

Quaker Toolbox

Enriching Meeting for Worship

Gathered silent worship can be immensely powerful. When we enter in the presence of the sacred with hearts and minds open, we may find ourselves experiencing life in a new way and seeing each other and the world around us through new eyes. Just having that open space in our hectic lives can be enormously refreshing. But the absence of external structure can be unsettling. Here are some simple suggestions for focusing silent worship, and preparing the way for Spirit-guided ministry.

1. We never know what will happen when we look for divine guidance. Enter meeting for worship every time expecting to be changed.
2. Spend some time each day in meditation, spiritual reading or prayer. The power of any given meeting for worship is probably in direct correlation to how much time the people gathered there spent cultivating the life of the spirit during the previous week.
3. Don't come to meeting expecting either to bring a message, or to stay silent. Practice listening for the inward promptings that mean there is something you are supposed to say or do. These may be as powerful as an earthquake or as light as the touch of a feather.
4. Remember that anyone, however unworthy they may feel, or how unlikely they may seem, can serve as a channel for the Light.
5. Listen deeply to any message spoken in meeting for worship. Listen for where the words come from more than to the words themselves. Listen with love.
6. Take turns bringing a reading you have found especially powerful or helpful to share in the few minutes before meeting settles in. The task of choosing a reading, and deciding what you want to say about it, will help you focus on spiritual practice during the week.
7. Allow some time after worship ends for "afterthoughts" • or "twilight meeting." • During this time, Friends may share thoughts and insights that came to them in meeting, but didn't seem to rise to the level of a spoken message.
8. Learn more about Quakerism. Reading Quaker classics as a group, doing Bible study or exploring Faith and Practice, will deepen your worship, your shared vocabulary and your sense of community.

Suggestions for further reading:

- Birkel, Michael. [Silence and Witness: The Quaker Tradition](#). Orbis, 2004.
- Loring, Patricia. [Listening Spirituality, Volume 2: Corporate Spiritual Practice among Friends](#). Opening Press, 1999.
- Taber, William Taber. [Four Doors to Meeting for Worship](#). Pendle Hill, 1992.