

Volume 5 of the Eldership and Oversight handbook series

Quality and depth of worship and ministry



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**Volume 5 of the
Eldership and Oversight
handbook series**

May 2013

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Preface

Quaker Life is pleased to present a new printing of *Quality and depth of worship and ministry*. No changes have been made to the text apart from a revision of section 15, the resources list, although it is relevant to note that the Committee on Eldership and Oversight has been laid down. The work it undertook continues to be the responsibility of Quaker Life.

Michael S. Booth, May 2013

1. Introduction

This book is a distillation of experience and reflection offered to the Committee on Eldership & Oversight by meetings around the country in the spring of 1998. Their input formed the basis of the gathering for those responsible for eldership and oversight at Yearly Meeting that year. The materials collected form a volume in the series known as the handbook of good practice in eldership and oversight. The Committee on Eldership & Oversight wishes to thank all those who contributed to this work.

The text is aimed primarily at those responsible for eldership, as the right holding of meeting for worship is among the duties of eldership listed in *Quaker faith & practice* chapter 12.12.* Those responsible for oversight are not forgotten, as the quality of worship and the quality of our community are mutually dependent. Any Friend wishing to reflect on the experience of worship may find this book useful.

As a starting point, it might be fruitful for those using this book to spend some time reflecting on what they understand by ‘worship’ and ‘ministry’, and how their ‘quality’ and ‘depth’ might be assessed. This could take the form of a worship-sharing session, using relevant writings from *Quaker faith & practice* (*Qf&p*). Chapter 2, approaches to God – worship and prayer, is particularly appropriate as are a number of the *Advices & queries*, chapter 1 of *Qf&p*, also published separately. Such discussion may reveal how each of us recognises a gathered meeting or ministry that is Spirit-led, leading on to consideration of how these experiences might be shared and strengthened. It is here that the material in this book may be of use: these queries, designed to be taken a few at a time, are one way in which individuals and meetings can explore how worship and ministry may be supported and sustained.

Most members of the Religious Society of Friends today would cite the meeting for worship as central to their spiritual life. It is important that Friends should talk to each other about this core activity, feeling able to share their understanding of listening or waiting on God in meeting for worship and in their daily lives. It is hoped that this book will bring into the open questions which we need to address together.

* See resources list, page 37



2. Worship

2a. What is worship?

What do you call that which we are seeking to worship?

The ground of our being,
the ultimate reality,
the meaning,
the father,
the mother,
the everlasting arms,
the Spirit,
God...

In what ways does our communal worship nourish and strengthen you?

In what ways does it illuminate the true self in the depths of our being?

In what ways does it sustain our service to each other?

In what ways does the spirit of worship underpin all you do?

In what ways do you enrich your spiritual life?

There is love at the heart of worship:

Is this your experience?

How do you share it?



2b. Preparation for meeting for worship

Do you worship only at particular times and places?

Do you prepare yourself specifically for meeting for worship? For example:

- in regular times of quiet withdrawal, reading, prayer or journal writing,
- in the company of others, in shared meditation or reflection,
- in music, poetry, painting, sculpture,
- in the performing arts and sport,
- in the variety and richness of our lives and relationships,
- in other ways.

Is the emphasis different from the rest of the week?

Are you ready both to give and to receive inspiration?

Are you able to have even a short time on your own in the period before meeting for worship?

3. The meeting for worship

What qualities are you seeking in a meeting for worship?

What criteria do you use to measure these qualities?

What do you understand by the 'right holding' of meeting for worship?

3a. The meeting room

Is your meeting room, whether owned or rented, an attractive place to be in?

How well is your meeting room prepared for the meeting for worship?

- Who makes sure of adequate heating and ventilation?
- Who makes sure that the seating is comfortable?
- Who arranges the seating for a feeling of community and communication?
- Who checks the equipment for members with special needs?
- Who checks the books for the central table?
- Who provides flowers for the central table?



3b. The welcome

How does your meeting test whether visitors feel welcome at the meeting house (or room)?

And whether they are met with warmth and sensitivity?



3c. Punctuality and timing

How important is punctuality? To you? To the group?

Do you observe the times designated unless prevented by unavoidable reasons?

Are you aware that worship begins as soon as the first Friends are seated?

How do you recognise that a Friend is worshipping?

What considerations govern the drawing to a close of meeting for worship?



