

* * * * *

"My spiritual practice has always been a central part of my life, but as an adult I was unsuccessful in finding a spiritual community where I felt comfortable and challenged to grow. About a decade ago someone told me about Quaker Meeting for Worship.

At CFM I have found a community that supports and enriches my inner life. While each of us attending approaches our relationship to the Light uniquely, I have found a community of people who experience the Divine within and among us; who make their relationships with the ineffable a priority in their lives; and who try, as I do, to live so that our outward lives correspond to our inner values and priorities."

* * * * *

"Following a crisis of faith in college, I had an experience that led me to the insight that experience, not theology, would be the basis for my faith. Eventually, I came to describe myself as a socially engaged, postmodern, universalist contemplative.

For me Corvallis Meeting is a community of support which offers a set of contemplative practices without requiring the profession of beliefs which run counter to my deepest intuition of the truth. It is a privilege to make my small contributions to a tradition that is spirituality grounded in silent worship and that works to reduce suffering through generosity and social action. We are a community that is part of a long line of open but otherwise ordinary people, who in our best moments 'pour out in love what we take in by contemplation'."

Corvallis Friends Meeting
3311 NW Polk St.
Corvallis, OR 97330
541-752-3569
www.quaker.org.corvallis
March 2011



Why I Attend Corvallis Meeting

Short Statements by Members and Attenders

"I love sinking into the expectant, waiting silence with others around me. It works so much better for me than seeking the guidance of the Inner Light alone. Just by being together we support each other to stay and wait. It's too easy for me to get up and do whatever is pulling at me when I'm alone.

I began attending Quaker meeting in the spring of 2008. At that time my overall life philosophy was pretty solid, but felt I needed a community that would allow my individual expression of that philosophy. I no longer needed someone outside myself telling me what was right or wrong; I could feel that for myself. Even more so, I needed to be able to make choices to take care of myself (as much a child of God as anyone) and not feel or hear talk about "selfishness" or "self sacrifice".

Friends Meeting has embraced and welcomed me and has supported me through difficult transitions as well as joyful celebrations.

On multiple occasions I have sat silently struggling with a situation running around my head when another Friend has spoken with a story, quote or experience which has given me immediate perspective and clarity—not to mention relief! A few times I have had the honor to serve others in the same way.

This gentle gift of silence that we share each week at Meeting has brought me closer to my Inner Truth and Light of God than any sermon, mass or structured religious ceremony ever did.

This may not be the path for all, but it is shelter and home for me."

* * * * *

* * * * *

"The first reason, frankly, that I come to Quaker Meeting is to get some peace and quiet.

It is an hour in which I cannot possibly do any of the nagging tasks on my things to-do-list. I love the silence—no credos, no sermons, nobody telling me when to stand up or sit down. Aah, contemplation.

In addition, some of the Quaker ideas appeal to me a lot: "There is that of God in everyone," "Holding someone in the Light," and even "Speak truth to power." (That last seems right but scary.) I look forward to learning more. The community matters to me as well. I like the people collectively, and some I know well enough to like individually. Some I admire greatly."

* * * * *

"Meeting for worship has a physical effect on me. I relax into the silence as if floating on a calm ocean that consists of everyone and everything in the world and is larger and deeper than the world. After a while I can let go and be open to that ocean. Occasionally a message rises; most of the time it doesn't—worship still has a powerful effect. It doesn't matter to me why it happens or what I call it. It is real. It helps me function in a loving way and my actions are more important than my beliefs.

I have to keep going back to that ocean of connection and checking with it so that my actions come from that state and aren't just from habit or a sense of duty. I try to maintain that connection during Meeting for Business and sometimes I manage to do so."

* * * * *

"I attend Friends Meeting in part because I don't have to explain why I come there. I also don't have to "park my brain at the door" to participate.

It is one of the rare religious traditions that does not require a set of beliefs; rather, what's needed is a commitment to a process. Transcendent spirituality is something to be experienced within that process, and there is no requirement to describe it with any particular traditional terms.

In the context of Quaker meeting, one has a community in which to share private inner leadings and gain from the wisdom that comes through others. Humility, trust, compassion and intellect all come into the discussion and decision-making, and we understand that none of those alone are sufficient. Quaker process seeks clarity and unity. In the process, I can more clearly discern the value of a particular leading. Such leadings are a gift to all of us. The collective potential creates a synergy that exceeds what I can do with any confidence alone.

It is a place where I can deepen and merge my inner spiritual journey and my external peace-making work. I find among Quakers people who measure their lives by qualities of compassion and action. The 400-year history of Quakers illustrates the steady progress of human evolution that is possible when the carefully distilled spiritual motivations take the lead and a community commitment to shared values profoundly transforms society."

* * * * *

I attend Friends Meeting because I'm addicted. Expectant silent worship puts my life in order. My thinking is clearer and I am more loving in my relationships. If I don't worship weekly, I more easily confused than normal. I have a difficult time remembering what's important and figuring out what to do next.

Silent worship isn't easy or natural for me. I spend more time than I'd prefer thinking about ordinary stuff. I stop and refocus my attention, but it soon wanders. When it feels best, I have my attention on God—not with any words, expectations or speculations, but just my attention.

The odd thing is that when I reflect on an hour of worship and know that my attention has wandered, I am still more focused through the week. My daily prayer times are more fruitful. My daily, momentary decisions are surer and more reliable.

Being around the people in Corvallis Friends Meeting has been a blessing in my life and in the lives of my children. They care. They listen. They are honest. The life searches of Friends reinforce the ones I am on. What they have found in that searching is a guide and an inspiration to me and to my family.