Second Month: Discernment, Ministry

Through the practice of unity, Friends seek a mystical experience in the last place most people would look for one – a business meeting. *Mary Klein, 2008*

For Quakers, "ministry" is almost synonymous with "service," but with the added sense that ministry is service that is done under God's guidance. *Mathilda Navias, 2012*

Advices from *FAITH AND PRACTICE* 1993: (Business Meeting)

Friends' way of conducting business is of central importance to the very existence of the Meeting. It is the Quaker way of living and working together; it is the way that can create and preserve a sense of fellowship in the Meeting community. The right conduct of Business Meetings, even in matters of routine, is a vital part of the worship experience. The process of individuals submitting themselves to the corporate revelation of God's truth forms the basis of Friends' approach to unity.

All members are encouraged to attend Business Meetings and be faithful in the service of the Meeting's affairs. Appointments of officers and committee members should be made with careful consideration of the qualifications of those named and of the opportunities for growth that may be afforded. Friends should not accept any service to which they are nominated without an accompanying sense of leading and a capacity for the task, nor should they lightly refuse such service.

Proceed in the peaceable spirit of the light of Truth, with forbearance and warm affection for each other. Be willing to wait upon God as long as may be necessary for the emergence of a decision which clearly recommends itself as the right one. Feel free to express views, but refrain from pressing them unduly. Guard against contentiousness, obstinacy and love of power. Admit the possibility of being in error. In Meetings for Business, and in all duties connected with them, seek the leadings of the Light.

Queries

- Do we patiently seek divine guidance to discern the right course of action?
- How do we test our leadings? Do we patiently and prayerfully seek clearness in the Light? Do we offer spiritual aid for others who are seeking clearness?
- When our own way is unclear, do we seek the counsel of others in our meeting?
- What can we do to help others recognize, temper, and strengthen their leadings?
- Do we hold our meetings for business in the spirit of worship, love, and understanding? How are we seeking God's Truth together in community?
- Do we regularly take part in meetings for business? Do we uphold the meeting in prayer when we cannot be present?
- Do we come into meeting for business prepared to be changed? Are we ready to let go of our individual thoughts and wishes and let the Holy Spirit lead the meeting to unity?
- As difficult problems arise, are we careful to meet them in a spirit of love and humility, with minds open for creative solutions? How do we avoid taking sides and forming factions?
- Do we avoid the pressure of time, neither unnecessarily prolonging nor unduly curtailing full consideration?
- Are we aware that we speak through inaction as well as action?
- Are we careful to wait for and move under the leading of the Spirit in the exercise of our gifts?
- When our ministry involves social and political action, how does it stay grounded in Truth and Love?
- How does our meeting nurture and support calls to service?