3d. Gathering in quiet

Given that no space is free of disturbance from noise, have you tried to reduce any disruption to the meeting for worship?

Can you consider noise and other physical problems as a challenge?

Do the arrangements for children to join or leave the meeting disturb you?

How do you deal with this?



3e. Becoming centred

What does the phrase 'centering down' mean to you?

Do you try to find a way to sit that allows you to be alert and relaxed?

Do you accept that we bring with us to meeting our lives and concerns?

How do you try to become still and focused?

Are you helped by considering some of the following?

- seeking an awareness of Jesus or the Spirit of God in the midst;
- remembering faithful Friends from the past;
- focusing on the Friends present and feeling thankfulness for being with them;
- praying for those personally known who are in need of such prayers;
- trying to hold all in the light of the divine presence;
- some other way – please share this with others.

Are you helped by focusing your individual concentration?

- using a discipline of deep breathing;
- using a repeated phrase as a mantra or recalling a prayer;
- concentrating on a single word such as 'love', 'peace', 'shalom';
- using a visual image like still waters or hills as used in the Psalms;
- hearing readings from *Advices and queries* and *Quaker faith & practice*;
- recalling passages from meditations, hymns or liturgies;
- some other way – please share.

What might sometimes make it hard for you to focus on the spiritual?

- powerful thoughts that refuse to go away;
- worries that surface about your life and relationships;
- noises that distract you within and beyond the building.

How do you cope with these? Can you accept them and let them go?

If these were persistent problems and concerned you, would you be able to share them and find help in your meeting?



3f. The gathered meeting

What do you understand by a 'gathered meeting'?

Do you agree that silence is central to the meeting for worship?

Are you aware of entering into a stillness of the Spirit for our corporate worship?

Do you agree that Quaker meeting for worship is a communal act, an act of communion, uniting us to each other in this Spirit?

Are you aware of this unity, which may be apparent at any time during the meeting?

Are you aware that the gatheredness may be felt by only a few worshippers, for longer or shorter times?

Do you try to be faithful and receptive as we wait together for this experience?

Can you recognise a meeting that is truly gathered – when we are one within a sustained stillness – a 'tranquil abiding'?

Do you trust in the work of the Spirit to bring about a gathered meeting?

Have you experienced silence that can be nourishing and that which is lifeless?

When we find no nourishment, is it the Spirit which is absent, or our attention which is lacking?

4. Ministry

4a. What is ministry?

In what ways do we minister to one another outside the meeting for worship?

What do you understand by ministry within the meeting for worship?

Do you recognise that ministry can be given in silence as well as through the spoken word?

How is vocal ministry linked to the silence and the gatheredness of the meeting?

How do you test that words coming to you in the silence carry a message that has to be shared with the whole meeting?

When you feel the call to speak, are you a faithful channel through which the message can be communicated?

Do you try to ignore the call?

Do you wait to know if the call is truly Spirit-led?

If you feel nervous and quake as you rise, is this because of self-consciousness or the humility of a servant?

Are you willing to be used in spite of feelings of inadequacy?

Have you found that effective ministry comes from the heart and is rooted in experience?

Do you try to formulate your words before speaking?

Do you trust the Spirit to work through you?

When spoken ministry has risen out of the silence, do you allow the silence to close over it?

Is there time before the next spoken ministry for it to be received and absorbed?

How do you recognise spoken ministry that is an integral part of the whole of the meeting for worship?

If not, is such ministry not valid, or do your expectations of meeting for worship need to be reviewed?



4b. Prayer

What do you understand by prayer? Is it ministry, addressed to a power beyond ourselves?

Do you practise prayer in your personal spiritual life?

Do the concepts of reverence, praise, penitence, thankfulness, intercession and petition find a place in your experience of worship?

If so, are you open to the call to express them in words in order to share them with other worshippers?

Do you recognise and value prayer as an expression of worship within a meeting for worship?

Does prayer offered on behalf of the whole meeting cause some present to feel uncomfortable?



4c. Ministry that did not speak to me

Can you accept that spoken ministry which appears to say nothing to you may be what was needed by another?

Are you able to let such ministry flow over you?

Have you experienced occasions when the effect of spoken ministry has been changed by what followed?



4d. Was that really ministry?

Do you agree that some things are usually not appropriate in spoken ministry?

