

## **Worship Sharing 6/21/22**

### **Meeting for Business**

Inward yielding and waiting for a sense of unity to grow among all present are characteristics of the way Friends conduct their business. The spiritual disciplines of corporate discernment are grounded in the faith that we can perceive and affirm God's guidance for the gathered community. Our experience of worship undergirds our understanding of reaching unity in the Spirit, a sense of the meeting that sometimes comes as an unexpected blessing when we have labored hard to discern our way. As we listen to each other and seek together for Divine guidance, we can affirm the unity that enables us to respond faithfully.

~NEYM Faith and Practice 1985

Central to Quaker process is the understanding that our task is not so much to figure out what to do as to understand what the Spirit is asking of us as a corporate body. When we come to business meeting, committee meetings, or smaller meetings of individuals with this perspective, the focus shifts away from outcomes and towards community. Our task is to seek together, the same way we seek in meeting for worship, the experience of God in our midst.

~Westport Monthly Meeting 2006

"Consensus" is a word sometimes used to describe a Quaker-like process. Yet Quakers would insist that this is not the most suitable term. Consensus (or unanimous consent, or general agreement) is based on the work of human wisdom and reason, whereas "the Sense of the Meeting" is based on the prompting of the Spirit. Consensus is commonly understood to require mutual compromise—shaving away at positions until we find a core which is objectionable to none. The Quaker approach tries instead to reach toward a higher and greater Truth that speaks to all concerns in ways that could not have been foreseen. We discover what God wants for us, as opposed to what we thought we wanted. "Consensus is the product of an intellectual process. Sense of the Meeting is a commitment of faith..."

~Eden Grace, 2000

### **Queries**

- How do these quotes speak to your experience at Meeting for Worship with a concern for business?
- How can we better encourage each other to take care to consider, in a patient, loving and prayerful spirit, the perspectives of those with whom we may from time to time disagree?
- How do we build trust that the Spirit has guided those involved with the process which has brought the group to its current place?