

Worship Sharing

"My dear hearts, be faithful every one in your particular measure of God which he hath given you, and in the Invisible wait in silence, and patience, and obedience, in that which opens the mystery of God." Margaret Fell, 1654

"Sing and rejoice, ye Children of the Day and of the Light; for the Lord is at work in this thick night of Darkness that may be felt: and Truth doth flourish as the rose, and the lilies do grow among the thorns, and the plants atop of the hills, and upon them the lambs do skip and play. And never heed the tempests nor the storms, floods nor rains, for the Seed Christ is over all and does reign. And so, be of good faith and valiant for the Truth."
George Fox, 1663

"To turn all we possess into the channels of universal love becomes the business of our lives." John Woolman.

"Perhaps more wonderful still is the way in which beauty breaks through. It breaks through not only at a few highly organized points, it breaks through almost everywhere. Even the minutest things reveal it as well as do the sublimest things, like the stars. Whatever one sees through the microscope, a bit of mold for example, is charged with beauty. Everything, from a dewdrop to Mount Shasta is the bearer of beauty. And yet, beauty has no function, no utility. Its value is intrinsic, not extrinsic. It is its own excuse for being. It greases no wheels, it bakes no puddings. It is a gift of sheer grace, a gratuitous largesse. It must imply behind things a Spirit that enjoys beauty for its own sake and floods the world everywhere with it. Wherever it can break through, it does break through, and our joy in it shows that we are in some sense kindred to the giver of it." Rufus M Jones, 1920

"Lift us above frustration with our lack of quick solutions to social and political problems. Move us so that our actions may be clear and wise. Let us not despair of mankind (sic) and surely not of each other. May we be open always to the leading of the Holy Spirit." Pacific Yearly Meeting, 1965

Queries:

What helps me hear and listen to the inward Teacher?

Where do I find joy and strength in my life today?

In what ways do I commit to and carry out stewardship in my life?

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The living power of a Meeting for Worship depends not only on the sincere dedication of heart and thought on the part of each individual member, but also on united communion in the presence of God wherein each one overpasses the bounds of his individual self and knows a union of spirit with spirit, bringing him into a larger life than that which is known in spiritual separateness.

Drafted by 1925 revision Committee, London Yearly Meeting

Lowly before the Unseen Presence knelt
Each waiting heart, till haply someone felt
On his moved lips the seal of silence melt.
Or without spoken words, low breathings stole
Of a diviner life from soul to soul,
Baptizing in one tender thought the whole.

John Greenleaf Whittier, from "The Pennsylvania Pilgrim," *The Poetical Works of* (1891)

...wait reverently for the coming and opening of the Word of Life, and attend upon it in your ministry and service that you may serve God in his Spirit. And be it little or be it much, it is well; for much is not too much, and the least is enough, if from the motion of God's spirit; and without it verily, ever so little is too much, because to no profit.

William Penn, Preface to Fox's Journal (Bicent. Ed'n; 1891), Vol I, p. liii.

A lack of experience or a sense of unworthiness must not prevent obedience to the leadings of the Spirit. As one sits in silence, some message may arise out of the depth of the soul which seems intended not simply for the worshipper, but for the gathering as a whole. If the message is not expressed, one may become burdened with a sense of omission; but if it is faithfully uttered, there may follow a sense of inward peace. The sensitive person may learn to recognize the call as clearly as the voice of a friend, though quite unable to describe its quality. One who is unaccustomed to speaking should have faith that God will provide strength to give the message. ... We should be glad to tell in words as well as in deeds of the faith that is in us.

Discipline – Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative) 1974

Do we come with hearts and minds prepared for worship and divine guidance?

Is there a living silence in which we feel drawn together by the power of God in our midst, and is this inspiration carried over into our daily lives?

Is the vocal ministry in our Meeting exercised under the leading of the Holy Spirit, in simplicity and sincerity?

Have we encouraged growth in the vocal ministry, and in the other spiritual gifts of our members?

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Centering begins with a desire to come into communion with God and to focus our minds and hearts on that which is of God. This desire is both active and passive. The active aspect of desiring a relationship with God encourages us to gather up random thoughts and calm the restless body and mind. It is the courage to touch the less-than-charitable parts of ourselves, the slow-burning fuse of anger and resentment, mistrust, and guilt, as well as the places within ourselves of faith, hope, and love.

The passive aspect of centering invites us to let go of effort, striving, and the need to have a particular experience. It invites us to suspend our expectations or preconceptions about what is supposed to happen during worship and just "let be." This balance of effort and effortlessness lies at the heart of centering. Basil Pennington, a Cistercian monk ... writes, "The subtle thing here is effortlessness. We are so used to being very effortful. We are a people out to succeed, to accomplish, to do. It is hard for us to let go and let God do."

Living From the Center, Valerie Brown, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 407

Questions:

I wonder what ways you find for centering, in worship or in your daily life?

I wonder what role the desire for communion with God plays for you in centering?