Might these include:

- a contribution more appropriate to a debate or discussion than to worship;
- a prepared talk;
- speaking at the same time and on the same theme each week;
- speaking twice in the same meeting, perhaps as a personal reaction to earlier ministry?



4e. Trust the working of the Spirit

Do you accept the discipline of checking whether your message is Spirit-led?

And the responsibility of deciding whether your ministry is valid?

Are you able to trust that a message meant for the meeting will come through someone else, if not through yourself?

Have you heard your thoughts expressed by someone else in a meeting for worship?

Are you aware of the call to be faithful and attentive, whether listening or speaking?

Are you aware of the Spirit moving in areas beyond words and deeper than the intellect?

Have you experienced profound ministry arising from intense human experience, highs and lows, doubts and certainties?

Do you wait for the illumination of the inward light to show you the seeds of ministry?

Do you remember to allow the silence to absorb and weave the ministry into the whole?

Have you ever felt that your message might be unacceptable to the meeting?

Can true ministry be too challenging, too personal, too Christian?



4f. Other forms of ministry

Do you accept that ministry need not be limited to the spoken word?

Has music ever touched in you depths of the spirit which are beyond spoken words?

Do you see ministry as an important means of strengthening our communion in worship?



4g. Responding to ministry

Should ministry ever be challenged during the meeting for worship?

Should we (after meeting) thank a Friend whose ministry has been helpful?

If other comments are needed, are they made in a tender and loving spirit?

How does your meeting deal with a prolonged or inappropriate contribution?

How in practice do we share the responsibility for meeting for worship and its vocal ministry?

Should 'eldering' be the responsibility of named Friends?

How does your meeting deal with disagreements generated by problem ministry?

4h. Sharing the thoughts that are not ministry

Does your meeting provide opportunities for Friends to share those thoughts and experiences which are not appropriate for spoken ministry in the context of worship?

Might these include

- seeking clarification or amplification of what has been said,
- expressing a deeply held concern, or a call to action,
- responding to events reported as national or world news,
- hoping for light to be shed on some current personal problem,
- bursting with some joyful news?

Does your meeting offer regular or occasional discussion groups, 'meeting after meeting' or worship-sharing?



5. Children and young people in meeting

5a. Children in meeting

How well are the children integrated into the life of your meeting?

How do you listen to them and learn from them?

Do you recognise their insights and value them?

Do you welcome their honesty and vision?

Do you accept their liveliness and energy?

In what ways do they challenge you to renew your commitment to worship and action?

Do you assume that the children will not appreciate the same silence their parents and adult friends share and cherish?

Do you assume they will not recognise when ministry has been specifically prepared for them?



5b. Young people in meeting

How well are the young people integrated into the life of your meeting?

How do you listen to them and learn from them?

Do you recognise their insights and value them?

Do you welcome their honesty and vision?

Do you accept their need to explore and experiment?

In what ways do they challenge you to renew your commitment to worship and action?

In what ways are the young people enabled to take part in the running of the meeting?



5c. Arrangements for children and young people in meeting

What considerations have influenced your decision about when children are present in the meeting?

Whose needs are being served?

Are you aware of those Friends who feel that the children's presence disturbs their worship and how do you respond?

Are you sensitive to those who look forward to the children coming into meeting?

How do you share the sense that we are all of great worth to each other and to God, regardless of age?



5d. Supporting the provisions for children and young people in meeting

Do you hold in your prayers with gratitude and humility those Friends who carry the major responsibility for watching over the spiritual nurture and growth of our children and young people?

How often are these Friends the children's or young people's own parents?

Do you consider from time to time what arrangements are made and what resources are available for the children and young people?

Do you ask whether you might be called to contribute to this ministry for a time?



6. All-age worship

Does your meeting feel to you to be an inclusive (all-age) worshipping community?

Is special all-age worship necessary? If so, for whom?

Does your meeting offer experimental worship involving a degree of programming?

If not, has it considered doing so?

Is this offered at the same time as meeting for worship, at a separate time, or does it replace the traditional meeting for worship?

Do you make provision for those who cannot feel at ease with experimental worship?

Do you welcome the opportunity to use ways into worship which are not appropriate in the traditional form of meeting for worship?

Are you aware of the occasions for such experimental worship in a great variety of Quaker gatherings?

7. Closing the meeting for worship

Who brings the meeting for worship to a close in your meeting?

