

Advices & Queries (Selections)

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NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
— OF FRIENDS —
QUAKERS

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Introduction

Advices first appeared in the form of epistles sent among Friends to encourage and strengthen one another in their faith. The earliest surviving collection of Advices was issued from Balby in England in 1656.

Queries originally related to specific items of information requested of local meetings from central bodies of Friends. In New England Yearly Meeting, queries began in 1706 as “Inquiries” and were just that—inquiries into how faithfully Friends were adhering to “truth testimony.” By the 1740s, the Queries had expanded to include reports on the spiritual state of the meeting, the number of new convincements, and Friends’ faithfulness on matters such as refusing to bear arms and plainness of speech and apparel. Right community behavior was clearly set out in Yearly Meeting minutes, which were later collected as a Book of Discipline. The advices carried the weight of “correct” responses to the inquiries, and this correctness was often gauged by behavior. There were consequences for “incorrect” responses, including disownment of those continuing in unacceptable behavior.

New England meetings used the London queries until 1760, when the Yearly Meeting adopted its own queries. The Yearly Meeting directed that the answers sent through the quarterly meetings to Yearly Meeting should be “full and explicit, comprising the substance of every part of each query, in order that this meeting, being rightly informed of the state of the church in general, the needful advice and assistance may be duly administered.”

In current New England practice, the queries are used as tools for personal and corporate spiritual self-reflection. We turn to our advices as a guide to the well-ordered, Spirit-centered life, cherishing the insights of generations of Friends who have come before us. We trust the Spirit to show us how the unchanging principles of truth they contain are to be understood and lived by us in our present situations.

2 Worship

ADVICES ON WORSHIP

1. Come to meeting for worship with hearts and minds prepared by daily communion with God, ready and willing to be faithful to whatever part the Spirit may call you to take. This may be vocal ministry or prayer, singing, silent worship, or prayerfully upholding the worshipping community. The Spirit may call anyone present to vocal ministry, regardless of training or experience. Be obedient and faithful in using the spiritual gifts given to you.
2. Come regularly to meeting for worship even when you are feeling depressed, tired, busy, anxious, angry, or spiritually dry. You are as beloved of God and as valued by your spiritual community when you feel empty as when you feel full. Have the courage to open yourself to what the Spirit may offer.

3. When you are preoccupied or distracted in meeting, do not become anxious or agitated, but gently bring your focus back to the Center, over and over again if necessary. If a thought keeps returning, the “distraction” may be a signal for work you need to do.
4. When you feel prompted to offer ministry in open worship, wait long enough to feel a sustained quickening of life in you, but do not hold back from fear of your own unworthiness or difficulty in expressing yourself. A few broken phrases centered in the Spirit may be more faithful than an eloquent speech.
5. Speak with your own voice, using terms true to your experience. Offer the message you are given in simplicity and sincerity, dispensing with preamble, apology, or justification.
6. When offering vocal ministry, speak in a clear voice. Standing may help you focus on the message; it will also help you to be heard.
7. When offering sung ministry, engage in the same discernment process as for spoken ministry. Join in such ministry offered by another worshipper only when you feel the Spirit’s prompting.
8. Remember that each person is a unique individual with a particular background and life experience, and that messages offered in meeting will reflect this variety. Part of worshipping together is listening with an open spirit. A period of silence following each message allows everyone to hold that message and its speaker in love. Hearing truth as others understand it is a way of deepening your own faith.
9. Be open to the variety of forms in which Friends worship. Broaden your understanding and appreciation of worship as practiced in the worldwide Quaker family.

QUERIES ON WORSHIP

Although Queries may often be answered with a simple affirmative or negative, it is vital to ask corollary questions, such as “why,” “how,” or “when.” A qualified answer arising from introspection is more meaningful and constructive than an uncritical “yes” or “no.”

North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) 1983

Queries for Individuals

1. Do I practice spiritual disciplines during the week to prepare my heart, mind, and spirit for corporate worship?
2. Am I faithful and punctual in attendance at meeting for worship?
3. What are my particular spiritual gifts and do I exercise them in meeting for worship?
4. Has my understanding of worship and its possibilities deepened over time and nurtured my spiritual growth?
5. Am I open to spiritual transformation in others and in myself?

