

Session 7 Outline: Making decisions, Part 1 – October 21, 2018

Based on Rex Ambler's *The Quaker Way*, Chapter 4, pp. 64-72

1. Check-ins

- Greet returnees and introduce newcomers
 - How have you been since we saw you last? Interesting experiences to share?
 - Comments on the experiment of "going into the silence"?

- Review *Group Agreement*

○ non-judgmental	○ tolerance	○ I-language
○ no argument	○ empathy & patience	○ clarity
○ mutual respect	○ confidentiality	○ active listening to understand
○ civility	○ the right to pass	○ safe to share uncomfortable things

2. Waiting Worship – 10 to 15 minutes

3. Revisiting Session 6 – Worshiping together

“Our practice of coming together once a week to sit in silence makes sense only if we have learned to do that during the week and have got to know the people we sit with in ordinary, everyday interactions. This would have been easier perhaps for the first Friends, since silence was part of their lives anyway, and the people with whom they worshipped would have met in other ways during the week. When they came together on Sunday, or whenever, they would truly 'meet' one another, since they knew one another well from their daily contacts, and they would be spiritually 'trained' to be open to one another and the experience of corporate worship.” (Ambler 57)

Query: In whatever form of silent waiting you do, what do you experience early in your sitting, and how does your inner awareness change throughout your quiet time.

- Contrasting the mystery of parabolic storytelling, and the way Jesus seems to be “hiding the truth,” with the frustration that the parables don't make sense and seem to commend irrational behavior.
- The experience of praying for God to be present and receiving the message: “I'm here. Pay attention.”
- The experience of a covered meeting: “The closer we come to each other the closer we come to the center.” In a covered (or gathered) meeting, the worshipers have a distinct feeling of being joined together and feeling the wholeness of the group.

Discussion: What might we do to transcend the modern challenge of our separateness during the week?

- The practice of carrying meeting for worship with one during the week.
- The challenge that, in our modern culture, where we do not all live and work together in one small community as the first Quakers did.
- The reminder that, like the early Quaker dissenters, who had to give up the community and social services of local churches, we need to create our own communities, to living closely together, and to working out ways to provide for and care for each other.
- The awareness that in meeting *we are all centering down collectively*, so we may need to wait for those who have less ease in doing so.

4. Discussion of the readings

- *Chapter 4 – Introduction* (pp. 64-67)
- *Why this distinctive practice?* (pp. 67-72)

5. Two personal examples, with queries

- Recall one of your *worst experiences of group decision-making* (at home, at work, with friends or partners, with a religious or political group).
 - What got in the way of effective outcomes?
 - How do you feel about the process and the decision made (or not made)?

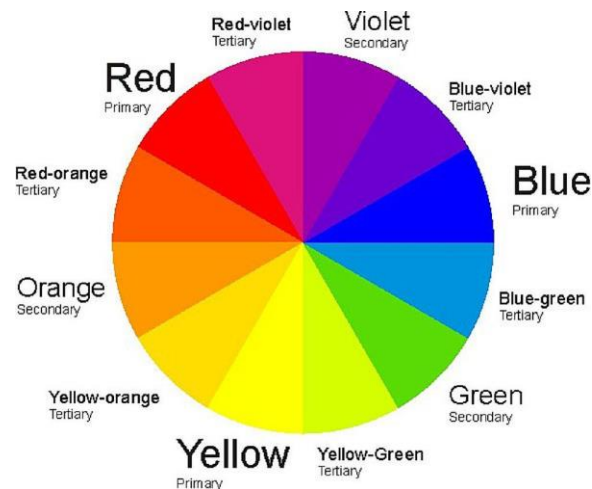
- Recall one of your *best experiences of group decision-making*.
 - What supported effective outcomes?
 - How do you feel about the process and the decision made (or not made)?

6. A pretend meeting for worship with a concern for business

Assignment: Our Meeting has determined that we want to paint the tables we are sitting around a color that would make this space for welcoming and comfortable for all of us and for newcomers. Our task is to come to a “sense of the meeting” about which color to choose. We will practice the Quaker decision-making process.

Reminder: We are interested in the process of doing this, not in whether or not we reach a decision.

Color wheel:



6. Wrap-up, date for next session, homework