



*What Makes a Friends Pastor Different?*

**Getting Started**

**Focus:** At this point the group has spent considerable time together and has processed a good deal of Quaker history and faith together. Are there members of this group who need to be invited to participate in some other small group once this series of sessions has concluded? Use this session to highlight other small group opportunities available for group members in your church and invite them to participate!

- Begin this session by asking for a volunteer to review the “Quaker Barnyard.” If necessary enlist the group’s assistance in identifying each personality and why they are important in Quaker history.
- Share praises and prayer requests, then spend some moments in prayer.

**Introduction**

**Focus:** Friends don’t know exactly what to do with the pastoral system. It seems to be a late addition, an add-on to our spiritual heritage. While Indiana Yearly Meeting was on the cutting edge of adopting the pastoral system, there is no long-standing theology or philosophy of the unique role of a Friends pastor. This session will look at three ways that the pastoral arrangement works differently among Friends.

## **Discussion Questions**

- Friends functioned for much of our history without pastors. What are the benefits that pastors have brought to the Society of Friends, and what problems have come along with the pastoral system?
- How dependent is your church upon pastoral leadership? Is this level of dependence healthy or unhealthy? Why?

## **A Different View of Ordination**

**Focus:** A survey of the Bible reveals that often when God wanted to intervene in human history a leader was raised up to serve as God's spokesperson. We might argue that George Fox and many of the early Friends were likewise God-ordained leaders that God called forth. We believe that God continues to call, equip, and empower selected individuals to public leadership roles in ministry.

## **Discussion Questions**

- What qualifies and equips a person to be a pastor?
- What do you know about Quaker "Recording" and how does it differ from ordination in other denominations?
- Are there Friends in your church that God is setting apart for a public ministry? In what ways can those who have such a calling be "sent off" by the church?

## **A Different View of Ministry**

**Focus:** Friends haven't always had pastors, but we have always acknowledged the ministry of every believer. Quaker pastors are at their best when they are unleashing the potential of a church full of spiritually gifted ministers.

## **Discussion Questions**

- What does Ephesians 4:11-12 teach us about the role of a pastor and the role of other Christians?

- How can a Christian discover his or her gifts and ministry?
- Can you cite examples of individuals in your congregation who are actively exercising their gifts in ministry? Share some examples.

## **A Different View of Decision Making**

**Focus:** Friends are not organized as a democracy where majority rules. Rather, we seek to operate as a theocracy where God rules. Friends business structure is not intended to give authority to men or women. It is intended to assist us in discerning the leading of God's Spirit in all of our decisions. The pastor's role is not to make decisions for the congregation, but to help the congregation discern God's guidance.

## **Discussion Questions**

- Do you have any first-hand experience of how Friends business procedures work in your church? How well do they work?
- How can a pastor help prepare a congregation to make decisions?
- How can a Friends pastor provide leadership without being authoritarian?

## **Conclusion**

Friends in Indiana Yearly Meeting have adopted the pastoral system, but must never neglect the role of every believer in ministry.

## **Discussion Questions**

- According to 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 and Hebrews 13:17, what should my attitude toward spiritual leaders be?