

Queries for reflection, discussion and learning

Chapter 1: Quaker pastoral practice

Queries for individual reflection

1. What do I understand to be the underlying purpose of pastoral care (including both eldership and oversight)? How does this underlying purpose affect me as a person and as a Quaker?
2. What am I bringing from my previous faith or non-faith experience that influences what I hope to find in my Quaker meeting?
3. Who do I see as being 'in charge' in my meeting? How do I feel about that? Does it make a difference to how I feel if I am one of the people in a significant role?

Queries for pastoral groups

1. Do some people have a better understanding of the aims of eldership and oversight than others? Why might that be? Why might Friends not really understand what we are here for and what we are trying to do? How can we address that?
2. In what ways might we be encouraging unhelpful assumptions among Friends about our service?
3. How might we create opportunities for people to share their thoughts and feelings about the way things are done or organised in the meeting? How might such opportunities also be part of the thinking that could lead to changes?

Queries for meetings

1. What do we hope or expect eldership and oversight will achieve for our community?
2. Are we aware of tensions to do with perceptions of hierarchy? Where do they come from? Might the way things happen or are organised in the meeting be encouraging this view? How might we together address both the tensions and the perceptions?
3. What are the unwritten rules in our meeting? Do we need to clarify Quaker practice, and if so in which areas? How should we go about that?