6. Do I open myself to listen to those whose spiritual experience is expressed in terms different from the ones I understand and am comfortable with?
7. What have I discovered in meeting for worship, and does it inform my life?

Queries for the Meeting Community

1. What are the signs of vitality and immediacy of the Divine Presence in our meetings for worship?
2. What gifts do different Friends bring to worship?
3. Do we nurture spiritual gifts and show appreciation when they are exercised?
4. Are we aware of those among us who rarely speak in worship, but whose presence grounds the meeting?
5. Are we open to ministry expressed in a variety of religious terms?
6. How well and how deeply do we listen to one another?
7. Do we recognize ministry as faithful even when it makes us uncomfortable?
8. Do we nurture our children in Quaker worship and know them as fellow worshippers?
9. Do our corporate and personal worship practices enrich each other?
10. Does our worship lead us into faithful action?

3 Corporate Discernment in Meetings 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.

Our business meetings begin and end with worship, framing the work at hand with centered awareness in the divine presence. Although the business to be addressed requires attention to facts, details, and varying options, we seek to remain spiritually grounded throughout the discernment process. Our decisions do not rely on majority rule, but rather on a unity found through calm attention to the Light Within. The Spirit may speak through anyone present and it is our task to listen and speak with humility and to trust in the Spirit’s guidance.

The heart of Friends’ business process is the nurturing of spiritual openness and deep listening that allows the sense of the meeting to emerge. At times, there may be unanimous agreement that a proposed action should

be carried out. However, when those gathered are not in simple agreement, careful consideration will be given to each speaker, and silent worship may be requested. If all in attendance draw on their disciplines of worship and stay mindful that the purpose is to seek the will of God for the gathered body, unity can be found and acted upon. Sense of the meeting is the understanding of where the gathered body is led and does not mean that every individual present is completely satisfied or in total agreement. Contrasting views and perceptions may be expressed and some disagreements may remain. The sense of the meeting emerges from the committed efforts of a loving community and strengthens its bonds.

ADVICES ON CORPORATE DISCERNMENT

1. Being orderly come together [you are] not to spend time with needless, unnecessary and fruitless discourses; but to proceed in the wisdom of God, not in the way of the world, as a worldly assembly of men, by hot contests, by seeking to outspoke and overreach one another in discourse as if it were controversy between party and party of men, or two sides violently striving for dominion, not deciding affairs by the greater vote. But in the wisdom, love and fellowship of God, in gravity, patience, meekness, in unity and concord, submitting one to another in lowliness of heart, and in the holy Spirit of truth and righteousness, all things [are] to be carried on; by hearing, and determining every matter coming before you in love, coolness, gentleness and dear unity.
Edward Burrough 1662
2. Remember that we are only able to act according to our present sense and judgment, in the faith that the light we are given is enough for our needs today. Let us be humble both with one another, and in anticipating that there may be more and different steps to take tomorrow.
3. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.
4. In searching together for the will of God in matters before the meeting, Friends are seeking the truth, so that all may join in its affirmation. We are not engaging in debate, or trying to win an argument. Know that working together as a community of spiritual seeking is often more important than simply getting things done.
5. On entering the meeting, avoid falling into conversation. Take your seat quietly, entering into a receptive silence. As the meeting moves forward, listen carefully to what others say, that you do not burden the meeting by repetition. Allow time for quiet reflection after each speaker so that their words may sink in and receive due consideration. Should you disagree with what has been said, show respect for those who have spoken by offering another viewpoint in a humble spirit.
6. Address the clerk rather than another individual and speak only to the matter under consideration. Do not attempt to speak for Friends who are

absent as they are not present to sense the movement of the Spirit in the gathered group.

