

# Holding Space for Newcomers: Friendly Sevens

---

Many Quaker meetings and churches have used the “Friendly Eights” small group model to build community among Friends and attenders. Friendly Eights are groups of eight members and attenders that typically meet once a month to share a potluck meal and fellowship. Some Friendly Eights groups continue meeting over months and years while others offer a one-time opportunity for deepening relationships among folks who may not know each other very well.

**The visitors who step through the doors of our meetinghouses are often seeking both *meaning* and *belonging*. One key way to address this desire for connection and to integrate newcomers into the life of our meetings is to provide small group opportunities that allow newcomers to become known and to develop friendships.**

With this in mind, consider organizing “**Friendly Sevens**” groups within your meeting community, through a regular schedule of potluck meals or social outings. The eighth spot in each group is reserved for and open to a newcomer.

Keeping one spot open for a newcomer reminds Friends of the importance of being ready to welcome visitors. Plus, in the meantime, the Friendly Sevens small group schedule can serve as a form of inreach and community building among the Friends who are already present in the meeting.