How is this done?

Are you aware that their concern is not only for the time, but for the state of gatheredness of the meeting as a whole?

If this were your responsibility, would you consider

- the timing of the last piece of ministry?;
- the mood of the children, if any are present?;
- the feeling engendered by the meeting as a whole, ministry and silence?

Does the timing of the closure seem generally to be appropriate to you?



8. The notices

Does your meeting consider occasionally how and when to present the notices effectively?

Who presents the notices? Need it always be the clerk, or the same person?

Are the notices tediously long, or do they indicate a vital and busy group?

Are you worried by the number of events and issues which are presented to you?

Can you avoid guilt and concentrate on those for which you have time, interest and skill?

Does the balance between Quaker and non-Quaker concerns seem right to you?

Is there time during the notices to hear news of visitors, those who are absent, those who may be ill or unable to get to meeting?

Is this the time when worshippers may share their concerns which were not ministry?

Do the notices come as a shock after the worshipful silence?

Do the notices reflect the continuity of worship and witness?

Is there a noticeboard or news-sheet where details of events may be found?

9. After meeting

Do you offer refreshments after meeting?

Are you sensitive to those who find such socialising difficult, or who wish to remain in a worshipful quiet?

Is your meeting good at introducing newcomers to those Friends most likely to meet their needs?

If you become aware of a newcomer who prefers to remain detached for the time being, what do you do?

Is there a named Friend (perhaps an elder) who can answer the enquirer's questions in a quiet setting?

Can you confidently direct the newcomer to the library and/or book stall and offer advice if asked?



10. Growing together in the Spirit

Has your meeting considered the problems and benefits of its size and situation, trying to make the best of its opportunities for becoming a caring, outward-looking community?

What efforts does your meeting make to grow closer as a community?

Are we able to trust each other enough to share our joys and concerns, and those things in our inner life which matter most to us?

Do you do enough to value every contribution, removing any sense of hierarchy?

Have you tried to encourage diffident Friends to come to enjoy the larger Quaker gatherings designed to help us in our spiritual journeys?

Do you lovingly uphold the members of your meeting between meetings for worship?

Do Friends gather in house meetings or get together during the week in small groups?

If so, how are these groups formed and what do they do?

Is there a risk of cliques developing, and how can this be avoided?

Has your meeting tried any of the following activities to foster friendships in the meeting?

- shared meals,
- walks in the country,
- parties and celebrations,
- poetry and book-reading groups,
- visits to concerts or galleries,
- music-making, painting,
- discussion groups.

If not, might your meeting consider beginning to do so?

Are you aware of the positive effect these can have on our spiritual lives and our worship together?

How does your meeting encourage the open exploration of disagreements and conflicts?

Unacknowledged issues can damage the depth and quality of our worship and ministry – how does your meeting foster the healing process?

11. Spiritual learning

What resources does your meeting have for 'spiritual learning'?

Do you try to share your beliefs with others, attempting to communicate your deepest insights?

How do you respond to language not your own?

Do you make allowances for how differently we use and define words?

How do you respond to the Society's Testimonies?

Early Friends acknowledged the importance of personal religious experience, tested within the group – can we do the same, coming as we do from various religious and non-religious backgrounds?

Are you sufficiently aware of the valuable learning resources to be found in the members of your own local meeting and monthly meeting?

If not, what steps would enable the meeting to find out?

Do you know Friends in your meeting who are ready to share their wisdom and to whom you can go without any embarrassment, whatever the reason for your approach to them?

And are you prepared to share with others in the same way?

Have you considered the possible benefits of a 'spiritual growth' group, spiritual direction or spiritual friendship?

How can we support each other in opening the darker areas of our being to the Light?

Are you ready to ask for help, if needed, from other seekers and from God?

Do you know when to advise others to seek help from trained professionals, or seek such help for yourself?

How might you learn from the experience and service of contemporary Friends?

Do you make efforts to become familiar with the lives and stories of early Friends?

Do you know from what source they gained their strength and endurance?

Are you aware of their familiarity with the Bible? Is the Bible important to you?

Are you aware of the church discipline that enabled early Friends to work and witness as a corporate body?

Do you recognise that there is much to learn from other churches and movements, from the mystics and religious teachers of all ages, traditions and faiths as well as from the worldwide Quaker family?

Does your personal spiritual life draw on worship, reading and discussion with other denominations and faiths?