7. Hold the clerks and the whole group in prayer, especially when difficult matters are being considered.

Advices for Clerks

1. Prepare an agenda in advance to balance the flow of business in a thoughtful way, listing committees which are to report and actions or concerns calling for discernment.
2. Remember to keep in mind the relationship of each agenda item to the larger life of the meeting.
3. Announce difficult matters in time to allow Friends to come prepared.
4. Open the meeting with worship.
5. Recall that your role is as servant to the meeting rather than participant in discussion. Employ listening more than speaking.
6. Remind Friends to address the clerk when speaking, rather than responding directly to other speakers.
7. Remember that worship during the meeting can keep Friends gathered in the Spirit.
8. Allow time as needed between agenda items for the recording clerk to compose minutes.
9. Some Friends speak easily and often. Take care they do not prevent quieter, more hesitant Friends from participating.
10. Conclude with worship.

Advices for Recording Clerks

1. Pre-write standard minutes (opening and closing, committee reports, outstanding business, etc.) but remain open to the possibility that the Spirit will lead the meeting elsewhere.
2. Expect to compose substantive minutes to be read back to the meeting for approval at the time.
3. You may ask the clerk and the gathered body to hold you in prayer when working on a difficult minute; remember it is the meeting’s minute, not your own.
4. Primarily minute actions and decisions. At times, additional context may be provided for clarity. “Less is more” is a good rule.
5. Minutes should reflect the sense of the meeting rather than a list of individual comments or perspectives.
6. If no decision is reached, a minute of exercise can capture where the meeting is in its discernment at that moment in time.
7. Names are not recorded unless the action pertains directly to specific person(s): marriage, traveling minutes, memorials, membership, etc.

Advices from John Woolman

Words in bold are advices articulated by Michael Birkel in his article “[Some Advice from John Woolman on Meeting for Business](#)” in the January 1995 issue of *Friends Journal*. The text in bold is copyrighted by Friends Publishing Corporation and has been reprinted with permission. To subscribe: www.friendsjournal.org/subscribe.

For some of the advices, Michael included actual quotations from Woolman. The Faith and Practice Revision Committee has added quotations for advices where he did not do so. All quotations are from *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*, 1971 (edited by J. Moulton).

Know where of you speak, and speak from the center rather than from preconceived notions.

I had occasion to consider that it is a weighty thing to speak much in large meetings for business. First, except our minds are rightly prepared and we clearly understand the case we speak to, instead of forwarding, we hinder business and make more labor for those on whom the burden of the work is laid. (p. 95)

Speak with economy, attending more to the matter at hand than to yourself as speaker.

If selfish views or a partial spirit have any room in our minds, we are unfit for the Lord’s work. If we have a clear prospect of the business and proper weight on our minds to speak, it behooves us to avoid useless apologies and repetitions. (p. 95)

Imagine how it feels to others.

Where people are gathered from afar, and adjourning a meeting of business attended with great difficulty, it behooves us all to be cautious how they detain a meeting, especially when they have sat six or seven hours and a good way to ride home. In three hundred minutes are five hours, and he that improperly detains three hundred people one minute, besides other evils that attend it, does an injury like that of imprisoning one man five hours without cause. (p. 95)

Don’t pretend the conflict isn’t there.

To see the failings of our friends, and think hard of them, without opening that which we ought to open, and still carry the face of friendship—this tends to undermine the foundation of true unity. (p. 112)

Value real community.

[T]hrough the strength of that love which is stronger than death, tenderness of heart was often felt amongst us. (p. 102)

Keep your eye single to righteousness, not self-image or self-righteousness.

I heard that the case was coming to our Yearly Meeting, which brought a weighty exercise upon me, and under a sense of my own infirmities and the great danger I felt of turning aside from perfect purity, my mind was often drawn to retire alone and put up my prayers to the Lord that he would be graciously pleased to strengthen me, that setting aside all views of self-interest and the friendship of this world, I might stand fully resigned to his holy will. (pp. 91-92)

Strive to reach the pure witness in others.

And though we meet with opposition from another spirit, yet as there is a dwelling in meekness, feeling our spirits subject and moving only in the gentle, peaceable wisdom, the inward reward of quietness will be greater than our difficulties. Where the pure life is kept to and meetings of discipline are held in the authority of it, we find by experience that they are comfortable and tend to the health of the body. (p. 68)

Humility and charity work best.

If such who were at times under sufferings on account of some scruples of conscience kept low and humble and in their conduct manifested a spirit of true charity, it would be more likely to reach the witness in others, and be of more service in the church, than if their sufferings were attended with a contrary spirit and conduct. (p. 98)

Righteousness and love are inseparable.

