

ALTERNATIVE PRAYERS WHEN THERE IS NO MINYAN PRESENT AT SERVICES

Ideally, it would be wonderful to always have a minyan at services, since a minyan of ten individuals represents the traditional minimal standard that constitutes a viable Jewish community. Unfortunately, we sometimes can't meet the goal of ten folks. Here are some alternatives to use when a minyan is not present at specific places in the service. Thanks to Rabbi Leila Gal Berner for providing these.

ALTERNATIVES TO BARCHU

Here are some suggestions as to how A "BARCHU MOMENT" might be included in the service when there isn't a *minyan* present.

1. A Moment to Reflect on Community (A 'Barchu' Moment)

All in each:

the One in the many,

the I in the Thou.

Each completes the other:

day and night,

desert and sea,

fire and water,

earth and sky.

So simple, so subtle —

it escapes me time and again.

And yet for a moment I glimpse the thread

that weaves me with you,

for a moment I am not — We are all.

And then I bend the knee in silent wonder

and I cry and laugh and embrace the world.

— Rabbi Rami Shapiro

2. Thank God for a Small Shul — A *Barchu* Moment

Holy One, we are a small shul, *heimisch* and intimate.

We know our children's names, and we greet one another

With love and familiarity.

We are an extended family.

This one brings the *challah*, this one the grape juice.

This one sets out the *siddurim* and another

Puts the coffee pot up to warm.

When the weather is cold, we may not have a *minyan*,

But we carry within us a *minyan* of the heart — in the

Faces and souls of those who are here this evening/morning.

We come together each to sing, to chant, to study,

to learn Torah, to share with one another the

Beauty of Community, the

Beauty of our Jewish tradition and heritage.

We bless the Shabbos candles or we hold the

Torah scroll close — and with each blessing

We come closer to each other, and

To You.

Rabbi Leila Gal Berner

ALTERNATIVES TO THE ALEYNU

Aleynu is a visionary prayer, imagining a 'messianic' age, when the world is perfected — when there will be no more war, violence, poverty or injustice. As Jews and Reconstructionists, we believe that we are God's partners in bringing about such a time, so readings on social action and social justice work are appropriate here. Here are some suggestions as to how *ALEYNU* might be addressed when there is no *minyan* present.

1. In our *siddur*, on pages 126 "It us up to us. . ."
2. In our *siddur* p. 127 "And then. . This can also be sung as follows:

*And then, and then both men and women will be gentle.
And then, and then, both women and men will be strong,
And then all will be so varied rich and free, and
Everywhere will be called Eden once again.*

(repeated 2 or 3 times).

3. In our *siddur*, pp. 772 – "Social Action"

All of the above can be 'sealed' or ended with the last lines of the *Aleynu*:

***V'ne'emar v'haya Adonai l'melech al kol ha-aretz.
Ba yom-ha hu, ba-yom ha hu, yihiyeh Adonai echad,
U-sh'mo, u-sh'mo, u-sh'mo echad!***

*(And it is said: Adonai will reign upon all the earth,
On that day, God will be One and God's name will be One!).*

ALTERNATIVES TO THE MOURNER'S KADDISH

Here are some suggestions as to how individuals who are in mourning or who are commemorating a *yahrzeit* (anniversary of the death of a loved one) might honor the memory of someone they loved:

Page 638 of our *siddur* (prayer book): Prayer in Remembrance of a Male

Prayer in Remembrance of a Female

Page 641 – We Remember Them (if there is only one mourner, the pronoun can be recited with the singular "him" or "her")

The following poems might be recited:

1. *Birth is a Beginning* by Alvin I. Fine

Birth is a beginning
And death is a destination.
And life is a journey
From childhood to maturity
And youth to age;
From innocence to awareness
And ignorance to knowing;
From foolishness to discretion
 And then perhaps to wisdom;
From weakness to strength —
 And, often back again;
From health to sickness
 And back, we pray, to health again;
From offense to forgiveness,
From loneliness to love,
From joy to gratitude,
From pain to compassion,
And grief to understanding —
 From fear to faith;

From defeat to defeat to defeat —
Until, looking backward or ahead,
We see that victory lies
Not at some high place along the way,
But in having made the journey, stage by stage,
 A sacred pilgrimage.

Birth is a beginning
And death a destination
But life is a journey,
A sacred pilgrimage —
To life everlasting.

In reverence and in love, I/we honor the memory/ies of _____
(names)

2. *My Hereafter* by Juniata de Long

Do not come when I am dead
To sit beside a low green mound,
Or bring the first gay daffodils
Because I love them so,
For I shall not be there.
You cannot find me there.

I will look up at you from the eyes
of little children;
I will bend to meet you in the swaying boughs
Of bud-thrilled trees,
And caress you with the passionate sweep
Of storm-filled winds;

I will give you strength in your upward tread
Of everlasting hills;
I will cool your tired body in the flow
Of the limpid river;
I will warm your worker's hands through the glow
Of the winter fire;

I will soothe you into forgetfulness to the drop, drop, drop
Of the rain on the roof;
I will speak to you out of the rhymes
Of poetry's Masters;
I will dance with you in the lilt
Of the violin,
And make your heart leap with the bursting cadence
Of the organ;
I will flood your soul with the flaming radiance
Of the sunrise;
And bring you peace in the tender rose and gold
Of the after-sunset.

All these have made me happy;
They are a part of me.
And I shall become a part all of them.

In reverence and in love, I/we honor the memory/ies of _____
(names)

3. *We Remember* by Evelyn Mehlman

I/We turn my/our thoughts to yesterday. . . to a world that lives only in my/our memory.
As I/we recall the days gone by, I/we know the past is irretrievable.
Yet — through the gift of memory, I/we recapture treasured moments and images.

I/We are thankful for the happiness I/we knew with those no longer here, with whom I/we lived and laughed and loved.

I/We praise the Eternal wellspring of life who links yesterday to tomorrow. I/We affirm that despite all the tragedy bound up with living, it is still good to be alive.
I/We understand that there can be no love without loss, no joy without sorrow.
May I/we have the courage to accept the all of life — the love and the loss — the joy and the sorrow, as I/We remember you.

In reverence and in love, I/we honor the memory/ies of _____
(names)