What Quaker resources do you rely on? What Quaker resources are lacking?

Has your meeting tried any of these approaches and methods?

- worship-sharing,
- quiet days,
- study groups,
- creative listening,
- meetings with invited speakers from different strands and thinking from the Quaker world and outside,

- the use of book boxes from the Quaker Centre bookshop,
- daily and residential retreats (not all organised by Quakers),
- participation in interfaith and ecumenical gatherings,
- panels from the Quaker tapestry as a means of introducing the history and testimonies of the Society,
- outreach events.

Does your meeting have a well-stocked library, containing not only books but other resources such as study packs?

Are its acquisitions well publicised?

How does your meeting make provision for any members who have special needs?

Does your spiritual learning provide you with information about the Spirit?

Does your spiritual learning lead you to an experience of the Spirit?

Is your learning illuminated and transformed by the relationships and insights developed during the whole of your life?



12. Meetings for church affairs

Are your meetings for worship for business gathered? Do they seem to you like meetings for worship?

Do you seek to discern the will of God for the meeting as a whole?

Are you listening to the Spirit speaking through human beings and to the response of those who listen?

Have you experienced occasions when the corporate decision was not what was expected or, perhaps, hoped for?

When the meeting moves towards a decision with which you are not in sympathy, are you willing to accept this with good grace?

Do you acknowledge that we may misinterpret the leading of the Spirit?

Do you recognise that it sometimes takes time to understand the right way forward for the meeting?

Do you agree that meetings for church affairs are a test of our ability to do business in the same way as we worship?

Are you aware of the fact that in the unity of our discernment, decisions are reached which may affect the life and witness of the Society as a whole?

Do you uphold the meeting and its clerk in worshipful attention, whether or not you are present with them?

13. Other meetings

Do you remember to give worshipful support to other meetings? Such as:

- meetings for worship for funerals and weddings,
- meetings for worship in prisons and other institutions,
- gatherings for worship in the homes of Friends who for reasons of health or age are not able to get to their meeting.

Do you remember to uphold Friends at times of need and as they serve the wider community?



E. Winkler pinx.

THE QUAKER'S MEETING

J. B. [unclear]

14. Conclusion

Have you a growing awareness of your individual responsibility for sustaining the quality and depth of worship and ministry?

Are you aware of the support you can offer to others and they to you in this journey?

Are you open to the call of God in your soul, always ready to surrender the self in response?

Can you commit yourself to the Spirit without reservation?

Are you open to receive from the Spirit, the giver of life and source of renewal, nourishment for the next stage of your journey?

15. Resources list

15a. Publications

For the Quaker Centre bookshop in London and other addresses, see page 41.

Quaker faith & practice: the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 2009.

Advices & queries. Chapter one of *Quaker faith & practice*, available as a separate booklet.

Both are published by the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. These two books are the essence: it is hoped that *Quality and depth of worship and ministry* will send readers back to the foundation.

Allen, Richard, *Silence and speech*. Fourth, revised edition. London: Quaker Books, 2004. A short, friendly booklet for those new to meeting for worship.

Bloom, Anthony, *School for prayer*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1970. This and other books on prayer by the Orthodox archbishop have been found very helpful by Friends.

Clare, Mother Mary, *Encountering the depths*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981. Insights of a simple profoundness, not without cost.

Freeman, Laurence, *Light within: the inner path of meditation*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986. Some fruits of the Benedictine tradition.

Gorman, George H., *The amazing fact of Quaker worship*, 1973 Swarthmore Lecture, London: Quaker Books, 2008. Explores prayer as passionate thinking, life as preparation for worship, a gateway to transcendence, but who or what do we worship?

Heales, Brenda Clift and Cook, Chris, *Images and silence: future of Quaker ministry*, Swarthmore Lecture, London: Quaker Books, 1992. Explores ministry in the Religious Society of Friends, including meeting for worship – which is sometimes avoided through meeting for counselling or for discussion.

Kelly, Thomas R., *A testament of devotion*. London: HarperCollins, 1992. A truly enduring spiritual classic; Kelly urges us to centre our lives on God's presence, to find quiet and stillness within modern life, the deep satisfaction of the inner spiritual journey.

