

A Good Day For the Rabbi (December 2008)

Of all the things I do as a rabbi, going to meetings is not among my favorites. It's not that I don't think they are worth having. On the contrary, so much of what we do would not be possible without the visioning and planning that takes place at meetings. But even more, to watch you—the members of our community, the ones who freely volunteer—give of your time and energy for the sake of others, that is among the most rewarding things I experience as a rabbi. This was particularly true on Sunday morning, November 23.

After the close of our Religious School's new Sunday morning minyan (although calling a 30-minute service of well over 200 people a "minyan" is, to be sure, an understatement), I had on my schedule two back-to-back meetings—one at 10 and the other at 11 a.m. By the time they had ended, as I was walking out to my car, I smiled. Not because they were over, but because of what had been started in those meetings.

The eleven o'clock gathering was the second of the newly reconstituted Tikkun Olam committee. About twenty people sat around a table and strategized how we might best foster opportunities for the performance of mitzvot of justice. Discussions ranged from providing assistance to women and children in war-ravaged corners of our world, to allowing members to expand their understanding of kashrut by including considerations of how workers and animals are treated, to how we might make a difference to those who have lost homes in New Orleans.

Then, at twelve o'clock, I moved into another room to join a conversation on how to make our increasingly popular Wake-Up Shabbat program even more accessible and enjoyable. We explored how to make the service truly multi-generational, how we might transform these unique Shabbat morning worship experiences into our dream of what a real community can become.

Trust me when I say that these are the days of which rabbis dream. But even better was the way in which I saw the agendas of these two committees intersect. And so will you, should you choose to join us for our next Wake-Up Shabbat.

On January 10—Shabbat Vayechi—a day whereon we will read of how Jacob helped to bridge the generations as he blessed his grandsons Menasheh and Efrayim, our morning study and

Shabbat lunch will be devoted to the varied and rich opportunities that await you to help repair the world. Come to learn what Tikkun Olam really means, to deepen your understanding of our sacred pursuit of justice. Then join with the children and grandparents of our congregation to celebrate the joy and inspiration that is Shabbat morning worship. And afterward, of course, there will be food. There's always food. But instead of table decorations, on this Saturday you will find brochures and fact sheets that you can take home, all filled with suggestions and ideas to help enrich your lives and—of course—the lives of those you will touch.

I have no doubt it will be a terrific day. You should put it on your calendar. But for me, as I walked out into the cold of that November afternoon, I felt only the warmth of satisfaction of having just seen how the means can be just as rewarding as the ends they are designed to produce. Maybe even moreso.

I'm still not so hot on meetings, but I'm grateful for the people who make them happen. So, I suggest, should you.