

## Supplementary Materials for “*Tefillah* and Synagogue”

### Discussion Questions

1. “I have also been part of prayer communities that, at their best, bring those who participate to heights and depths otherwise unattainable.” [p. 23]
  - a. What “works” for you, personally, in terms of *tefillah* and synagogue? At what points do you find this in a service you attend in your congregation?
  - b. At what particular services—or parts of services—in your community are the largest proportion of those who attend highly invested and engaged? Why do you think this is? Are these qualities transferable to other services?
  
2. “A synagogue’s success as a house of prayer correlates directly with its standing as a house of assembly, a community of shared responsibility, celebration, and meaning.” [p. 24]
  - a. How can a stronger sense of community improve participants’ experience of *tefillah* according to Chancellor Eisen? Do you agree or disagree, and why?
  - b. What, in your opinion, are the markers of “success as a house of prayer”?
  
3. “Music, words, and silence, working together, can enable Jews for whom belief in God is difficult or fleeting to put aside their doubts for a moment, and pray.” [p. 25]
  - a. Are there aspects of communal *tefillah* that enable you to “put aside [your] doubts for a moment, and pray”? If so, what are they?
  - b. Do you experience obstacles to genuine prayer in communal services? If so, what are they, and how might they be overcome?