- Kelly, Thomas R., *Reality of the spiritual world* and *The gathered meeting*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1996. From a gathered meeting we hope to emerge re-energised with God's Power, re-sensitised by that tenderness, to meet the daily world with new steadiness.
- Kolp, Alan, *Fresh winds of the Spirit*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1991. In this account of the spirituality of George Fox, Alan Kolp has combined Quaker studies and the insights of the contemporary revival in spiritual studies.
- Lacout, Pierre, *God is silence*, trans. John Kay. London: Quaker Home Service, 1993 (first published 1969). A book about the value of silence that unites us beyond words – this brief book is a spiritual classic beyond Quakerism.
- Newcastle Meeting, *Hearts and minds prepared* and *What do you do in meeting for worship?* Millrind Press, 1998. Two booklets in which Friends share their own experience and insights.
- Penington, Isaac, *The Light within and selected writings*. Philadelphia, PA: Tract Association of Friends, 1998. A short selection of extracts, including essays on silent meetings, prayer and the Light within, by one of the most inspiring and most loved of the early Quakers.
- Punshon, John, *Encounter with silence: reflections from the Quaker tradition*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1987. Worship that remakes and renews: simple but exceptionally powerful thoughts on silence, prayer, discernment and worship, his resource is the Quaker unprogrammed meeting but his appeal is to all who want to move beyond a spiritual superficiality.
- Religious Education Committee, *Opening doors to Quaker worship*. Philadelphia, PA: Friends General Conference, 1994. Ways for all of us, not just the young, to explore Quaker worship, develop our own understanding and find new life in our tradition.
- West, Jessamyn (ed.), *The Quaker Reader*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1992. A most helpful and accessible collection of extracts (fewer but longer than in *Quaker faith & practice*) from significant Quaker writers.
- Woolman, John, *Walking humbly with God: selected writings of John Woolman*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2000. A small, pocket-sized book of extracts from Woolman's influential *Journal and other writings*, edited and introduced by K. Beasley-Topliffe, to carry around and meditate on.

Books that may be available in a library

These were included in the previous edition, but were out of print when this edition was prepared.

Fawell, Ruth, *Courage to grow*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1987. Spiritual growth through everyday experience, and the courage this takes; a celebration of the friendship and trust we can all offer each other, and the strength that can be drawn from the Quaker meeting.

Lacey, Paul A., *Nourishing the spiritual life*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1999. A valuable signpost to the goal of a balanced life, exploring the support of prayer and worship, the gifts of joy.

Main, John, *Silence and stillness in every season*, ed. Paul Harris. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997. Daily readings with John Main, whose teaching and practice of 'centring prayer' is particularly valued by Quakers.

Merton, Thomas, *The shining wilderness*, ed. Aileen Taylor, introduced by Monica Furlong. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1988. Daily readings by another monk, much-read by Friends.

Publications issued since the first edition of this book

Lampen, John, *The worship kit: a young person's guide to Quaker worship*. Philadelphia, PA: Quaker Books, 2010.

Wall, Ginny, *Deepening the life of the Spirit: resources for spiritual practice*. London: Quaker Books, 2012.

Using *Quality and depth of worship and ministry in a group*

This book is for slow reflection, to be read bit by bit, the queries held in the heart until a meaning becomes clear. The book is especially useful for sharing with others, nourishing the meeting community. The resources below offer helpful guidance to facilitating groups.

Companions along the way: spiritual formation within the Quaker tradition.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 2000.

Edited by Florence Ruth Kline with Marty Grundy, this resource for adult religious education has much on prayer, spiritual companionship and deepening the spiritual life. The various ways in which groups can work on a topic – in the chapters on worship sharing, on the ‘Friendly Bible Study’ and on using stories – would be helpful to any group exploring *Quality and depth of worship and ministry* over an extended period.

Creative listening and worship sharing. Children and Young People’s Committee of Quaker Life. A handout for group participants, or facilitators – free from CYPC.

Duke, Elizabeth, *The experience of worship and Readings on worship*, Quaker Resources for Learning, 1995.* These companion teaching packs also have good guidelines on ‘modes of group process’ and ‘worship sharing’, which suggest a format for reflecting on this book.

Farnham, Suzanne G. et al., *Listening hearts: discerning call in community.*

Harrisburg PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1991. A group of episcopalians explored the Quaker understanding of clearness in this and other books in the ‘Listening hearts’ series. Their method of reflecting together, worship sharing around a reading or question, suggests a useful method for those responsible for eldership.*

Fostering vital Friends meetings Part II. Friends General Conference, 1999.

