THE GOOD ENOUGH RABBI

(by Rabbi Ellen Lewis, based on the Perfect Rabbi)

The Good enough Rabbi preaches when she has something to say, tells a story when she doesn't, sometimes writes sermons on Friday afternoons and occasionally digs into her files and reuses old sermons. After all, if they don't sound familiar when she rereads them, what are the chances that a congregant would remember? She talks about sin in a way which her congregants can hear and which makes them feel understood and motivated. She works however many hours she can work productively without feeling depleted, understanding that 24 hours a day would still not be enough. She never lets anyone know she can fix the copy machine. She earns a salary that reflects her value to herself and to the congregation, dresses professionally, and has a synagogue fund out of which she can buy books or give tzedakah. If the congregation won't hire her because her car is a pit, they don't deserve her. When told that she doesn't look old enough/tall enough/distinguished enough/thin enough/male enough/bearded enough/good enough to be a rabbi she says politely, "This is what a rabbi looks like." She knows her strengths and weaknesses in working with different groups in the congregation and doesn't teach 7th graders unless she can love them. She can be serious but refuses to be serious all the time; she laughs or smiles comfortably on and off the pulpit. She is available in her office at times she chooses and never explains why she is not there. She does not use ESP to guess when people are in the hospital but only visits the hospitalized when she is told someone is there. She knows the only people to whom she is truly indispensable are her family. The Good Enough Rabbi takes care of her own needs and so models that others should take care of themselves, too. It is because she only tries to be good enough that makes her the perfect rabbi.

(The above was inspired by the anonymous text below)
THE PERFECT RABBI

1. The results of a computerized survey indicate the perfect Rabbi preaches exactly fifteen minutes. **2.** He condemns sin but never upsets anyone. **3.** He works from 8:00 a.m. until midnight and is also a janitor. **4.** He makes $50 a week, wears good clothes, buys good books, drives a good car, and gives about $50 weekly to the poor. **5.** He is 28 years old and has preached 30 years. **6.** He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all of his time with senior citizens. **7.** The perfect rabbi smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. **8.** He makes 15 calls daily on congregational families, shut-ins and the hospitalized and is always in his office when needed. **9.** He is available to the congregation 24 hours a day and is a role model for how to spend time with your family. **10.** If your rabbi does not measure up, simply send this letter to six other synagogues that are tired of their rabbi, too. **11.** Then bundle up your rabbi and send him to the synagogue on the top of the list. **12.** In one week, you will receive 1643 rabbis and one of them will be perfect. **13.** Have faith in this procedure. **14.** One congregation broke the chain and got its old rabbi back.