

Being Friends Together

Reading *Quaker faith & practice* > Autumn/Winter 2015/16 > Chapter 3: General Counsel on Church Affairs > Q131 Group session

Session 3 General Counsel on Church Affairs Chapter 3, *Quaker faith & practice*

Group session

90/120 minutes

90-minute session: do Activity 1, then choose one activity from 2A, B, C and D
120 minute session: do Activity 1, then choose two activities from 2A, B, C and D.

Before the session it may be helpful to remind yourself of the guidance on working with groups available in the Ways of Working area of *Being Friends Together*. Check that anyone with particular needs in your group is able to access any handouts, or has a version that is accessible for them. For Activity 2C, arrange in advance for one or two Friends with experience of Clerking or Nominations to speak to the group.

Resources:

- Copies of *Quaker faith & practice* (5th Edition) for reference - also available online at <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/3>
- Query slips (see Activity Sheet 1) x one slip each Activity 2A
- Paper and pens Activity 2A
- Instructions sheet and cards (prepared in advance from Activity Sheet 2) x one set per small group Activity 2B
- *Quaker faith & practice* – at least one copy per group Activity 2C
- Queries slips (see Activity Sheet 3) x one slip per pair Activity 2D

Welcome and worship

5 minutes

Session introduction

5 minutes

Focus for this session: Chapter 3 of *Quaker faith & practice*, which offers general guidance about meetings for church affairs, including: the sense of the meeting, participation in meetings for worship for business, clerkship, nominations and appointments, the use of small groups in identifying needs and reaching decisions, and authority for public statements.

<http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk>



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Activity 1: It spoke to my condition

30 minutes

Group sharing go-round using creative listening

In creative listening mode, take it in turns in a go-round of the group to:

- read aloud an extract from Chapter 3 that spoke to your condition or resonated with you in some way when you read this chapter in preparation for the session – it could just be part of one of the longer extracts
- share for no more than two minutes about why it spoke to you

Allow a brief pause between each contribution. A facilitator may need to indicate to participants when they have had two minutes so that everyone gets a chance to speak.

Activity 2A: Divine guidance and creative insight

30 minutes

Reading/listening + personal reflection + whole group worship sharing

Give each participant a copy of the query slip (see Activity Sheet 1).

Read aloud the first paragraph of *Qf&p* 3.02, and all of 3.06, 3.07 and 3.30. Either the facilitator(s) could read them out, or they could be read by one or more volunteers. 5

Spend some time as individuals considering the following query: 10

- What experience do you have of this sense of divine guidance or creative insight breaking through, either in Quaker meeting for worship for business, or in your own personal life?

You may like to note down, doodle or mind-map your reflections.

Finish with an opportunity to share something of your response to this activity in the whole group, in worship sharing mode. You may wish to extend the time available by doing this Activity 2A last and running on into the final whole group plenary before the notices. 15

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Activity 2B: Being part of meetings for worship for business

30 minutes

Card based response activity in small groups

This activity is best done in small groups of no more than six people. Give each group an instruction sheet and set of cards prepared in advance from Activity Sheet 2.

In groups of four to six people, do an activity using brief quotations of advice about participating in meetings for worship for business, taken from *Qf&p* 3.08 to 3.11. Shuffle the cards and pick one at random. Read it aloud, then share responses to the piece of advice on the card:

- How easy or difficult do we as individuals find it to follow this advice?
- Do we as a meeting need to pay more attention to this advice, or are we doing ok?

Pick another card and repeat the process. Do this two or three times, depending on the time available.

Activity 2C: Sharing Clerking or Nominations experiences

30-40 minutes

Brief speaker input + discussion in threes

*Choose to focus either on Clerkship or Nominations for this activity. Arrange in advance for one or two Friends with experience of the chosen area to respond briefly to the question below, allowing 5-10 minutes each. Make copies of *Qf&p* available for groups to refer to. The main extracts in Chapter 3 about clerkship are 3.12-3.21, and about nominations 3.22-3.25.*

Prepared input from one or two Friends, in response to the following question: 10-20

- Which pieces of advice about clerkship/nominations in Chapter 3 have been especially important or challenging for you, and why?

In groups of three, reflect on which pieces of advice resonate with you now, whether or not you have experience of clerking/nominations. 10-20

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Activity 2D: Gifts

35 minutes

Reading/listening + pairs sharing

Give each pair a copy of the queries slip (see Activity Sheet 3).

Read aloud *Qf&p* 3.22, 3.23 and 3.25. Either the facilitator(s) could read them out, or they could be read by one or more volunteers. 5

In pairs, share responses to the following three questions, allowing five minutes each per question and both sharing about one question before moving on to the next (it may help to have a facilitator inform participants when it is time to move on to the next question). 10+10+10

1. Tell your friend about an experience of doing something that you love to do or are good at.
2. Have you ever been asked to do something, or took something on, that you felt unable or unsure about doing, yet found the strength to do it? What was that like?
3. Is there anything that you would like to do (or continue to do) as service among Friends or in the wider world, that could use any of your gifts?

Whole group plenary

10 minutes

A brief opportunity to reflect in the whole group on your responses to any of the activities. Use worship sharing or creative listening mode, depending on your group dynamic and preference.

Notices about next session/practicalities, etc.

5 minutes

Concluding worship

5 minutes

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