

## Friday Night Service Principles

As Congregation Beth Hatikvah has grown, one of the blessings has been the expansion in the number of activities that take place in our community and in our building. Because we strive to make Shabbat a central event in our community's life, many of those activities are scheduled as part of Shabbat celebrations.

For the last few months, our B'nai Mitzvah, Facilities, Religious School and Spiritual Life Committees have been meeting – separately and together – to develop some principles to follow when our plethora of Shabbat plans either creates conflicts in the use of our space or calls for setting some priorities on the use of our Shabbat time.

As always, we strived to base these principles on our congregation's core values, and not simply on pragmatics. The logic is that one person's obvious, practical solution may not take the next person's needs into account. By basing principles on values, we have a framework for balancing individual and communal needs. Fortunately, we think that these principles, agreed on by our three committees working with Rabbi Amy, will also be eminently practical.

In adopting these principles, we acknowledge that they represent a shift in emphasis, putting a higher priority – when scheduling requires a choice – on meeting the needs of larger groups (the congregation in general, or the Religious School) than on meeting the needs of an individual B'nai Mitzvah family. We also acknowledge a responsibility to inform and educate families about the implications of these principles for their *simchah* plans. Finally, we accept the responsibility to do the sort of thoughtful advance planning that will avoid scheduling conflicts.

1. The Friday night service is primarily a community experience, for the whole congregation. We include our B'nai Mitzvah in the Friday service, but in planning the service the community's needs are paramount.
2. There is a set Friday evening service schedule that may only be modified when absolutely necessary and approved by the Spiritual Life Committee. B'nai Mitzvah families should not expect to be able to obtain adjustments to the schedule.
3. There is a set list of prayers that are led by each B'nai Mitzvah. In the case of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah falling on a Music Shabbat, the assumption will be that the leading of prayers that are also recited on Saturday will be shifted from the child to the CBH Singers, at the discretion of the Rabbi. Those prayers and songs that are not also recited on Saturday may be led by the CBH Singers instead of the child. Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Rabbi, in consultation with the family.
4. The norm for all B'nai Mitzvah is that there is no expectation for families to select English readings for inclusion in the Friday night service. Our preference is that no

additional English readings be added to any Friday night service; families should discuss any exceptions with the Rabbi.

5. Where possible, we will avoid scheduling a Religious School class dinners on an evening when a B'nai Mitzvah family has arranged to use our building for a dinner before services. To make scheduling easier, we will ask families to indicate their plans at the time they select their child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah date.
6. Set-up for a B'nai Mitzvah luncheon can take place after services on Friday night if there has been a Religious School class dinner in the social hall earlier in the evening. The teen lounge can be used as a staging area, but must be cleared on Friday night if there is school on Saturday morning.
7. If a Religious School class Shabbat coincides with a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the Oneg Shabbat is the responsibility of the class. However, the family should be offered the opportunity to participate in the Oneg to the extent it desires.