

YOUR FIRST TIME IN A QUAKER MEETING

Welcome to Hamilton Monthly Meeting Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

WHAT HAPPENS IN MEETING FOR WORSHIP?

Out of the silence someone may speak, but it should be only out of an inner compulsion, led by the Spirit. Sometimes several people may speak briefly in the course of the Meeting hour; sometimes the silence is unbroken. If someone's words do not "speak to your condition", try to seek the spirit behind the words.

You may find it easy to relax in the silence and thus to enter into the life of the Meeting, or you may be disturbed by the strangeness of the silence, by distraction outside, or by your own roving thoughts. Do not worry about this, but return again and again to the still centre of your being where you can know the presence of God. Try, if only for an instant, to be quiet in body, mind, and spirit.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF MEETING?

After about an hour, an appointed Friend will shake hands with a neighbour, and those present will greet one another. In Hamilton Meeting, we then invite newcomers to introduce themselves. We have a few minutes we call "Afterword" in which those present can share thoughts that may not have been ready to be spoken in Meeting. Announcements are made, followed by refreshments and fellowship, in which everyone is invited to partake if they wish.

WELCOME to our Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. We call ourselves Friends or Quakers. We are glad you have come. If you have never been to a Quaker Meeting before, this brochure may be helpful. Before you go into the Meeting Room, please feel free to introduce yourself to others and ask questions if you wish to. When you are ready, you may enter the Meeting Room and sit wherever you choose.

ALL ARE WELCOME. Quakers believe every person has unique value, and an Inner Light. Women, men, children, persons of every race, age, and ability, of whatever condition in life, are welcomed equally.

A QUAKER MEETING for worship is based in silence: a silence of expectant waiting. It is an active silence in which each of us is trying to come nearer to one another and to God. Friends are seekers. At its best, the silence deepens as the Meeting proceeds, until each individual feels the unifying Spirit which erases boundaries. We have the conviction that each person can have direct experience of the Spirit of God and that there is something of God in everyone. There is no paid clergy, because Friends feel that no intermediary is needed between the individual and God.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE about Quakers, feel free to ask questions of Friends, look at our pamphlets, and browse in our library. You may borrow a book if you wish. Please sign it out using the card system and remember to return it.

You may also visit our Meeting's website at www.hamiltonquakers.ca or for information about Quakers in Canada <http://www.quaker.ca>

This pamphlet is a work in progress and adapted from other sources. If you have questions or comments, please contact the Clerk of the Meeting at hamiltonmonthlymeeting@gmail.com

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