



## *Emotional Health &* **CONGREGATIONS**

**EMOTIONAL HEALTH TURNS** on how well we manage stress and understand our feelings so we can care for ourselves well. Does your congregation add to stress or help participants in the faith community live in emotionally healthy ways? Here are pitfalls and blessings of congregational life when it comes to stress.

### **A CHURCH**

**INCREASES** stress when it

- expects over-volunteerism
- avoids undercurrents of conflict
- asks for money repeatedly
- loses sight of relationships
- promotes perfectionism and legalism
- schedules too many meetings



### **A CHURCH**

**DECREASES** stress when it

- provides healthy social contact
- helps people deepen their spiritual lives
- arranges positive educational and social programs
- offers prayer and meditation as avenues of stress relief
- provides faith framework for understanding difficult life events
- promotes altruism

**KNOWING THESE TWO SIDES** of the coin exist for faith communities, it is imperative to focus on nurturing the stress-relieving aspects of spiritual life and diminishing the stress additives that can occur. Simply recognizing this paradox exists is the first step in growing the positive influence of faith on stress.