

Suggested Guidelines for Discussion Groups

1. *Use “I” statements.*
Share your ideas and thoughts in a manner that owns them as your personal views and perspectives. “I believe that...” or “I feel that...” Understand and acknowledge that your beliefs are rooted in your life experiences.
2. *Listen deeply and lovingly, responding in a collaborative spirit.*
Lovingly accept each person’s contributions as reflecting her or his experience, whether or not the experience is your own or is common to others. Be interested to see and learn from others’ perspectives.
3. *Wait a few seconds before speaking.*
In order to help slow down the discussion and keep participants from interrupting each other, take a few deep breaths after another person shares before you begin to speak.
4. *Self-monitor the frequency of your contributions*
If you tend to speak readily, slowly count to ten before speaking; there may be someone in the group who needs more “time space” than you to feel comfortable or safe speaking up.
5. *Pay attention to the power dynamics of the group.*
Has any one group (of age, race, gender, etc.) “hogged” the time or determined the shape and flow of the sharing, thus compromising safety, respect or mutuality?
6. *Honor confidentiality.*
Hold in confidence anything of a personal nature that is shared.

Suggested Guidelines for Worship Sharing

1. *Use “I” statements.*
Speak honestly and genuinely from your own experience, sharing prayerfully from your heart (that is, from your whole self), not from your head. Always remember and honor the differences between sharing and informing.
2. *Listen deeply and lovingly without commenting.*
Accept what others share as true for them at this time. Assume goodwill. Avoid correcting, fixing, debating or rebutting. Try, as well, to avoid praising others’ contributions. Be tender with one another. Listen, to the best of your ability, with love and with an open, accepting heart.
3. *Allow silence between sharings.*
Leave space between sharings so that all can truly listen to what is shared and can allow each contribution to sink in. And, certainly, never use the time while others are speaking to plan what you are going to say. As each individual shares, you may want to hold him or her in the Light (in prayer).
4. *Exercise healthy self-discipline.*
Speak only once until everyone has had a chance to share. One is free to share or to pass, as led. Do not take up more than your “fair share” of the time.
5. *Honor confidentiality.*
Hold in confidence whatever is shared unless given express permission to share it outside the group.

For additional information on worship sharing and how to facilitate it, please visit <http://www.fgcquaker.org/ao/toolbox/worship-sharing>

