

Queries for reflection, discussion and learning

Chapter 22: Leading with discernment

Queries for individual reflection

1. How do I recognise when an urging to do something is a true leading or coming from somewhere else within me? What is the difference between a Spirit-led action and a simple compassionate response?
2. What is my role in the discernment process of our pastoral group? How can I aid that process, and how might I possibly inhibit it?
3. How do I deal with feelings of not having done enough or of having got something badly wrong? Am I able to review my part in what happened and learn from it? What would support my ability to grow from such an experience?

Queries for pastoral groups

1. How aware are Friends that they collectively give us authority to take actions and make decisions, within a role that the meeting also defines? How clear are we that Friends permit and trust us to exercise authority on their behalf?
2. How do we identify and agree on our priorities within the broadly defined roles we are appointed to?
3. In what ways do we test or check that our leadership is responsive to what individuals and the community need? How do we respond when we find out that we have been getting it wrong?

Queries for meetings

1. How do eldership and oversight roles or delegated duties fit in the overall 'map' of our meeting? Do we recognise the authority of appointed Friends to take actions on our behalf? How is that authority conferred in our meeting? Are there limits to or boundaries around that authority?
2. 'Discernment is a continual cycle of reflection and seeking guidance, considering possibilities, deciding what to do, taking action and reflecting again to review how it went.' How well embedded are our meeting practices in this cyclical process? Are there any stages we tend to miss out on?
3. How thoroughly do we engage with the parts of our processes that require us to become well informed – with factual and other information, and by consulting Friends with skills or experience? How can we make good use of people and resources so that our discernment is conducted as fully in the light as possible?