

Joining Quakers

Perhaps you have been attending a Quaker Meeting for some time, have discussed aspects of Quakerism with Friends, and done some reading about it. You might have attended a course or workshop in order to find out more. You may now feel that the time is right to consider becoming a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Why become a member?

Membership is the outward acknowledgement of your inward spiritual life towards commitment or belonging to the Religious Society of Friends. It is a sign of your personal involvement with a group of people who share convictions about the purpose and meaning of life. Membership shows that, though the religious path is an intensely individual one, it is one where you choose not to “go it alone”, because you wish both to give and to receive loving care and support on our journey. Being a member of the Society, means on the one hand that you can rely on Friends, and on the other hand that they can rely on you. It involves the sharing of loving care, and a sharing of responsibility.

Before applying for membership, you could ask yourself these questions:

- Has Meeting for Worship based on silence become an essential part of my life? Have I discovered the variety of Friends by going to Meetings for Worship other than my own? How do I respond to the challenge of Advices and Queries?
- Have I read the anthology of Quaker writings, *Quaker faith and practice*, and learned about the experience of the Religious Society of Friends and the Christian roots of the Society? Am I aware of what Friends have stood for in the 350 years of their existence, and of close association between Quaker faith and practice?
- Will I be willing to take on one of the jobs which are essential in a group which has no leaders or paid helpers? Am I willing to contribute financially to the extent that I am able? Am I willing to be a friend in the broadest sense of that word to the other people in my meeting?

Applying for Membership

If you have decided to apply for membership, this is how you go about it.

Write to the Clerk of Area Meeting. If you do not know the name and address ask any member of your meeting. It is helpful to Area Meeting if you give a few details about yourself and your reasons for seeking membership, but you can just say ‘I would like to apply for membership of the Religious Society of Friends’.

Your application will go to the next Area Meeting, and they will ask two Friends to visit with you and talk it over. This is not an ‘examination’ – it is to make sure that you understand what membership of the Society involves, and to give you a chance to ask anything you want about the Society. One of the friends will probably be known to you, so it will be an interesting and enjoyable visit for you all. They will then tell the next Area Meeting about their visit, and the decision of the Area Meeting will be brought to you by a member as soon as possible after that.

If you become a member, your meeting will be very happy. But if you decide that at the moment membership is not for you, there is no less of a welcome for you in your meeting.