Month Four: Community, Unity and Mutual Care

Openness to the prospect that God works in multiple and unexpected ways is changing Quaker practice. It also gives hope and encouragement to those who seek to find a unity that reaches beyond words.

Margery Post Abbott, 1997

We come to know God in our relationship with others. We learn new ways of being with others and loving them that comes from God.

Margery Post Abbott, 2012

Advices from *Faith and Practice 1993* (Unity, Mutual Care)

Different ways of understanding the divine life occur among us. These differences should not be ignored for the sake of a superficial agreement. They should be recognized and understood so that a deeper and more vital unity can be reached. Convictions which might divide or disrupt a Meeting can, through God's grace, help to make it creative and strong. Friends should keep faith and fellowship with each other, waiting for that unity which draws them together in the love and power of God.

Our need for love and care, our response to this need in others, make up a rich part of our lives. In an exchange truly grounded in love, each of us is both giver and receiver, ready to help and accept help. Neither pride nor fear keeps us from the unconditional love and care of God manifested through others. Let neither comfort nor self-centeredness blind us to need of others. We listen to one another with openness of heart and in good faith, aware that greater wisdom than our own is required to meet our human needs. We lift up our hearts to the source of all Wisdom and power.

Queries - Community

- How do we foster love, truth, and harmony within our community?
- Is our community a shelter where we can grow in Spirit? How can our community provide the best combination of safety and challenge to encourage spiritual growth?
- How do we as individuals share our gifts with the meeting? How do we as a community help individual Friends find their own gifts and share them with others?
- How do we as individuals support the spiritual health of the meeting? How do we as a community support the spiritual health of individual members and attenders?
- How do we make our meeting a beloved community and a living testimony—for all members and attenders, wherever they are in their own spiritual journeys?
- How do we create a radically inclusive culture in our Quaker community?
- How does our meeting community reflect the Spirit and Truth at the center of our lives?

Queries – Unity

- When problems and conflicts arise, how do we work to resolve them in a spirit of love and humility?
- Do you endeavor to let go of your individual desires and let the Spirit lead us to unity?
- How do we open ourselves to the diversity of culture, language, and expressions of faith in our community of Friends?
- How do we respect the reputations of others? Do we avoid gossip? Do we protect confidentiality?

Queries – Mutual Care

- In what ways do we bring together members and attenders, young and old, in love and community?
- Are we sensitive to each other's personal needs and difficulties? How do we assist in useful ways?
- Do we visit one another in our homes and keep in touch with distant members?
- How do we listen to one another, even beyond words?
- How do we provide mutual care while acknowledging our own limitations?
- How well are we able to love each other unconditionally?