

Reflections on Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship is a time of expectant waiting. It is often a “timeless” time. For some this means it goes very quickly; for others it goes interminably slowly. It will end, though, however it goes for you. *The silence is thought to be full rather than empty.* It is a time when we turn inward hoping to find our center, the “Light Within.” Quakers assume that we can find at our center a “still small voice” that is difficult to hear in the tumult of daily life. Quakers believe this still small voice contains wisdom that is worth paying attention to.

We gather together for Meeting because we expect that there is a level on which we can communicate with one another, or touch one another, that transcends verbal and physical communication. We also expect that some of us might be “moved to speak” and share a thought, some piece of our inner journey with the rest of the community.

Centering, the process of leaving behind the cares of the world, can be difficult, even for regular attendees of Meetings for Worship. Something that often helps clear my mind of the clutter of everyday life and of worry is focusing on a single thought, such as “the love of my friends comforts me;” a single visual image like a flower or the ocean rolling into shore; a hope, such as “may my family be held in the Light,” anything that allows my thoughts to be centered and eventually allows my mind to flow without my consciously guiding it. It is almost like the process of falling asleep, slipping into a different state of consciousness without awareness that it has happened.

In meeting, I have hopes that I may find that place between waking and sleep, that while centered, I may be able to touch the divine within myself.

- Michael DeHart, head of Thornton Friends School, 2001