

# Being Friends Together

Reading *Quaker faith & practice* > Introduction

## Reading *Quaker faith & practice*: Introduction

*'Quaker faith & practice' is a treasure trove of inspiration – an endless well to dip into for wisdom and guidance.*

*Ian Kirk-Smith, The Friend 1.5.15*

**Reading *Quaker faith & practice*** invites us to explore *Quaker faith & practice* through a programme of monthly reading and reflection sessions. We hope to discover together how our book of discipline can speak to our condition and deepen our spiritual lives.

Each month from October 2015 to April 2017 **Reading *Quaker faith & practice*** will offer:

- group session guidance relating to a particular chapter or chapters, with options for longer or shorter sessions, and different response activities to allow for a variety of learning styles and preferences
- self-study materials for those working through the programme as individuals

You can download a calendar showing which chapter(s) will be the focus for each month from the Being Friends Together page for this pathway, or search for catalogue number Q10P2.

### An invitation...

Dear Friends,

The Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group invites you to join with us, and other Quakers across the country, in reading and getting to know our current Book of Discipline. We have discerned that this is an important preliminary step before a decision is sought about any possible revision.

We have put together this programme of monthly sessions as a suggestion, a prompt, and an encouragement. As well as offering these materials through *Being Friends Together*, we will be publishing columns in *the Friend* and maintaining an online presence in time with the calendar of sessions offered here. We suggest that you might like to use the calendar to guide your private reading and/or your Meeting's study group. We recognise, though, that it will not suit everyone: we invite you to participate in whatever way suits you best, in more or less of the reading as

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appropriate for you, to adapt to your needs and your Meeting's needs, and trust that you will attend to what love requires of you.

Your responses to the reading can be kept private or in prayer, shared with your Meeting, offered in writing to one of our many Quaker publications, emailed to the group at [qfp@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qfp@quaker.org.uk) or shared online - either in your own space or see <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/reading> for links to discussions. This is, however, a learning exercise rather than a consultation. You are invited to share in the hope that it will help others with their reading and understanding, rather than to inform a decision directly.

The calendar of sessions includes every chapter in the book and some of the extra material. It puts more technical church government material alongside more personal and experiential material, and tries to give a manageable, varied, and sometimes surprising mixture of reading. It tries to balance the need to read the whole book in a reasonable period of time with an awareness of the other demands which communal and secular life places on Friends – to take an obvious example, the suggested reading for November 2016 is on our Peace Testimony, at a time when we predict many Friends will have those issues in their minds.

For every month's suggested reading, we hope that you will keep in mind these questions:

- how do I react to this material?
- what does this material, and my reaction to it, tell me about the history and development of Quakerism?
- what authority do I give to this text?
- how does this speak to me today?
- what spiritual benefits do I gain from reading and reflecting on this?

The Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group look forward to taking this journey with you and hearing about your explorations.

## Notes for facilitators

Before focusing specifically on any of the chapters in the Book of Discipline, you may wish to begin your **Reading *Quaker faith & practice*** group study programme with an opportunity to get to know one another a little better. You could use one of the introductory sessions provided in the *Being Friends Together* [Ways of Working](#) area, and tailor it to fit your needs. You might like to include in the session a general introduction to the **Reading *Quaker faith & practice*** group study programme; the

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introductory paragraphs and invitation above give a brief overview that you could read aloud to your group.

The facilitators of your learning group may find it helpful to browse more generally through the resources in the [Ways of Working](#) area. You'll find there information and suggestions about ways of working together, including guidance on facilitating a learning group, essential practical preparations you'll need to consider before you get started and guides to reflective group processes such as worship sharing.

To go to the [Ways of Working](#) area, click the link or search for catalogue number WOW, then scroll down and explore the resources there, including the section about introductory and concluding sessions.



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