

The Quaker Barnyard



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IYM Quakers – Session 8

Membership:

Becoming a Member of the Society of Friends

Getting Started

Focus: This concluding session provides an opportunity to rejoice over the good fellowship that the group has enjoyed over the previous weeks. This session also provides an opportunity to paint a strong picture of membership which participants can be invited to embrace.

- Share your own reasons for being a “member” of the Society of Friends and of your own Friends Church.
- Express appreciation to group members who have spent recent weeks reviewing the faith, history, and testimonies of Friends.
- Share praises and prayer requests, then spend some moments in prayer.

Introduction

Focus: For their first years Friends did not have formal membership, but early Friends recognized the value of providing this opportunity. Membership once assumed both commitment and accountability to the wider Society. Such a view of membership still has value today.

Discussion Questions

- Read Ephesians 2:19-22 and 4:25; According to these verses what does it mean to be a “member”?
- Would you describe membership in a local congregation as unimportant, important, or essential? Why?

The Commitment of Membership

Focus: Over time many have come to focus on the rights and privileges of church membership, but a more helpful perspective understands the responsibilities of membership. This section focuses on commitments inherent in joining a church.

Discussion Questions

- Read Romans 12:4-5; What does “belonging to others” mean?
- List a number of ways that members can protect the unity of their church.
- Should every member be involved in personal outreach? How can members who are more introverted effectively be a part of the evangelistic mission of the church?
- Can you identify individuals in your church who are effectively using their gifts in ministry?
- Why is it important for members to faithfully attend and generously give to the church? Why is it important for members to live Godly lives?

Steps to Membership

Focus: *Faith & Practice* contains a clear process for becoming a member of a Friends church. This section is based upon excerpts and summaries of this section in *Faith & Practice*.

Discussion Questions

- Why do Friends expect members to have a personal faith in Jesus Christ?
- Some might view the Friends process for becoming a member as cumbersome. Why do Friends give such careful consideration to the process?

Conclusion

Are you a Quaker? If you depend upon a personal relationship with Christ rather than rituals, you may be. If your relationship with Christ has caused you to see the world differently and care more for those who are rejected or oppressed, you may be. If you daily experience Christ and are drawn to gather regularly with others for worship, you may be a Quaker.

You are invited to consider membership in the Society of Friends by making a commitment to membership in your local congregation.