

6. When the work might pose challenges for a nominee, the Nominating Committee offers to help arrange support and guidance from an individual or a Support Committee.
7. The Nominating Committee considers the gifts and talents of new and young members and attenders.
8. The Nominating Committee provides information about workshops and other training available for clerks, treasurers, and committee members.
9. The committee stays aware of individual Friends who are carrying heavy responsibilities for the meeting; it understands that it is unwise for one or two people to hold too much responsibility.
10. When there are persistent difficulties in filling offices or committees, the Nominating Committee makes the meeting aware.

Religious Education Committee

The committee adopts curricula, activities, and projects that reflect Quaker faith and practice for both adults and children. It helps children feel welcome and integrated into the meeting community. Care for young people is an opportunity for the whole meeting, not just a task of one committee. The meeting can provide recognition of transitions such as high-school graduation; it can nurture the spiritual gifts and spiritual contributions of young people, and encourage participation in meeting for worship. A large meeting may have separate committees for children's religious education and adult programming. See "Religious Education and Study" in Chapter 3, "Friends Spiritual Disciplines."

Clearness and Other Care Committees

Meetings form various kinds of ad hoc committees to assist members and attenders. Different meetings use different names – a "Clearness Committee" in one case may be a "Support Committee" or "Anchor Committee" in another. No matter what the committee is called, meetings take good care to establish any such committee mindfully, state its charge clearly, and name a clerk to convene its meetings and guide its process. Typically the

Pastoral Care Committee appoints the committee in consultation with the person or group needing clearness, support, or care.

Such a committee may also meet without the focus person or group present, to seek Light for its work. The committee may ask:

- What are our appropriate behavioral boundaries? Are we keeping to them?
- Are we helping or are we hindering, for example by fostering dependency?
- Are we allowing the focus person or group to do their own work, or are we being too directive?
- Are we staying within our responsibility and charge?
- Have we gone beyond our ability? (That is, is it time to recommend professional help?)

Clearness Committees. Clearness Committees are ad hoc committees appointed by the Pastoral Care Committee. Their original and continuing use has been for those requesting membership in the Religious Society of Friends and for those contemplating marriage. Over the years, the scope of Clearness Committees has widened to address personal problems and decision making.

When an individual, family, or other group is facing a particularly difficult situation, they may request a Clearness Committee. The Pastoral Care Committee appoints the committee and names its clerk in consultation with the person or group concerned. Situations in which clearness is sought may include changes in a marriage relationship such as separation or divorce; interpersonal conflicts within the meeting; stands on public issues; a new job; a required move to a distant area; a concern for personal witness; travel in the ministry; and other personal decisions. The Clearness Committee and the person or group meet together in worship to seek divine Guidance.

The process begins with the person or group asking for the committee to help hear what God may be asking of them in a particular area of life. The committee usually consists of two to four trusted individuals (but not necessarily close friends) willing to

listen. The Clearness Committee's clerk convenes the committee and keeps it focused. Another member may take notes.

The committee gathers in silent worship. The person or group speaks out of the silence concerning the question weighing on them. Listeners offer gentle open-ended questions to clarify the matter; the person or group responds from the heart. The committee's inquiries invite the focus person or group to deeply engage and discern their own truth, rather than offering advice or judgment in the guise of questions. All present are committed to attend to the movement of the Spirit, recognizing that this is a time for the person or group to find their own way in accord with the Light, not an opportunity for others to share stories about how they solved similar problems. The listeners reflect back what they have been hearing. Further meetings are arranged if desired. In all things the committee remains aware that the process is confidential.

Support Committees, Anchor Committees. A Support or Anchor Committee is an ad hoc committee acting as elders for a Friend who is filling a responsible position within the meeting or the Society. The clerk of a meeting, a hospital chaplain, a prison visitor, or a Friend with a leading in peace, social justice, or environmental action – all can benefit from a gentle, strong listening presence to help them stay faithful, grounded, and accountable in their ministry. The Friend may choose the committee name that best describes the type of assistance they need. The Pastoral Care Committee or Worship & Ministry Committee appoints the Support or Anchor Committee (usually two to five people) and names its clerk in consultation with the Friend concerned. The Support or Anchor Committee exists for the duration of the Friend's work.

Care Committees. A Care Committee is an ad hoc committee that usually consists of two or three people who walk alongside a Friend during major life transitions, long-term illness, or incapacity. The Pastoral Care Committee appoints the committee and names its clerk in consultation with the Friend concerned. The Care Committee responds to the person in need of assistance by arranging for food, prayers, visits, transportation, or other support

that can be provided by volunteers. It may make available counsel, information, and support in planning for life transitions. The Care Committee reports regularly to the Pastoral Care Committee and is laid down when the Friend's situation is resolved.

Friends in Ministry

...That care be taken for the families and goods of such as are called forth into the ministry, or who are imprisoned for the truth's sake...

Epistle from the Elders at Balby, 1656

“Friends in Ministry” includes Friends with leadings to travel among, write for, and speak to other Friends, as well as Friends whose lives speak in a specific outward witness – for example, visiting prisoners, working among the mentally ill, addressing racism, or serving at food banks or homeless shelters. In our time, “Friends in Ministry” is expanding among unprogrammed Friends to include, for example, Friends in professions with an explicit pastoral or ministry component, such as chaplains and spiritual directors.

Vocal ministry during meeting for worship is described in “Expectant Worship, Vocal Ministry” in Chapter 3, “Friends Spiritual Disciplines.”

Released Friends with a Concern. Friends endeavor to serve God through their daily lives. However, in some Friends there arises a leading to some specific task. The leading is felt as an imperative claim – it cannot be denied even when the individual experiences deep personal reluctance. This is what Friends call a “concern.” It is also possible for a concern to arise spontaneously in a meeting in response to a particular need or opportunity. From early days the Religious Society of Friends has greatly valued those leadings of the Spirit which result in individual and corporate concerns. However, concerns vary in merit, depending on the validity of the inspiration and the care with which they are considered and carried out. The concerns of even well-known Friends have not always been of equal significance. Some concerns are meant for an individual, others for a wider group. Friends pursue a concern