

Queries for reflection, discussion and learning

Chapter 8: The meaning of community

Queries for individual reflection

1. What are my needs for community, and how far do I find them met in my meeting?
2. What do I contribute to building community? How significant is my contribution towards achieving the community I hope for?
3. How do I respond to tensions and disagreements in the meeting? How might I be part of encouraging others to see diversity and difference as opportunity not threat?

Queries for pastoral groups

1. How do eldership and oversight complement each other in our community? What is our role in seeing that the spiritual, practical, social, business and outward strands of meeting life are interwoven and work as a whole?
2. How could we enable more people to get to know one another through purposeful activity together?
3. 'Sometimes those of us who are good at organising should sit on our hands.' What more might we do to encourage and support initiative and activity in the meeting? Are there limits or boundaries to this that we should be considering as well?

Queries for meetings

1. What are the many parts and connections that make up our meeting community? Can we map them, perhaps as a spider diagram?
2. 'In true community there will be enough diversity and conflict to shake loose our need to make the world in our own image' (Parker J. Palmer). How far do we recognise and work with this less than comfortable truth in our meeting?
3. How do we build community together? What opportunities exist that enable most individual Friends in the meeting to play a useful part? How might we expand or build on those opportunities?