

Worship Sharing 12-5-23

**“A Community Formed for Faithfulness” Marcelle Martin, 2017**

“Basic to our Quaker faith is our understanding that everyone has direct access to the living God; each of us can receive divine guidance and leadings of the Spirit. We want to hear and respond faithfully, but doing so is not easy. Human beings are hardwired to seek approval, focus on fear, and conform to the beliefs and norms of our culture. Essential to the Quaker Way are the practices we use to help each other discern the quiet promptings of the Spirit, distinguishing them from all the other inner and outer voices and motivations that crowd our minds and hearts.”

“To foster genuine faithfulness among ourselves and become the prophetic witnesses we aspire to be, we need to widely develop and practice skills in discernment. Even more essential, we need to help one another clear our hearts and minds of whatever impedes our awareness of the Divine Presence, so we can open to the guidance that wants to shape our lives in counter-cultural ways. If we learn to better help each other live faithfully and make doing so an important part of our community, then we will grow in our ability to discern and respond when the Spirit leads.”

“Our culture teaches us not to pay attention to the divine guidance that comes from within. Giving our attention and credence to the often subtle, humble way that the Spirit makes itself known in our consciousness can feel risky. It is important, therefore, to have encouragement to notice and savor our experiences of divine love, guidance, and healing, however humble they may appear to be. Although Quakerism emphasizes the direct relationship that exists between each person and God, we have always found spiritual companionship helpful, often crucial, in accessing that direct relationship.”

“Many Friends have experienced an occasion when their community reached a sense of the meeting about God’s leading for them. A shift takes place after members of the group let go of their individual ideas and preferences and sense themselves being gathered into unity about a decision. There is often a collective experience of hearts opening or becoming lighter, freer, or “easy.” A sense of peace permeates the group, accompanied by profound silence, or awe, or quiet joy... Making faithfulness an important part of our community life will help us grow in our ability to discern and respond to the leadings of the Spirit.”

## Queries

How do these quotes speak to your experience?

How have you experienced participation in spiritual community as a ministry to yourself or others?

In what ways can we share these gift more broadly?

[https://www.friendsjournal.org/marcelle-martin-community/?utm\\_source=FJ&utm\\_medium=website&utm\\_campaign=related](https://www.friendsjournal.org/marcelle-martin-community/?utm_source=FJ&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=related)