

Spiritual Growth and Nurture Dream Team

Individual nurturers of spiritual growth – reclaiming the role of elder

Recognize the importance of using our gifts as critical to our spiritual growth
Explore reclaiming the traditional role of eldering as identifying and supporting the development of gifts among our members and attenders
Redefine eldering as a role of many, not a title belonging to a few
Encourage a new generation of mature Friends to nurture the spiritual growth of others in meeting
Consider having our committees be more mindful of calling forth and supporting the gifts of their members and others at meeting; especially Nominating, Pastoral Care, Ministry and Worship, and Religious Education (kids and adults)

Implications for meeting practices and structures:

Probably would be no structural changes, since we do not envision the establishment of a new group called “elders”
Some committees might be asked to consider a new addition to their charge – the calling forth and nurturing of gifts

Human and financial resource requirements:

Some individuals would be challenged to consider taking on a new role at meeting
There might be some financial implications if we invited someone outside of meeting to help us explore this idea, someone like Marge Larrabee, for example, who has given workshops on eldering at FGC
One committee, possibly Ministry and Worship, might be asked to oversee the exploration of this dream

Small groups as essential to spiritual growth

Recognize and affirm the existence and importance of all small groups in the meeting – permanent, short term, and single event groupings – for the building of community and the nurturing of the spiritual life of group members
Encourage everyone at meeting to be in a small group
Support our often overworked committees in broadening their charge to include nurturing the growth of their members
Recognize the importance of our spiritual life in recognizing individual and corporate leadings and as a source of energy to follow them

Use the newsletter, silent announcements, bulletin boards and website to publicize the existence of small groups and to share information about their activities

Implications for meeting practices and structures:

There are many small groups already – no new structure is necessary
Individuals and committees could be encouraged to form new groups as way opens and needs arise
An occasional second hour to share small group experiences and options might be a helpful new practice

Human and financial resource requirements:

We see no financial implications of this dream
Already existing resources (newsletter, silent announcements, etc.) can be used to support it
Ministry and Worship Committee has already developed a list of the small groups at meeting and could be tasked to nurture this dream

Creating more meeting-wide opportunities for reflection and study

Provide adult religious education activities on most first days, with multiple opportunities occurring at the same time
Consider the use of curriculums developed by Quaker and non-Quaker groups
Introduce a time for sharing following Meeting for Worship (often called AfterThoughts or AfterWords) during which Friends can reflect on their worship experience

Implications for meeting practices and structures:

The introduction AfterThoughts or AfterWords would probably require changing our first day schedule to accommodate this new activity
Expanding adult religious education activities might also result in schedule changes,

Human and financial resource requirements:

Adult Religious Education Committee would have to be expanded
Consideration might also be given to having a paid staff person support our religious education program
Curriculums and other learning materials would require meeting funds
Ministry and Worship Committee might also need more members to oversee this and other dreams from our team

