

# **The Tallit, Kipah, and Other Worship Attire**

by  
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Welcome to Worship Shorts!

Today, I would like to talk about our attire – our garments. You will notice that there are basically two items of special clothing that are commonly found in a Messianic Jewish synagogue: the *tallit* and the *kipa*. Now the *tallit* is a garment that was initially created in order to enable people to fulfill Numbers 15:37-40, which, by the way, is part of the *Sh'ma* portion of the *Siddur*. Here, the children of Israel are commanded to tie fringes to the corners of their garments forever. There's supposed to be a thread of blue, and the fringes are to remind us to do all of the commandments of God.

But, in order that the congregant, who might come in from laboring in the outdoors, would not stand before the Lord without fringes, a separate garment was made that could be put on after arriving at the synagogue. Some observant Jews also wear a *tallit katan*, or little *tallit*, that is worn under the outer garments. This commandment is for Jews, and it is normally understood that non-Jews would not wear a *tallit*. But the practice varies in different synagogues, and at Ohev we have a policy concerning who should and who should not wear it. That policy also addresses the use of a *tallit* by women, which is also becoming a more common practice in many Jewish denominations.

At Ohev, if you are a Jewish male, you should probably wear a *tallit* based on the Scripture, but for everyone else, you are encouraged to discuss your practice with an Elder prior to wearing one. Now the wearing of a *kipa* by a man is a lot less clear. It is not a commandment of Scripture, but it is a common practice in most Jewish denominations. If you walk into a Conservative or Orthodox synagogue, you would be handed a *kipa* and expected to wear it whether you are Jewish or not. It is considered a sign of respect. At Ohev we have no policy on the wearing of *kipot*, except that men who are on the *bima* should wear one, and anyone who is wearing a *tallit* should also wear one. It's true that in many denominations women are starting to wear *kipot*, but it's usually preferred that they wear one that is of a more feminine design. On the *bima*, women who are handling or reading from the Torah are expected to cover their heads.

Now that's it for the *tallit* and the *kipa*, but there is one more thought. We encourage all participants in our services to dress in nice clothes and to dress modestly. If you don't own nice clothes, we aren't saying that you should stay home. If you don't own modest clothes, then maybe you SHOULD stay home. This is the time to appear before the Lord and before the people of God with a respectful appearance. Ignorance is excusable, but once you know, we encourage you to come dressed nicely, even in your finest attire, if you are able to do so.

And thank you for listening to Worship Shorts!