

The Most Important Things

Continue and expand upon the things that make us whole. In addition to worshipping together, we find joy in shared meals, common work, intergeneration (often playful) activities and singing together. Our sharing of joys and concerns provides windows into the one another's lives, further increasing the intimacy which often arises from our worship experience. Bound together in part by palpable differences with the larger culture, our community is enhanced as we support one another in our "differentness". In particular, meeting in homes provides not only a place to meet, but also an affirmation of values as we struggle to live plainly. The "busy-ness", which crowds our lives, needs to be confronted – perhaps in a series of 2nd hours.

Examine the way we do things. A framework of committees supports the work of the meeting. With neither pastor nor paid staff, *everything* is dependent on the work of these committees. At best, these committees become microcommunities, providing a comfortably small place in the larger meeting community. Committees therefore can provide a way to integrate newcomers.

- We need to explore the resources which would provide information and training necessary to help committees function better.
- Some F/friends are unable to undertake the ongoing responsibility of committee membership, but would be able to undertake some specific, well-defined task. Defining these tasks removes burdens from committees, while getting the work done. Coordinators might be able to handle singing, Listserv moderation, and some issues around the Memorial Garden.
- Meeting is not yet making full use of technology. Although we recognize that some F/friends are not comfortable with computers, the use of email to distribute information prior to committee meetings, etc. is very helpful. We need a Listserv (probably moderated) to disseminate information and to facilitate logistical work. The latter would be most useful if paired with a calendar. An ad hoc committee on technology might be fun.
- Last, but not least, we should consider hiring a part-time person to provide logistical support to committees and coordinators and to maintain the records of the meeting in a consistent way.

Conflict resolution. We feel that conflicts from the past (sometimes, but not always, the recent past) have a very destructive impact on the meeting community. Our unwillingness to promptly deal with disagreements and hurts means that they fester and are never really resolved. This creates a minefield for the newcomer, who inadvertently may stumble into old hurts, thereby creating more hurt and provoking an inexplicably strong reaction. Old, unacknowledged, wounds also may make it difficult for people to work together and may create an environment of distrust. We recognize that this is a common situation in Friends' Meetings, but we are also aware that Friends have useful traditions. **Recommendations.** During the first year we would like to see the Meeting actively planning for Conflict Resolution work. To avoid further burdening the Pastoral Care Committee, a Study Group on Conflict Resolution would be established to examine sources of strength in our Quaker traditions and history and to identify potential sources of assistance. In subsequent years, we would recommend that the meeting establish a line item in the budget to provide training in conflict resolution and mediation for some interested Friends and to support intervention of a skilled, seasoned outside facilitator if appropriate. Do we need a Grievance Committee?

Facilities. To serve our community-building needs, our facilities need to reflect a simple beauty which provides a place of spiritual refreshment and welcome. There is an urgent need to both spruce up the place and provide increased accessibility. At present, our basement, where we eat together, is inaccessible to mobility-impaired people. Similarly, bathrooms in the meetinghouse are not accessible. Additionally, the sound system doesn't work well. We need a task force to examine these issues and possible solutions. Accommodating our older Friends will help us prepare for our aging population and prevent marginalization of those who carry our institutional memory.