
As Quakers, we have no creed to recite, no confession to confess, no rituals to undergo that will reliably bring us into the fullness of membership. But we do have a rich and inspiring tradition; we have each other; and we have the Spirit of God which, we are promised, will “lead us into all things.”

At its best, a Quaker Meeting is not just a collection of individual seekers, but a community of faith, a covenant community, knit together by our common seeking of God. We are like spokes on a wheel: as we draw closer to our center in God, we also draw closer to each other. And as Douglas Steere has reminded us, “to come near to God is to change.”

Members One of Another: The Dynamics of Membership in Quaker Meeting, Thomas Gates, Pendle Hill pamphlet #371 2004, pgs.27 and 38 (pamphlet found in our library)

Resources:

Friends Journal (Quaker monthly magazine) (in our library)

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice (in library)

Northern Yearly Meeting’s Faith and Practice draft chapters (online)

Audiotapes of spiritual journeys (in library)

Ministry & Counsel members for individual conversations

Suggested Quaker books in our library

The Journal of John Woolman

John Woolman lived and traveled in the American colonies in the decades prior to their independence from England. His journal is an interesting view not only of him, but also of the language, practices, and interrelationships of Quakers of his day.

Penn

by Elizabeth Janet Gray This book is a gripping, clearly written tracing of the journey of William Penn—from his birth in 1644 as the son of a famous admiral through his convincement as a Quaker, his sacrifices as a champion of the oppressed, and his establishment of Pennsylvania.

Quakerism—A Faith to Live

by Elfrida Ylpont (1965) This book consists of sixteen short biographical sketches of prominent (mostly British) Quakers starting with George Fox and ending with Amy Lewis, who died in 1951.

The Story of Quakerism Through Three Centuries

by Elfrida Ylpont (1977 edition) This rather detailed chronicle of the development of Quakerism begins with the seeking of George Fox and finishes with the condition of the Society of Friends in the 1970s.

The Quiet Rebels

by Margaret Bacon This is an extremely readable account of the development of Quakerism and the place of Quakerism in the cultural life of America today.

Beyond Majority Rule

by Michael Sheeran This book is a study, by a Roman Catholic priest, of the way meeting for business functions in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Quaker Journals: Varieties of Religious Experience Among Friends

by Howard Brinton (1972) In this collective approach, similar to that of William James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Brinton provides the first comprehensive approach to Quaker journals.

Friends for 350 Years

by Howard Brinton More than a history of the Religious Society of Friends, this book seeks to analyze the religious character and development of the Quaker movement over the centuries.

The Quaker Way

by Rex Ambler Based on a series of lectures, Ambler tries to explain “the Quaker way” by describing Quaker practices and Quaker life.

Thinking about membership?



**Twin Cities Friends Meeting
Saint Paul, Minnesota**

Membership in TCFM

Membership in the Religious Society of Friends is intended to be a joyful responsibility in a community that hopefully enriches the spiritual journey of everyone.

Members belong to and represent their local meeting, yearly meeting and the Religious Society of Friends. As members, we affirm our concurrence with the testimonies and practices of the Society and our willingness to do our best to live by them. At the request of parent(s) when they join, children can become associate members at the same time.

Membership does not imply that one has reached a particular level of spirituality. Rather, it is an acknowledgment of a person's desire to contribute to Meeting in a deeper way and in return an acknowledgment by Meeting that the deepening of its relationship with the individual is welcomed with joy. Members continue to seek the Truth and remain open to continuing revelation. It is an active commitment to the process of spiritual growth.

As members we are all called to minister in some capacity and to contribute to the life of the Meeting and of the Society of Friends as the Spirit leads. All Friends are open to hearing and answering their individual call to service, and ministry takes many forms. This may include, but is not limited to, spoken ministry, serving on committees, holding offices, providing financial support, teaching First Day school, leading discussions, joining in adult religious education, participating in the activities of Meeting and wider Quaker organizations, representing the Meeting to other organizations, supporting others in their efforts, and caring for others.

Spiritual preparation for membership

Queries for reflection: testimonies are generally shared as a natural outgrowth of our spiritual practices. Among these beliefs are:

- **EQUALITY:** Respect for the dignity of all; seeing/respecting that of God in all people
- **INTEGRITY:** Commitment to truth-telling at all times
- **COMMUNITY:** Caring relationships that support us in speaking truth
- **PEACE:** Nurturing peace by seeking justice in its deepest meanings
- **SIMPLICITY:** Simplifying our activities, consumer behavior, and busy-ness to allow time and energy for spiritual and community connection

Throughout history Quakers have demonstrated their commitment to these testimonies. The queries listed below are intended to guide you as you consider applying for membership.

What will it mean to me to be a member of the Religious Society of Friends?

To what extent are my beliefs consistent with the testimonies and practices of Friends? How do they differ?

What are my reservations about being a Friend?

What do I expect from the Religious Society of Friends, this yearly meeting, and this monthly meeting as it relates to my life and spiritual growth?

In what ways can I contribute to the life of the Meeting?

How does meeting for worship affect my life, my relationship to others, and the world?

Membership process

If you are thinking about applying for membership, we recommend that you

- read at least one book about Friends' history and a yearly meeting's Faith and Practice. (The TCFM library has a good supply of both kinds of books.)
- attend several meetings for business
- talk to one or two TCFM members about what membership means to them

Then write a letter to the clerk of the Ministry and Counsel committee, sharing why you feel drawn into membership. (A short letter is fine.) You may include the names of TCFM members that you would like to serve on your clearness committee, although others may be added as well.

Your letter will be read at the next meeting for business and referred to the Ministry and Counsel committee. Ministry and Counsel will then form a clearness committee to meet with you.

A clearness committee, a clarifying process to discern your readiness, is a two-way discussion between you and the committee. The committee will worshipfully seek assurance that you have been divinely led to this point, have an understanding of and desire to live by the principles of Friends, and that your way of continued seeking is compatible with the manner of Friends. The clearness process is an opportunity for deep spiritual sharing and an opportunity for all participants to grow in their understanding and their faith. Typically the committee meets with you once or twice.

After the committee meets, committee members will send their recommendation to Ministry and Counsel, and the committee clerk will be in touch with you.