

Discernment

A guided people



“As we enter with tender sympathy into the joys and sorrows of each other’s lives, ready to give help and to receive it, our meeting can be a channel for God’s love and forgiveness.”

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Quaker communities are communities of discernment that attend to the guidance of the Spirit, and seek to be faithful to where this leads us. We have a long-standing conviction that it is possible to build heaven on earth. As a guided people, the life of the community should reveal, in microcosm, our hopes for the whole creation. Some dimensions of Quaker community life include being:

A community of revelation and healing: where the Spirit shows us our flaws and limitations, brings healing and inspires new ways of living.

A community of diverse gifts: where all contributions are valued. This enables us to achieve things together that we could never do alone.

A community of experimentation: where we try out new ways of living and working together, that move us towards wholeness and right relationship.

Ecological Reflection

The experience of living within a dynamic and evolving community can help us to appreciate interconnection and interdependence. We can recognise the value of each individual member, the contributions they bring, and the way the whole community is something more than just the sum of its parts. This represents a valuable ecological principle. Although communities sometimes define themselves in ways that judge and exclude others, at their best, they can offer a practical vision of right relationship in action. This is counter-cultural within a society dominated by individualism.

Query

In what ways does your Quaker community model an ecological vision of right relationship, based on diversity, cooperation and interdependence? How can we expand our conception of community so that it includes all living things?