

Additional Questions for Congregational Leadership

- A. “Only strong face-to-face community has the power to persuade Jews to remain Jews and to sustain the conviction that our beliefs and values really matter to the world.”
1. In your experience/opinion, what are the Jewish values that your community embodies? List at least five. Are they all positive? What are the values that you wish your community would embody?
 2. Does your community have a mission statement? If so, do you know what it is?
 3. Does your community have a vision statement? If so, do you know what it is?
 4. Can you list five Jewish beliefs and values that “really matter to the world”? Does your community help you live those values? What do you wish your community offered in this regard?
- B. “Conservative communities . . . take maximum advantage of the rich variety of backgrounds, interests, talents, and perspectives represented in their membership. Community is enriched when women share positions of leadership with men and when all are encouraged to bring their diverse skills and voices to the learning and practice of Torah.”
1. How can your community foster an atmosphere where, beyond just accepting the idiosyncrasies of some individuals, their energy and potential are harnessed to benefit communal life?
 2. What are some other groups—besides women—to whom opportunities for communal leadership and engagement can be offered? How can your community foster a sense of investment in the community in new members and younger members?
 3. How can your community take maximum advantage of your energy, gifts, and talents?

Supplementary Materials for “Community”

- C. “Diversity of this sort can sometimes strain communities to the breaking point—which makes it all the more important that the bonds of connection linking them are reinforced in activities and commitments that all share. When Conservative communities find a way to elicit and integrate the varied talent in their midst, those communities grow stronger as a result. The diversity helps everyone to grow.”
1. How can the leadership of your community help foster the bonds of connection in order to survive and thrive despite the inherent tension that exists in a diverse community?
 2. In your opinion, what are the pitfalls of being a leader of a community?
 3. What types of actions do leaders need to avoid taking to maintain the integrity of their communities?
- D. Chancellor Eisen makes reference to personal experience of the tensions that diversity in a community can bring: “Other memories too are vivid . . . heated discussions over Jewish belief or practice that ended without lasting damage to communal or personal bonds because relationships that had been built up over years were strong enough to weather argument.”
1. Has this ever happened to you? Did you feel that personal or communal bonds were strong enough to weather a particular argument?
 2. What are strategies one can use and/or actions one can take to ensure that a relationship stands even after an argument?
 3. If what Chancellor Eisen describes has never happened to you, what are some strategies you could use or have used to make your point without allowing the discussion to turn into a heated argument?