

Worshipping with Quakers online

For Quakers, worship (sometimes called Meeting for Worship) is at the heart of what it means to be a Quaker. It is a source of strength and inspiration and it helps shape how we live our lives. It is an experience that is probably different from what is normally associated with the word 'worship'.

A meeting for worship usually lasts for an hour. In Quaker worship there are no ministers or creeds. We first gather together in silence to quiet our minds – we don't have set hymns, prayers or sermons.

In the stillness we open our hearts and lives to new insights and guidance. Sometimes we are moved to share what we discover with those present. We call this 'ministry'. We listen to what everyone has to say to find its meaning for us. Anyone can give ministry, including visitors.

What happens in the stillness?

In the quiet we look for a sense of connection. This might be a connection with those around us, with our deepest selves, or perhaps with God. Our worship may take us beyond our own thoughts and ideas, beyond the everyday, to help us live with a deeper sense of love and purpose.

Sometimes during worship, someone might speak or, when online, write something in the 'chat' box; this is a way of giving words to something that is really beyond words. This is called *ministry* and it comes from a sense of being prompted to share something of real importance; it might be about something that concerns them deeply or something from their own personal experience; it might be something that worries them or something they feel thankful for. Anyone can offer *ministry*, even if it is their first time in Quaker worship. Sometimes no one speaks and the whole meeting for worship can be silent.

Who runs the meeting for worship?

Anyone can contribute to a Quaker meeting for worship – there is no leader. In online worship, there will be a 'host' and we do have people with a responsibility to support and nurture our worship. We call these people 'elders'.

What books do you use?

Whilst there are no service books or set forms of words, during worship, people may read from the Bible and copies of a book called *Quaker faith & practice* will be available on a table. *Quaker faith & practice* is a collection of writing from our 375-year history. People may read from it quietly, or sometimes aloud if they feel prompted to. We also use a small booklet called *Advices & queries*, which is a

collection of prompts, insights and questions. You can find *Advices and Queries* here: <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/1/>

Who can come to meeting?

Meetings for worship are open to everyone. Children are a valued part of the Quaker community and there are some online sessions specifically for them – You can find out more about children's meetings online here

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/online-meetings-for-children-and-young-people>

Below are links to some leaflets and short videos that might be helpful in understanding more about Quaker worship and how it shapes the way Quakers live:

Quaker Worship: a short leaflet that tells of the experience of worship four different Quakers <https://quaker-prod.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/4151712d8539c18b17cd9518073ebc98e3da55bc5af62b0484279e46f7c8>

On the Quakers in Britain website, you can find out more about worship here:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/our-faith/how-quakers-worship>

You can find out more about what Quakers believe here:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/our-faith>

Here are four short animated films about four different Quakers who share their experience of living as a Quaker: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/quaker-journeys>