

Havurah Shalom

Portland's Reconstructionist Community

www.havurahshalom.org

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Is Reconstructionist Judaism for You?

Reconstructionist Judaism is an approach to Jewish life which integrates a deep respect for traditional Judaism with the insights and ideas of contemporary social, intellectual and spiritual life.

Communities

Reconstructionist communities are characterized by their respect for such core values as democratic process, pluralism and accessibility. They create participatory, inclusive egalitarian communities committed to exploring Jewish life with dedication, warmth and enthusiasm.

Patterns of Practice

Reconstructionist Judaism is respectful of traditional Jewish observances but is also open to interpretation and new forms of religious expression. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan(1881-1983), the founder of Reconstructionism, envisioned a form of Judaism that would find joy and meaning in its content.

Unlike Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, Reconstructionism does not view inherited Jewish law (halacha) as binding, but we continue to turn to Jewish law for guidance. Where Reform Judaism emphasizes individual autonomy, Reconstructionism emphasizes the importance of religious community in shaping individual patterns of observance. We find meaning in rediscovering the richness of traditional ritual and creating new observances, which respond to our contemporary communal and personal cycles.

Spiritual Seeking

Reconstructionists hold diverse ideas about God, but we share an emphasis on Godliness: those hopes, beliefs and values within us that impel us to work for a better world, give us strength and solace in times of need, challenge us to grow, and deepen our joy in moments of celebration.

Ethics and Values

Reconstructionist communities emphasize acts of social justice alongside prayer and study as an essential part of their spiritual practice. Reconstructionist Judaism affirms that religion can and must be a powerful force for promoting communal discussion about ethics and values and their application to our daily lives.

For further information on Reconstructionism see the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF) website: www.jrf.org