

An Explanation of the Friday Evening Service

Rabbi Jacob Adler

Temple Shalom of Northwest Arkansas

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In 1926, the author John Masfiled published a book with the odd title of *ODTAA*. He later explained that it stood for “One [Darn] Thing after Another.” Many people experience prayer services as just a random sequence of prayers—*ODTAA*. But the services do in fact have a structure and flow. If we can understand and experience the flow, our prayer experience is immeasurably enhanced. Here is a conversational version of the Friday evening prayers. I hope that this may enhance people’s experience of prayer.

Traditional services have more Kaddishes than indicated here, as do many Reform services (though fewer than in traditional services). The idea of Kaddish is, “We’ve completed one part of the prayers; now, on to the next.”

First part of Kabbalat Shabbat, pp. 128-137	The week is ending; Shabbat is coming
L’cha Dodi, pp. 138-39, and prayers on 140-145	Here Comes the Shabbat Queen!
Last verse of L’cha Dodi and following prayers, pp. 139-145.	She’s here!
Bar’chu, p. 146	It’s time to pray.
Ma’ariv Aravim, pp. 148-149	It’s getting dark.
Ahavat Olam, pp. 150-151	God loves us.
Sh’ma ,pp. 152-153	God is our One and Only
V’Ahavta, p. 154	We love God
Mi Chamocha, p. 158	God rescues us when we’re in trouble
Hashkivenu, pp. 160-161	God takes care of us while we sleep.
V’shamru, p. 162	We stand up for Shabbat. ¹
T’filah, p. 164	We each talk directly to God.

¹ In traditional prayer practice, *V’Shamru* is recited standing. In a Jewish court, witnesses must stand when they give testimony. *V’Shamru* is our testimony to the truth of Shabbat.

T'filah: Avot, p. 166	We are connected to God through our ancestors and teachers. ²
T'filah: Gevurot, p. 168	We are connected to God through our life ³
T'filah: Kedushah, p. 170	God is the model of holiness that we want to embody.
T'filah: Kedushat ha-Yom, p. 172	We thank God for the holiness of Shabbat
T'filah: R'tzeh, p. 174	God, please accept our prayers!
T'filah: Modim, p. 176	God, we thank You for all Your gifts to us.
T'filah: Shalom rav, p. 178	God, help us to bring peace in the world.
Mi she-Berach, p. 371	God, bring healing to those who need it.
Alenu, pp. 586--591	Thank you, God, for letting us know You.
Mourner's Kaddish, p. 598	We praise God even in our grief.
Adon Olam, p. 625	God is always with us.

² See Zalman Schechter, *The First Step*.

³ See Zalman Schechter, *The First Step*.