

What Happens at Meeting for Worship?

Meeting for Worship begins when the first worshippers settle into the silence at the appointed place and time. It ends when a member of our Worship and Ministry Committee shakes the hand of a person seated nearby. At that signal, Friends generally shake hands and greet each other.

Meeting for Worship is the core of Quaker practice. Friends seek connection to one another and to Spirit (God, Inward Light, Inner Guide) dwelling among us. There is no pastor or pre-arranged program at a Quaker Meeting for Worship. Our Worship and Ministry Committee keeps the Meeting for Worship under review, prayer and care.

We gather in stillness, to be silent, to listen, or to speak as we are led by Spirit. Each tries to still the inward clamor of personal anxieties and ambitions, listening for the voice of Spirit, endeavoring to be faithful to its instruction.

Meeting for Worship is different from solitary prayer. The strength and focus of the Meeting community draw one who is distracted back toward the Center. In the community of others, an individual may be more willing to be searched by the Light that exposes weaknesses and shortcomings, and challenges us to transformation.

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In community, we can more clearly receive and understand continuing revelation. We can also receive the strength, wisdom, and courage to mend the flaws that the Light discovers in ourselves, our community, and our world.

Faithfulness may require silence, action, or restraint of action, by an individual or the whole Meeting. Spirit may speak through any of us, regardless of experience, education, age or gender. It may require one to speak words that do not come easily, which may not be fully understood, or which may be uncomfortable. Vocal or spoken ministry is delivered while standing, if we are able to stand, to aid others in hearing.

Receiving Spoken Ministry

Listening with open hearts, we receive the spoken ministry of others as an opportunity to hear Spirit speaking to us. If a message doesn't speak to us now, it may speak to someone else, or may nourish us in unexpected ways in the future. Sometimes we are touched deeply by what others have said. We allow time for silence between each speaker so the full weight of a message can be contemplated.

Engaging in Spoken Ministry

We rise and speak out of the silence only after careful discernment, rather than acting on impulse. We speak only of what we ourselves have tasted and encountered spiritually, as a window through which others may see the Sacred at work in our lives.

In keeping with the Quaker tradition of simplicity, we trust Spirit to provide the words as we are speaking. A message from a deeply centered place is spontaneous, direct and to the point. We avoid referring to previous messages, including contradicting or correcting. The focus is simplicity rather than eloquence, inspiration rather than personal feelings. Sharing of text should be carefully considered and rare. Our practice is to speak only once during the worship hour.

*We look forward
to having you
worship with us*

Much of the content of this brochure has been adapted from Pacific Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice 2001* by SCM's Worship & Ministry Committee. 11/2020

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*Strawberry Creek Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends*

Meeting for Worship

Welcome to the Strawberry Creek Meeting. We are all enriched by your joining us today. The purpose of this brochure is to increase understanding of the practices Strawberry Creek Meeting has developed in support of a spiritually rich worship experience.