And in the heat of zeal, I once made reply to what an ancient Friend said, which when I sat down I saw that my words were not enough seasoned with charity, and after this spake no more on the subject.

And then after some close exercise and hearty repentance for that I had not attended closely to the safe guide, I stood up, and, reciting the passage, acquainted Friends that though I dare not go from what I had said as to the matter, yet I was uneasy with the manner of my speaking, as believing milder language would have been better. (pp. 110-111)

QUERIES ON CORPORATE DISCERNMENT

Although Queries may often be answered with a simple affirmative or negative, it is vital to ask corollary questions such as “why,” “how,” or “when.” A qualified answer arising from introspection is more meaningful and constructive than an uncritical “yes” or “no.”

North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) 1983, p.33

1. Do you seek the leadings of the Light in meeting for business as you do in worship?
2. How do you prepare your heart and mind for meeting for business?
3. Do you come prepared for the business at hand, having read relevant material or with committee reports ready for distribution?
4. Do you make an effort to maintain your awareness that God is with us as we work?
5. Do you proceed in a peaceable spirit with forbearance and warm affection for each other?
6. Do you trust that the Spirit has guided those involved with the process which has brought the group to its current place and do you respect the decisions that have already been made?
7. Do you attend to the clerk, speaking only when acknowledged, and refraining from conversations back and forth across the room?
8. As a member of a spiritual community, do you acknowledge differences and seek to settle conflicts promptly in a manner free from resentment and all forms of inward violence?
9. Do you take care to consider, in a patient, loving and prayerful spirit, the perspective of those with whom you disagree?
10. Have you considered whether God’s will for you as an individual may differ from God’s will for the meeting?
11. When a decision is being reached with which you disagree, are you faithful to your responsibility to speak if led?
12. When the meeting comes to a decision, do you accept it as “our” decision rather than “theirs”?
13. Are we willing to recognize when we are in a place where we should not act, but rather to wait patiently for further guidance to come?

11 General Advices and Queries

... so far as [our gracious Creator's] love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation. Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable — that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.
John Woolman (date unknown)

The advices and queries elsewhere in this book help us to discern what God is asking of us in specific areas of our lives. These general advices and queries challenge us to turn to the Inward Teacher and to nurture faithfulness as a foundation for every thought and action. We seek the particular ways we might be led to serve the one common interest of which Woolman speaks, both as individuals and as meetings, “turning all we possess into the channel of universal love.”

Advices convey the wisdom gained from the inward experiences of Friends trying to live faithfully in the Light. They may reassure us, counsel us, or challenge us. Queries are tools directing us toward the Source of guidance as we reflect on our current condition, as individuals or as meetings. They elicit responses, but not answers. The value of the queries lies in our thoughtful consideration of them, recognizing both the response that rises out of our current condition and the one that expresses our aspirations. Bringing these two responses together is a continuing challenge as we strive to live faithfully. While we may formulate queries related to particular situations, these general advices and queries can be used again and again as a spiritual tool as we grow and change.

It is a common practice for meeting communities to use the advices and queries for inspiration and as a guide for reflection on their spiritual health. Some meetings read an advice and/or a query in meeting for worship or meeting for business. Other meetings have special gatherings to consider a query or a set of queries, where Friends can speak their thoughts and personal experiences during a period of worshipful listening.

Individual Friends use the advices and queries as part of their personal devotional practice and as tools for self-examination, finding both inspiration and challenge in them.

Pray with advices and queries; hold them in your hearts. Consider each of them at some time. Feel which speak to you, challenge you, show you the way. When a query could be answered with a simple “yes” or “no,” go further and ask “why,” “how,” or “when.”

