

Seudat Havra'ah

It is Jewish custom that Shiva begins with a traditional meal for the mourners upon their return from the cemetery called seudat havra'ah or "the meal of consolation". In some communities, this is provided by close friends and family members, especially in areas where there are restaurants, delis or caterers familiar with this practice. If your friends and/or family offer their support in this way, please ask them to contact the Bereavement Chair directly. The seudat havra'ah is traditionally a simple dairy meal. Hard boiled eggs, which are round, are served, because they are symbolic of the cyclical nature of life, and the immortality of the soul. In offering these to the mourners, the intention is to affirm that even in the face of death, life continues. In some communities, lentils are served for this same purpose.

The Sisterhood of Congregation Shaarai Shomayim, through our Bereavement Committee, offers our services to provide the seudat havra'ah for you and your family during this very difficult time in your life. Should you request our help, we will take care of everything for you, including setup and cleanup. Our menu includes:

Tuna salad	Nova lox (optional)	Vegetable tray
Egg Salad	Herring in cream sauce	Fresh fruit tray
Hard boiled eggs	Cream cheese	Cakes and cookies
Whitefish salad (when available)	Bagels and rye bread	Soft drinks
	Dairy kugels	Coffee and Tea

What can you expect?

- You will receive a phone call from the Bereavement Chair, who will ask you several questions:
 - How many people do you expect to come back to the house?
 - Do you want us to serve lox?
 - Do you have any pets?
 - Do you have a kosher home? The food we provide will be kosher-style but not kosher.
 - How can we arrange for access to your home?
 - To the best of your knowledge, will there be other family members and friends who will be bringing food or helping with the meal?
- You will be asked to place a tablecloth on the main serving table and to leave out any serving utensils that we can use. We also ask that you provide the soft drinks and ice.
- Sisterhood will provide everything else including paper goods, coffee urn, the water pitcher and paper towels for the front door and all of the food.
- While much of the food is donated by our members, there are items that must be purchased. We will advise you of our actual costs within a week or two of the funeral. While it is not required, an additional donation to the Sisterhood is appreciated.

We understand that each family has its own customs and traditions. Our Sisterhood is very prepared to arrange your seudat havra'ah in whatever timeframe is called for and in accordance with this outline. When we provide the meal, all food served must comply with Temple policy, which prohibits serving pork products and shellfish, mixing meat and dairy, and serving bread products during Passover. Some families may decide that this menu is not keeping with your preferences. In these cases, we respectfully ask that family friends make arrangements for this meal for you.

We wish you healing and peace in this sad time in your lives.

The Bereavement Committee of
Temple Shaarai Shomayim Sisterhood