Queries for reflection, discussion and learning

Chapter 9: Belonging and commitment

Queries for individual reflection

1. Which of the following best describes my relationship with the meeting?
   - The Friend for whom meeting is their primary community
   - The Friend strongly committed to meeting among competing demands
   - The Friend who sees meeting as just one group among others they are part of.
   What tensions exist for me in this relationship?

2. Have I ever felt an outsider in an established group? What did it feel like? What can I personally do to ease someone's first or early experience of my meeting?
3. What does my membership mean to me? If I'm not a member, what is holding me back? In either case, how can I be involved in encouraging others in their commitment to the meeting and the Quaker faith?

Queries for pastoral groups

1. 'It's always worth taking the risk of saying hello, just in case.' (*Outreach handbook*). How do we each feel about putting that into practice? What advice might we offer others who find opening up conversations with strangers difficult?
2. Do we recognise the close relationship between needs and gifts? How will we encourage Friends to value the relationship, to acknowledge their needs as well as their gifts, and be willing to share both?
3. Do we need to explore other routes into membership than the process we are most used to? Might we consider providing training or a learning workshop for Friends who will be involved in these processes? How would we go about this?

Queries for meetings

1. How do we provide an inclusive welcome to 'whoever comes through the door, anyone who might want to and everyone who is already inside'?
2. How transparent are the inner workings of our meeting? What are the gains or risks connected with 'closed doors'?
3. Where are we as a meeting on the issue of membership? If we are affected by proportionately too few members, how will we approach the questions this raises? How does our meeting actively encourage, support and value membership?