ADVICES

1. Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Seek to live in affection as true Friends in your meetings, in your families, in all your dealing with others, and in your relationship with outward society.
2. Seek to lead others to Truth through love. Let us teach by being ourselves teachable. We are all humble learners in the school of Christ.
3. Do not fear periods of doubt and questions; they may lead to openings.
4. Make space in your daily life for communion with God and for spiritual nurture through prayer, reading, meditation, and other disciplines which open you to the Spirit.
5. No one human being or group has the full measure of the Light. Seek to understand the experience of those whose theology and practices differ from your own. Take opportunities to enter into prayer and work with the wider community of faith. Find ways to articulate your own faith so that it may be shared with others.
6. Ground your spiritual life in your own experience of the Divine. Speak and act from that experience.
7. Trust that the Inner Light can lead us beyond our individual perceptions and desires into action grounded in God’s truth.
8. Stand still, wait for divine guidance, then act.
9. Attend to the Spirit at work in the ordinary activities and experiences of your daily life. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Be open to and alert for how the Spirit may be speaking to you in fresh ways, leading you in new directions.
10. Examine your leadings through a process of discernment to determine whether or not they are grounded in the Spirit. Test your discernment with your faith community.
11. Be alert to how “way opens.” It may be revealed through a door closing.
12. Be grateful for the gifts you have. Neither be too proud of them nor value them too little. Do not waste time coveting the gifts of others.
13. Offer up your time, talents, energy, and resources for God’s guidance in their use. You may find yourself called to work for which you feel you have no gift. With prayer and discernment, you will understand how to respond to the call.
14. Let your life speak.
15. Remember that love is a gift of the Divine, not simply a human emotion. As imperfect human beings, we are not always able to feel loving toward one another, but by opening ourselves to the Light Within, we can receive and give love beyond our human capacity.

The following are advices of New England Yearly Meeting Young Adult Friends, inspired by their experience at the 2005 World Gathering of Young Friends in Lancaster, England and Kenya. (See NEYM 2005 Sessions, Minute 51, pp. 21-22.)

1. Attend to what love requires of you.
2. Humbly seek out that of God in the way others live, and find what's deeply right in it. Talk about your spiritual journey explicitly. Find words for that which is hard or strange. Evangelize. Spread the good news.
3. Never be absolutely sure that you are right.
4. Abandon your forms when they do not fulfill God's will.
5. Find in your faith things to live humbly by and to die for.
6. Do your work. Call others to do theirs.
7. With your sins and the sins of your parents: admit them, repent them, heal the wounds. Read the Bible.
8. Have joyful worship. Do not always be somber.
9. Face your fears and your powerlessness. Have faith.
10. Know who you are spiritually, and trust God to know where you are going.
11. Deny the distractions. Follow only God.
12. Love boldly. Share deeply.
13. Forgive and forgive and forgive.

QUERIES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND MEETING COMMUNITIES

Ask yourself: Am I down in the flaming center of God? Have I come into the deeps, where the soul meets with God and knows His Love and power? Have I discovered God as a living Immediacy, a sweet Presence, and a stirring, life-renovating Power within me? Do I walk by His guidance, ... knowing every day and every act to be a sacrament?
Thomas Kelly 1966

1. How does Truth prosper among you?
2. “You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?”
3. Do you allow the Inward Teacher to work in you? Are you teachable?
4. Is every aspect of your life open to the transforming power of God? What stands in the way?
5. Are you open to the many ways Spirit may speak to you?
6. Do you recognize divinely inspired insight? Can you distinguish between divine leadings and your own needs or desires?
7. To whom or to what are you accountable?

8. How does your faith relate to the Christian heritage of the Religious Society of Friends?
9. What do Jesus’ life and ministry mean to you?
10. Do you look for opportunities to deepen your understanding of the history and testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends? Do you inform yourself about the diversity of Friends’ theology and practice? The space within Quakerism is graciously large. Where are its boundaries?
11. What calls us into a Religious Society? Do we grow together in faithfulness?
12. Do you listen for the Spirit even when the words are foreign to you? Is your own understanding of God enriched by other people’s experiences of the Divine?
13. Do you use your time, energy, resources, gifts, and material possessions in the service of God’s love?
14. Are you ready to respond to any concern God may lay upon you, large or small?
15. Do you maintain an appropriate balance among work, service, worship, family, and recreation? Are you ready to rest if God asks it of you?
16. What does love require of you?

