

FACE TO FACE WITH FACEBOOK

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Congregation Beth Emeth

The explosion in “social networking” mechanisms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and others, is changing the social landscape and group dynamics will never be the same. What is the value of the word “friend” when it is not uncommon to have hundreds or even thousands of them on one social networking site? How can we create a sense of community when we access our “friends” through our computers instead of face to face? What will be the shared experiences that link us together if the majority of our experiences are virtual? These are vexing questions, but most puzzling of all to me is the question, “How does someone who is a member of the “boomer” generation keep up with all the latest trends and technologies?” Having recently been initiated into the mysteries of Facebook, I am discovering how absolutely wonderful it is to reconnect with people whom I was sure I would never see or hear from again. In some cases, though, I am reminded why I never wanted to see or hear from some of them again! Facebook has the potential to expand our social horizons but also the potential to constrict them. We can reconnect to old friends, connect to their friends and receive countless suggestions to “friend” others, but we also can join groups that connect us only with others who already share our interests. Facebook and the other networks attempt to mimic the way communities are created, but I wonder if there truly can be a sense of community “on line.” If someone in your on line community is sick you can send virtual chicken soup but it’s not going to help make them better the way a real, steaming bowl of soup delivered to their home will. Communities take on a life of their own as the lives of the members become interconnected and as they share good times and bad together, not just as postings on a Facebook “wall” or fleeting status updates on a home page. The potential is there, though, and we are learning how to harness the technology to truly build real communities. In “*The Ethics of Our Ancestors*”, a section of the Talmud, Joshua son of Perachia seems to foretell the coming of Facebook when he says, “Get yourself a friend...” It was good advice then and it’s good advice now.

Please join us for an “Open House” on Sunday morning June 14, 9:30-11:30 to learn more about Congregation Beth Emeth.

Have a question for Rabbi Skiddell or an issue you would like to have discussed?

Please be in touch at rabbi@rcbe.org or look for us on Facebook!

Friday Evening Services at Congregation Beth Emeth, located at 36 Franklin Ave. in Hewlett, begin at 8:00 PM. Saturday morning services at 9:30 AM

For more information call 374-9220, come by the synagogue office or go to our updated website: www.rcbe.org