

Not Too Busy for YOU!

One of the fun things about being a rabbi is how varied the tasks are. Not only do I get to be with you in your griefs and in your simchas, not only do I get to teach Torah, not only do I get to lead services, but I get some very quirky opportunities as well, such as my monthly column in the *Register Guard*, and funny speaking opportunities, ranging in recent months from the Cities of Kindness initiative to the local Kiwanis club meeting.

I do quite enjoy teaching about Judaism and representing the Jewish community to varied audiences, but I want be clear: My first priority is you. You, collectively, the community, and you, individually, the TBI member reading this.

I write this because lately, in several meetings I've had with members about personal spiritual challenges, they have begun or ended the meeting by apologizing for taking my time, saying they know I am "so busy with so much important work," and "shouldn't have to spend time taking care of one person." This concerns me; nothing is more important to me than being present with members who need my attention. And if I'm hearing this from people scheduling meetings it makes me wonder how many of you might feel like you could use some attention or a conversation to work things through but worry about asking for it because you're worried about wasting my time.

There is no contest that if you need rabbinic attention, that is more important to me than any speaking engagement anywhere in Eugene. So if you need to talk; whether because you are grieving the death of a loved one and everyone expects you to have moved on, you seek spiritual resources for facing illness or aging, you are feeling anxious about the state of the world, you need to figure out how Talmud Torah is working for your family, or any other issues; I want you to know that those conversations are my highest priority. Please do not worry about bugging the rabbi. This is by far the most important part of my job.