



Equality:

Answering to that of God in Everyone

Getting Started

Focus: By now participants of this group have hopefully developed a rapport with one another and look forward to the fellowship in each session. Take a few moments to focus on community building at the beginning of this session.

Getting Started Ideas

- The “Getting Started” section of session 3 suggested planning some kind of group activity or gathering. Take some moments here to review the plan, or review the event if it has already taken place.
- Review prayer requests from previous sessions. Welcome new requests for prayer or words of praise. Pray together.

Equality: Answering to that of God in Everyone

Focus: Fox’s words, “*walk cheerfully over all the earth answering to that of God in everyone,*” have been often quoted, and for some Friends have become a nut-shell description of their understanding of Quakerism. Some Friends use this quotation to argue that since God is in all people, then all of the varied religions of the world are equally valid. Pushed to the extreme, this quote could even be used to argue the New Age contention that we all are gods. We do not believe this was Fox’s intent, and it clearly does not represent the dominant perspective of Friends in Indiana Yearly Meeting.

Discussion Questions

- Where does the Bible teach that there is “that of God in every person?”
- Is “equality” a biblical concept? If so, what examples from the Bible affirm this?
- Is having “that of God” synonymous with being created in the image of God?
- In our culture, what kinds of individuals are often treated as “second-class?”

That of God in Every Gender

Focus: In many Christian groups there is an increasing openness to women in pastoral leadership. Friends, however, have acknowledged the ministry of women from our earliest days.

Discussion Questions

- How do we reconcile the ministry of women among Friends with limitations placed on women’s roles in the New Testament?
- Why do you think Paul takes the position stated in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12?
- Read Acts 2:17-18 and Galatians 3:28. Do these verses contradict the teachings of Paul in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy? If not, how can they be reconciled?

That of God in Every Race

Focus: The Friends focus on equality enabled them to recognize the evils of slavery as practiced in early America. Many Friends risked great personal loss to grant the African American slaves their freedom.

Discussion Questions

- How is God described in Deuteronomy 10:17-10?
- Do the following examples represent ungodly prejudice or legitimate concern?
 - 18th century plantation owners who regarded their negro slaves as property.
 - 1960s American churches who opposed the civil rights movement
 - Residents of your community who resent an increasing Hispanic population
- What is the difference between ungodly prejudice and legitimate concern?

Conclusion:

Focus: History shows that Friends have found many instances where they simply could not treat individuals that all of society regarded as second-class in such a manner. While we gratefully acknowledge this before-their-time sensitivity to under-valued groups in the past, it takes courage to be supportive of unpopular people groups today.

Discussion Questions

- Read Acts 10:28. Who was God preparing Peter to accept?
- Can you identify groups of people who most need Friends to accept/assist them today?
- What examples can you cite in your church of “walking cheerfully over all the earth answering to that of God in everyone?”