

The Four Doors to Meeting for Worship

The First Door

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In his Pendle Hill pamphlet, *Four Doors to Meeting for Worship*, William Taber writes that Meeting for Worship is a form of communion for Friends, in which we gather in silence in order to enter a reality that “is always here within us and beside us, available to us as an invisible stream into which we can step at any time.”

Worship, then, is not so much something we do, but is a state of consciousness which we enter which brings us into communion with the Living Presence. He identifies four stages, or doors, to Meeting for Worship.

The First Door: The Door Before

The Door Before refers to those times when we find ourselves in a worshipful state at any time during the week, day or night. Daily “retirement” (a time, even brief, of reading the Bible or other inspirational readings, or engaging in a spiritual practice) is frequently recommended by those who regularly experience the Living Presence. Going through the Door Before many times a week allows Friends to take their seats on Sunday already prepared for entering the familiar and living Stream.

Beginning and persisting in a spiritual discipline is an important step toward personal spiritual growth and a solid and meaningful meeting for worship. Even when just a few Friends regularly go through the Door Before, the entire meeting settles more easily into the deep and living quiet which Quakers call a “gathered meeting.”

Queries:

- In what ways do you have a time of “Daily retirement” for inspirational reading or spiritual practice?
- How does your practice during the week influence your experience when in Meeting for Worship?
- How has your practice impacted your personal spiritual growth?