Additional Questions
for Congregational Leadership

1. “What ‘works’ for me may leave you uninspired, and vice versa. Some congregations respond to this diversity by offering a variety of minyanim on Shabbat morning, making sure to bring all congregants together periodically so as not to lose the sense of being part of a single community.” [p. 23]

   a. If your congregation offers different minyanim on Shabbat, what seems to “work” about each of them? If your community does not offer different minyanim on Shabbat, why not?
   b. What other types of services or tefillah experiences take place at your congregation outside of Shabbat and holidays? Are there additional times that you would like to see services or tefillah incorporated into the life of your congregation?
   c. When you have been in other communities, what has “worked” for you, in terms of tefillah and synagogue? Discuss how this could be incorporated into a service at your congregation with a partner.

2. “Recognize that Conservative Jews do not come to synagogue for the sole purpose of encounter with God. . . . such encounter is often regarded as a “bonus”—neither expected nor unwelcome—that enriches an experience built on several other building blocks.” [p. 23]

   a. What are the other “building blocks” of the services experience, as described by Chancellor Eisen in this paragraph, and would you add anything to this list?
   b. Which of these “building blocks” do you think are most important in motivating service attendance at your congregation? What other motivating factors do people have for attending your congregation?
   c. How could you spread the word about the various attractions of attending services at your congregation?
3. “[P]rayer does not come easily to modern men and women . . . Study of the siddur helps to bridge the gap.” [p.24]

   a. What venues for study of prayers or of the siddur are offered in your community? If you have participated in these opportunities, how have they affected your experience of prayer?
   b. What different forms could study of prayer and liturgy take? What kind of study might improve your experience at services?

4. “The sanctuary space must be suited to uniting its worshippers in song—not too large for intimacy, not cold or off-putting, well-designed acoustically.” [p. 25]

   a. How does the sanctuary of your community compare to the ideal described by Chancellor Eisen?
   b. What makes a sanctuary “too large for intimacy” and/or “cold or off-putting” in your experience?
   c. Many main sanctuaries seat a lot more people than usually attend services. Suggest some practical strategies that can help a community counteract this mismatch?