

## Welcome!

A Quaker Meeting begins with waiting. We wait in the presence of Jesus Christ. We gather in silence in the hope that Jesus will be among us and speak to us. The silence may last for quite some time, perhaps an hour or more. But that does not mean that nothing is happening. All of us are trying to come nearer to Christ Jesus, and through him, to each other.

Worship for us is a community experience. We try to hear and follow what Jesus says to us as a Meeting, and we find unity in this purpose, so that the waiting and listening become an act of sharing in the new Life that God gives us.

We come to Meeting because we feel the need to meet in the presence of Christ. This is important to us; it is the foundation for our lives. We believe that Christ Jesus is actually present with us, and he sets the agenda for our worship. He is our Priest, he may move some of us to speak, or some of us to pray, or some of us to sing. So, there is no set program to our worship. He will decide what happens in our time of worship. We are baptised in his Spirit and the Words he speaks to us is our Bread. We know that he will provide whatever is needful in our Worship.

Meeting for Worship starts as soon as the first person enters the room and sits down to wait. It is helpful if the Meeting can settle a few minutes before the appointed time. Go in as soon as you are ready. Sit anywhere you like but if possible leave seats near the door for latecomers.

You may find it easy to relax in the silence and thus to enter into the experience of the Meeting, or you may be disturbed by the strangeness of the silence, by distractions outside or by your own roving thoughts. Do not worry about this, we all find it difficult to settle at times, but we return again and again to the still centre of the Meeting where the presence of God can be known.

Try, if only for brief periods, to be quiet in body and mind, this will help you to be more open to Jesus' presence. Bring whatever is pressing on your mind before Christ Jesus. It can be a time of insight, revelation, healing, or calm.

Nearly everyone at some time in their lives seems to want to find God for themselves, even those who find it hard to believe that God exists. The stillness and silence of the Meeting is a means by which we can reach out to God and Christ.

The silence may be broken if someone present feels called by Christ Jesus to say something which will help the meeting to more fully understand what he is saying or were he might be leading the Meeting.

Anyone is free to speak, pray or read aloud an appropriate passage from the Bible or another suitable book, provided it is done in response to an inward prompting by Christ's Spirit which comes in the course of the Meeting. The silence is broken for the moment but our communion with God is not interrupted.

Listen to what is said in a discerning and charitable spirit. Each contribution may help somebody, but our needs are different and can be met in differing ways. If something is said that you feel is not helpful to you or does not speak to your need, try to feel where the words are coming from. The speaker wants to help the Meeting: take care not to reject

the offering by negative criticism. Trust that if the speaker is being truly led, their offering is what the Meeting, or someone in the Meeting, needs.

The purpose of our Meeting is to hear and follow God, not only as individuals but as a community. Through Gods Will revealed to us as wait in His Presence, we seek to become united in His love and strengthened by the Truth that Jesus reveals to us so that we enter a new life in God.

After about an hour two Elders will shake hands to mark the end of the worship. Someone then may announce forthcoming events and give news of members. Afterwards, there may be refreshments. Do feel free to speak to anyone, particularly if you wish to know more about Quakers.

Literature is usually available in the Meeting or can often be borrowed.

While sitting in Meeting for the first time you may find it helpful to re-read this leaflet.