

Faithfulness

A costly way



“Are you following Jesus’ example of love in action? Are you learning from his life the reality and cost of obedience to God?”

Advices & Queries 4

“Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may involve us in taking unpopular stands.”

Advices & Queries 38

Following the guidance of the Spirit can have costly consequences when it leads us to refuse and interrupt the 'normal' ways of the world. When we are freed of our dependence on dominant powers, systems and ideologies, and offer a different vision, we may be perceived as a threat. If we stand firm in our witness, like Jesus, we may make ourselves unpopular, and end up being threatened and attacked. This is the costly way of the cross. The earliest Quakers knew it only too well. Suffering may sometimes be the inevitable consequence of doing what is right. What are we prepared to endure for interrupting and refusing to go along with war, injustice and ecological destruction?

Ecological Reflection

There is a great deal of suffering within the natural world. Much of it seems unavoidable, but some of it is the direct result of human violence and greed. There is therefore no avoiding suffering from an ecological perspective. Following the guidance of the Spirit, may lead us, through a strong sense of compassion, to suffer for the sake of ecological healing and restoration. The process of being brought into a healthy and harmonious relationship with the rest of creation is likely to be a difficult and painful one. This does not mean that suffering is inherently a good thing in itself. However, costly witness, as a testimony to love, truth and justice, can bring great joy, and a deep sense of Spiritual accompaniment.



Query

Do you depend upon the guidance of the Spirit, and the upholding of your community, 'to find a spiritual wholeness which encompasses suffering as well as thankfulness and joy' (Advices & Queries 10)? How can we encourage and support one another, so that the challenges of costly witness are faced with steadfastness and courage?