Photocopiable sheets in this comprehensive toolkit for Quakers include spiritual friendships, covenant groups, suggestions for leading a worship sharing group, worship seeing, four doors to meeting for worship and a beginning list on meeting for reading! Available from the FGC website: www.fgcquaker.org/resources/resources-fostering-vital-friends-meetings

Loring, Patricia, *Listening spirituality: volume II Corporate spiritual practice among Friends.* Washington DC: Openings Press, 1997. Carefully chosen readings intertwined with Loring’s experience of living in God’s presence form a practical, well structured book to help develop a deeper understanding of being in Quaker community. Volume I on personal spiritual practice among Friends is also warmly recommended.

* Not currently in print

15b. Addresses

The address for all the central offices and services of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain is:

Friends House
173–177 Euston Road
London
NW1 2BJ
Telephone switchboard: +44 (0)20 7663 1000
Fax: +44 (0)20 7663 1001
Website: www.quaker.org.uk

The Quaker Centre bookshop (for all Quaker publications):

Tel: +44 (0)20 7663 1030
Email: bookshop@quaker.org.uk

You may find retreats and other events listed in current programmes. A full address list of Quaker study and conference centres and retreat houses in Britain can be found in the current Book of Meetings and on the BYM website, or contact:

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre
1046 Bristol Road
Birmingham
B29 6LJ
Tel: +44 (0)121 472 5171
Fax: +44 (0)121 472 5173
Email: enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk
Website: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Some Friends have found the Julian Meetings helpful, and an opportunity to meet in depth with other Christians. There are 350 of these silent, contemplative prayer groups throughout the UK. They also offer quiet days and retreats. For general information about Julian Meetings in the UK, or advice on starting a new meeting, please contact:

nat.coordinator@julianmeetings.org

For information about Julian Meetings in your area of the UK, please contact:

ukdata@julianmeetings.org

For information about Julian Meetings worldwide, visit their website:

www.julianmeetings.org

or contact:

world.wide@julianmeetings.org

To find out about a wide range of retreats, opportunities for exploring prayer, silence, worship, and discernment, information about training, spiritual companionship, resources, places to take a group of Friends for a quiet day or residential meeting for worship, look in *Retreats*, published annually and available from the Quaker Centre bookshop, or contact:

The Retreat Association

Kerridge House

42 Woodside Close

Amersham

Bucks

HP6 5EF

UK

Email: info@retreats.org.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1494 433 004

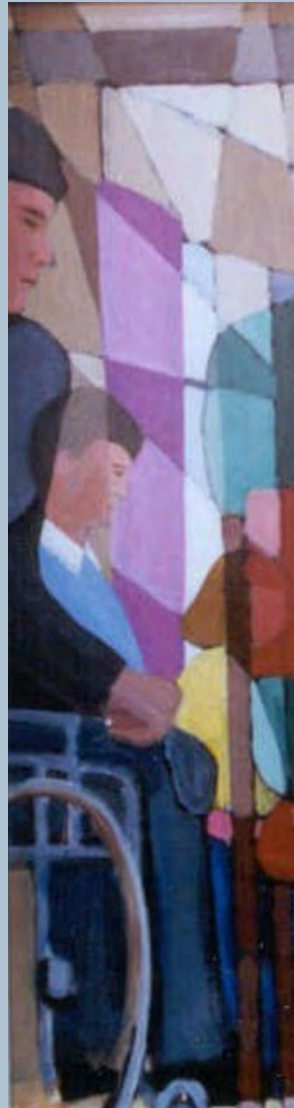
Fax: +44 (0)871 715 1917

Website: www.retreats.org.uk



Friends would say that meeting for worship is central to their spiritual lives – but what is worship? What does ‘ministry’ mean? How can we talk to each other, sharing our understandings of listening or waiting on God? Meetings can feel shallow, unsatisfying, or deep and transforming. Dare we assess quality and depth?

This booklet is a distillation of experience and reflection collected from meetings and offered back in the form of queries, designed to be taken a few at a time. Those responsible for eldership will find this book helpful in their regular meetings, as they consider how to sustain and support the Quaker community in this core activity. Queries could also be used more widely in the meeting, perhaps on a quiet day or in a listening or study group.



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