

# Queries for reflection, discussion and learning

## Chapter 13: Absent Friends

### Queries for individual reflection

1. What keeps me away from meeting – occasionally or often? Do I feel that others notice and care? How is that observation or care expressed, and is it welcome? If no one enquires about my absence, how would, or does, that affect me?
2. When I notice others are absent how do I respond? If there is someone whose absence I am ignoring for any reason, why is that?
3. Are there some people in meeting I scarcely notice at all? How might that affect them, and how does it affect me?

### Queries for pastoral groups

1. How do we respond to repeated or prolonged absence that has no apparent cause? How far do we accept variations in attendance, or prolonged absence, as the normal run of things?
2. Are some reasons for absence easier to accept than others? What might be the implications of making assumptions without checking?
3. How effective are our routine ways of keeping in touch with absent Friends? Are there things we can do that might encourage absent Friends to stay in touch, even while they are unable or choose not to come to meeting?

### Queries for meetings

1. Do variations in attendance affect our meeting community? What difference does it make whether people come regularly, infrequently or sporadically?
2. Do we hold back from enquiring about absence out of feeling it is none of our business? What might be the possible consequences of no one taking the trouble to contact an absent Friend?
3. How well do we support and uphold Friends who are often absent on Quaker business of one kind and another? Do we know what these Friends do or where they are when they are not worshipping here? How can the meeting encourage and enable any of us to tell the meeting about our wider service and involvement?