

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DOWNTOWN FRIENDS MEETING

1. What is expected of me as an attender to our Meeting?

The more you put into Meeting, the more you'll get out of it. We have no requirements for attenders. Once you begin to attend our Meeting, it's up to you to get involved to the extent you want. This can be as simple as just coming to Meeting for Worship, or you can help with a committee.

2. What's up with the front benches in Meeting? Where do I sit?

We don't have appointed places for people to sit in our Meeting house. A few seasoned Friends sit on the "facing bench," however, we welcome anyone to sit there. Generally, most sit in the main section of benches. We recommend that you sit as far in on a bench as possible to make it easier for others arriving later to find a seat. If you arrive after 10:30 A.M., please enter through the front door on the Lancaster Avenue side of the Meeting House.

3. What etiquette is followed and understood before someone stands to share a message during Meeting for Worship?

Since we believe "that of God" is within every person, we listen carefully to each message, seeking together for the truth. Sometimes the reason for a message may be unclear, but we often find out later that it "speaks to the condition" of another listener. We prefer speakers be brief and that they speak no more than once. Also, we prefer that speakers wait a few minutes following the last message.

4. Where do the kids go during Meeting for Worship?

We encourage you to bring your children to Meeting. While you attend Meeting for Worship in our Meeting House, your children are welcome to join in our First-Day School activities, though children sometimes choose to remain with their parents for the whole hour. If they do attend First Day School, they'll join you again in the Meeting House at approximately 11:15 A.M. to spend the remaining time in Meeting for Worship, so they can learn how to center themselves and worship silently.

5. When may I join a committee?

You may join a committee after you've been regularly attending Meeting for a while and you feel ready. Not all committees are open to attenders. However, you may find that our Hospitality, Peace and Social Concerns, and Outreach Committees are good ones to start with. Of course, you don't have to be on a committee to help where you see help is needed. Many people also contribute to Meeting through their time and talent.

6. Is there Quaker education for adults?

While we don't have a structured adult education program as such, we have many activities aimed at helping adults learn more about Quakerism, such as our Bible study group (Thursday nights at 7 P.M.), brown bag discussions (occasionally held after Meeting for Worship during the fall and winter), Opening Exercises (held each Sunday at 10 A.M. from Sept. to June), plus occasional outside speakers who share their knowledge on particular topics. From time to time, we also offer a Quakerism 101 course, plus we have copies of Faith and Practice, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's guide to Quakerism, for loan in our library.

7. Do I need to bring food to Eating Meeting to take part?

Our monthly potluck lunch, known as Eating Meeting, is always open to anyone whether they bring food or not. In fact, you don't have to make food but can buy something to bring. All items are welcome. This occurs the second Sunday of each month except October, December, July, and August.

8. Who goes to Business Meeting?

We hold a Meeting for Business on the last Sunday of the month for about an hour immediately after Meeting for Worship. Here, we discuss administrative decisions, as well as give approval to new activities proposed by members and attenders. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

9. I see you don't "pass the plate." How do I contribute financially to Meeting?

We accept financial contributions from members and attenders throughout the year. You can do this by check, made payable to "Downingtown Friends Meeting," which you then give to our Assistant Treasurer—just ask who that person is.

10. What is the process toward membership?

We're hopeful that visitors who begin to attend regularly and find a spiritual home at Downingtown Meeting consider applying for membership in the Religious Society of Friends. We invite everyone to apply who is comfortable with Friends' religious practices and beliefs. Though we have many families within our Meeting, we're an open group that includes people of all races, religious backgrounds, and lifestyles. Everyone is welcome to worship with us and to apply for membership. To apply for membership, you need to submit a letter to the Clerk of our Meeting, stating why you wish to join the Religious Society of Friends. The Clerk will then hand it over to our Marriage and Membership Committee, which will visit with you to make sure you're clear about your decision.

For detailed answers to these and other questions about our Meeting or Quakerism in general, please ask questions of any of us or visit our Web site at ***www.downingtownfriendsmeeting.org***.