

## EXPLORING QUAKER SPIRITUALITY

### DISCERNMENT – OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Here are a number of reflection activities that you might like to use following. You can do them on your own or discuss them with others (e.g. family, friends or members of your Quaker community).

#### **A Guided People: Quaker Spiritual Discernment and Decision-Making**

Using the handouts or the Power Point sides, consider the following questions:

1. Think of a time when you feel you have made a good and/or a bad decision? What had an impact on the quality of the outcome?
2. Might any of the practices covered in this session have helped with the above decisions? How?

#### ***Advices and Queries* – Discernment and Decision-Making**

Considering the frequent references to discernment in *Advices and Queries*:

1. Have you gained any new insights into your own practice of discernment? Do you feel led to do anything differently? What might that be, and why?
2. We are advised to 'do what love requires' of us. This is not always easy. What prevents you from doing what loves requires?

#### ***Quaker Faith & Practice* – Discernment and Decision-Making**

Looking at one or more of these passages:

1. Do you have any experience of taking a personal concern to your meeting or of helping to discern the concerns of others? Consider sharing your experience.
2. How can we ensure that our worshipful and ordered practice of making decisions is properly upheld? What might prevent us from giving this discipline the attention it deserves?

## **Discernment and Decision-Making in the New Testament**

Read and reflect upon the passage from Acts 15 about 'The Council of Jerusalem':

1. Which aspects of this account do you think reflect the Quaker approach? Consider sharing your reflections.
2. Do you disagree with or feel uncomfortable about any elements of this account? If so, why?

### **A 'Mini Clearness Meeting' Exercise**

Consider trying out this exercise with three or four people in your community. One person needs to oversee the process (reading out the details of each stage), one person needs to be the 'focus person' (bringing a decision or dilemma to the group) and two or three people need to form the committee. You can vary the times stated depending on how long you have available to undertake the exercise.

In practice, these stages would not be rigidly time-limited and a series of meetings may be held over a period of time.

In the interests of the 'focus person', when this exercise is used as training practice, it is best to focus on an issue that is not too serious, personal or controversial.