1-13

Date: March 18, 2021

Message: *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.*

Hebrews 4:9-10

Sabbath is a gift from God...a gift of love. Remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy is our gift to God. Finding a time each week to do this is often difficult. The "busy-ness" of life demands our time and energy and we often neglect to remember the Sabbath. Rest. Cease from labor. That is easier said than done, but once, several years ago, I had the opportunity to experience this gift.

I had the honor of playing Golde in a community theatre production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. In one very moving scene, Golde lights two candles and offers a blessing, as the family gathers to observe the Sabbath. In preparation for my role, and especially this scene, I was invited to the home of our local rabbi to experience Sabbath, a very traditional weekly observance beginning at sunset on Friday. The rabbi, his wife, and their young daughter were also part of the *Fiddler on the Roof* ensemble and remain my dear friends.

It was an evening I will never forget and a truly holy experience for me during each performance, as I lit two candles and extended my hands over them, drawing inward circles, bringing the light into myself. With closed eyes, a blessing was offered, and then the beautiful "Sabbath Prayer" was sung by Golde and her husband Tevye. The family joins in, asking for God's protection, strength, and blessings...to grant them long lives and to favor them with happiness and peace.

What a beautiful and meaningful way to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. This is a tradition that has been handed down through the centuries to many generations. It is a gift from God. He loves us and desires that we experience Sabbath. Rest. Cease from labor.

I encourage you to find a time to rest and cease your labor. Light candles, if you wish, and thank God for the many blessings he has given you. Ask for all that you desire. Pray for your family, others, and any needs. Open your heart and speak to God. Happy Sabbath!

Prayer: *"May the Lord protect and defend you. May God bless you and grant you long lives. Favor them, Oh Lord, with happiness and peace. Oh, hear our Sabbath prayer. Amen."*

(Excerpts from "Sabbath Prayer" - *Fiddler on the Roof*)

Jennifer Hinerman Plyburn
South Parkersburg United Methodist Church
Little Kanawha District
jenplyburn@hotmail.com

Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry, VP United Methodist Women, Choir,
LKD Ministry Spouses and WV Annual Conference Ministry Spouses,
WV Annual Conference Clergy Support Team, Wife of Rev. Jim Plyburn