

The Quaker Way

Quakers sit in silence because they want to know something that words cannot tell them. They want to feel something or become aware of something that they can really make connection with. It is something fundamental to their life, they know that, indeed it is the underlying reality of their life, but they are not normally aware of it.

They are preoccupied with other things. They are taken up, like others, with the relatively shallow things of life, encouraged by the media and contemporary culture generally, and they hardly feel the depth of it all. So they feel the loss, the distance, and want somehow to get close to this deeper reality.

They want to become "the Friends of Truth," as they liked to call themselves at the beginning. Not any truth, but a truth that relates specifically to their deepest felt needs, and to the needs of the world. They are looking for a truth by which to live, that is, a sense of reality that tells them who they are and how they should live.

Part of the reality of their life, of course, is their relationship with one another and with other people, both near and far. So they want to "discern" what happens between people, what makes for a good life together, and what makes for a bad one.

They want to learn in their own experience how relationships that are broken can be mended, how conflicts can be resolved, and how "the Friends of Truth" can work together to make these things happen in the world. (10-11)

—*The Quaker Way: a rediscovery*, by Rex Amber (2013)

Second Sundays @ 6 PM ***Evening gatherings*** ***for worship & fellowship***

Jacksonville Friends (Quakers) welcome anyone who wants to sit together in worshipful silence and to share without judgment our individual and collective spiritual seeking.



Image by Bobby Buskirk

During the Coronavirus pandemic, Jacksonville Quaker worship group is gathering online on Second Sundays @ 6 PM using Zoom video conferencing.

If you wish to join us, please contact Heidi Lowey-Ball, our convener.

For information:

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Jacksonville Quaker **Worship Group** **at the Beach**

www.jacksonvillefriends.org

Worship on Second Sundays
beginning at 6:00 PM

Hosted by members
and/or on Zoom

Affiliations

Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM)

seymquakers.org

Friends General Conference

www.fgcquaker.org

About Quakers

QuakerSpeak Videos

quakerspeak.com

Friends Journal

www.friendsjournal.org

Our Meeting for Worship

Our Meeting for Worship begins as the first person enters silently, sits down, and turns her or his mind toward Spirit/God.

We quietly center ourselves to the stillness of the Meeting, tuning out the sounds of the world outside and turning our attention to the inner voice.

Don't worry if you find your mind juggling lively thoughts. Find peace in the stillness surrounding you.

Our children sit silently with us for the first 15 minutes, after which they are excused for silent study or First Day School.

Our Meeting for Worship is unprogrammed. There are no prepared sermons, songs, or prayers. We sit in quiet waiting, listening for our own leadings of the Spirit.

If a leading comes, we speak the message into the silence. There is no commenting or discussion following each message. Instead, we return to silence; humbly digesting the spoken message.

Silent worship ends (called the "rise of meeting") when the Clerk greets Friends. We welcome each other, share announcements, coffee and social time.

What do Quakers believe?

We believe that every person is loved and guided by God. Broadly speaking, we affirm that "there is that of God in everyone." Everyone is known by God and can know God in a direct relationship.... Quakers use many words to describe the Divine. Some of them include: God, the Light Within, Christ, Spirit, Seed, and Inward Teacher.

It sounds like Quakers can believe anything they like—is that so?

Quakers invite the word of God to be written in our hearts, rather than as words on paper—we have no creed.... If we are sincerely open to the Divine Will, we will be guided by a Wisdom that is more compelling than our own more superficial thoughts and feelings.... Following such guidance is not always easy. This is why community is important to Quakers, why we turn to each other for worshipful help in making important choices.

What are Quaker testimonies?

Quakers find that attending to the Light Within influences the ways we act in our personal lives, as well as the changes we work for in the wider world. We have noticed that certain values seem to arise more or less consistently when we try to stay close to the guidance of the Inward Teacher, and we call these principles our "testimonies." They are not so much rules that we try to obey as the outcomes of our efforts to live in harmony with the Holy Spirit. Some commonly recognized testimonies include peace, integrity, equality, simplicity, community, and care for the earth.

Are Quakers Christian?

The Quaker way has deep Christian roots that form our understanding of God, our faith, and our practices. Many Quakers consider themselves Christian, and some do not. Many Quaker today draw spiritual nourishment from our Christian roots and strive to follow the example of Jesus. Many other Quakers draw spiritual sustenance from various religious traditions, such as Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and the nature religions.

Do Quakers read the Bible?

The Bible is a book close to the hearts of many Friends. Many Quakers turn to the Hebrew and Christian scriptures for inspiration, insight, and guidance.... Most Quakers do not consider the Bible to be the final authority or the only source of sacred wisdom. We read it in the context of...the Light Within and worshipful community discernment.

Are all Quakers alike?

The kind of Quaker belief and worship described here represents just one variety. Other branches of Quakers do have pastors and more structured worship, and have a more Bible-centered emphasis in their beliefs. In the United States, those branches [include] Friends United Meeting [and] Evangelical Friends Church International.

Friends who worship in silence are often called "unprogrammed" or "nonpastoral" Friends, while those who follow pastor-led worship are called "programmed" or "pastoral" Friends.

—from *Frequently Asked Questions about Quakers*,
on the website of **Friends General Conference**
www.fgcquaker.org/explore/faqs-about-quakers