Appendix 8: Pastoral Care and Clearness Committees for Personal Discernment

8A. Advices and Queries for Pastoral Care Committees

Advices

1. As a meeting, we accept a degree of responsibility and concern for one another. We would not wish to turn aside from one another in times of need.
2. As members of pastoral care committees, we wish to ensure that each member of our community is able to draw upon the meeting’s care and concern. Useful ways to give support will necessarily vary from one situation to another. As we offer help, we strive to be sensitive to one another’s spiritual, emotional, and material condition, and to the need of each of us to maintain our personal dignity and protect our privacy.
3. Pastoral care committees should seek not to act beyond their competence or beyond the limits of their proper responsibility. Clear discernment of proper responsibility comes when caring arises from the heart of compassion and when people are held firmly in the light.
4. Our feelings and motivations necessarily color our decisions and discussions about individuals. We need to be especially aware of our feelings about a person and that these may overcome our ability to

discern God’s will. We should be prayerful in maintaining this awareness and, as necessary, remaining silent in our meetings.

Queries

1. Do we reach out to ensure that contact is maintained with all of our Meeting community? Do we make clear that we are available to offer mutual support - spiritual, emotional, and material? Are all encouraged to seek and accept the support of the Meeting?
2. Do we take care that each member of our community is held in sensitive awareness, with respect for personal dignity and privacy? Are we tender of one another’s feelings? Do we maintain confidentiality, avoid gossip, and refrain from unnecessary and inappropriate exchange of information?
3. As we offer pastoral care, do we each maintain awareness of our own needs and motivations and the effect these may have on our own care-giving? Are we careful to distinguish personal feelings about individuals—positive or negative—from our charge to care for them? In striving to help others, do we seek the Spirit through prayer and silence?
4. Are we sensitive to the limits of our capacities and the limits of our responsibilities? Are we prepared to express these limits and recommend professional resources?
5. Do we remember to faithfully hold in prayer those to whom we offer care? Do we as members of pastoral care committees hold ourselves mutually accountable to the spirit of these queries?

8B. Guidance for a Clearness Committee for Personal Discernment

A clearness committee meets with a person who is unclear how to proceed in a keenly felt concern or dilemma, hoping that it can help this person reach clarity. It assumes that each of us has an Inner Teacher who can guide us and that the answer sought can be found by the person seeking clearness. It also assumes that a group of caring friends can help draw out the Spirit’s guidance from and for that person. The committee members’ purpose is not to give advice or to “fix” the situation; their task is to listen, setting aside their own prejudices or judgments, to help clarify alternatives, to help communication if necessary, and to provide emotional support as an individual seeks to find “truth and the right course of action.” The clearness committee works best when everyone approaches it in a prayerful mood (which does not exclude playful!).

8C. Queries and Advices for Those Asked to Serve on Clearness Committees

Queries

1. Is this your work to do at this time?
2. Can you devote sufficient time and energy to this committee, knowing that it may take several meetings and many weeks or months to clarify the problem and provide support while the decision is made and carried out?
3. Do you feel sufficiently at ease with the focus person and with the other members of the committee to work with them? Can you engage with them to provide an atmosphere in which divine guidance can be sought?
4. If it is a decision to be made by more than one person, can you set aside your own prejudice or bias as you listen to each person involved?
5. Are you willing to keep the committee discussions confidential and avoid gossiping or referring to them outside the committee unless those requesting the help of the committee are comfortable with a wider sharing of their problem?
6. Can you keep an open heart and an open mind about the outcome?

Advices

1. While the convener takes care of the practical details of setting up the meeting and keeps a sense of right order while it is in progress, remember that each member of the committee shares responsibility for maintaining a prayerful presence, asking for times of silence when needed, and asking questions as led by the Spirit. It is not an occasion to provide counseling but a spiritual exercise which aims to help the focus person or people to hear the Spirit’s guidance for themselves. Don’t offer solutions or advice but ask honest, probing questions to assist them in this process. Listen deeply to all that is said.
2. If the meeting is for more than one person, try to give equal attention to each person present, whether adult or child.
3. Remember that people are capable of change and growth. Do not become absorbed with past excuses or reasons for present problems. Focus on what is happening now that is perpetuating the situation or causing the need for a decision to be made.