

## What's the difference between silent worship and meditation?<sup>1</sup>

This is why I don't love the phrase "silent worship." It's confusing. We have other phrases that refer to sitting together in silence as Quakers: waiting upon the Lord, unprogrammed worship, expectant worship. I like "expectant worship."

Expectant worship can look like group meditation if you're watching it, and there's a meditative aspect, especially in the beginning when you're sorting through your thoughts and feelings. You have to get your body, mind, and spirit settled for deep listening.

But when we're practicing expectant worship, we're *expecting* to be guided by God. God is going to speak to us in some way during the time we are in worship together. Sometimes messages come without words, just a feeling of peace or something, and there might be silence the whole time.

Sometimes God's messages are personal. One person might receive some new insight but not feel like it's meant to be shared with others. Other times somebody senses a message that should be shared to the whole group, and that's when they stand up and speak. Anybody can speak.

Early Quakers said, "Christ has come to teach His people for Himself." So we're not just hoping we'll be guided. We're expecting it.

### **Queries:**

**Do you think of Meeting for Worship as "expectant worship" or is some other phrase more fitting for you?**

**How does this speak to your personal experience?**

**How do you experience God speaking to you or through others?**

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<sup>1</sup> From Emily Provance's blog: "Turning, Turning: Holy Experiment Among Friends." subscribe to her regular blog posts and other writings/talks at <https://goodnewsassociates.org/associates/emily-provance/>

