

Suggestions for a Spirit-led Visit

A Spirit-led relationship between the meeting calling for assistance and the visiting Friends can be pivotal. The following suggestions are offered as ways to facilitate that relationship and to foster a spirit of ministry, participation and collaboration.

Begin bathing the meeting in prayer as soon as you know you will be visiting.

Always keep in your mind and heart that you are traveling in ministry. Take time for personal prayer about the upcoming visit. Also plan times for prayer with your travel team partner(s). You may want to invite other Friends to join in prayer – both prior to the meeting and during it.

Open with worship. Take time to have a meaningful time of worship, not just a time of perfunctory silence. Stay centered in worship throughout the meeting. Recognize it may be helpful for the group to return to waiting worship during the meeting. You may want to designate which of the travel team will speak and which will be there to hold the group in worship.

Test assumptions with the group. The initial contact may have come through one person. Maybe the group you're meeting with has now expanded to include others who were not part of the initial conversation. Test the assumptions of why the group is gathered and the purpose of the meeting. Testing assumptions and inferences enables members to get valid information and to make informed choices. This builds group trust.

Encourage the group to share all relevant information about the issue and/or need. Explain to the group that sharing information ensures that all members have a common base of information. It is important to note that group feelings are relevant information to be shared.

Be specific – use examples. Unlike general statements, specific examples generate valid information that people can draw from based on shared experience.

Ask group members to translate for themselves. Invite them to listening lovingly and accept words offered in a loving spirit. If they hear a word that doesn't "work" for them, ask them to translate it into a word that fits for them. If they don't understand a word, invite them to ask for clarification.

Ask the group what important words mean. This may seem obvious, but in the end it is vital. Asking the group to define important words helps them describe what they mean and what they do not mean.

Make statements. Then invite questions and comments. Inviting others to comment encourages them to question and challenge ideas. It also helps focus discussion as a dialogue rather than a series of monologues. Example: "You might consider doing XX for the following reasons . . . But some of you may feel differently or have some questions. It would be useful for each person present to share what you think about this idea, whether you agree or disagree." Consider what effect this might have on your meeting.

Do a self-evaluation at the end of each on-site meeting. Ask members to provide the feedback on the visit.

This document was downloaded from the website of Friends General Conference. Explore the many resources and opportunities we offer for Quakers, Quaker meetings, and all interested individuals. Go to www.fgcquaker.org.

