

Guidelines for Coming under the Care of an Established Meeting

Quakerism tends to be a grass roots faith. Worship groups often spring up spontaneously. Many grow into vital meetings. But the process of germination and growth is helped enormously by coming under the care of an established meeting.

So what is involved in coming under the care of meeting? Below are some guidelines your group may find helpful as you consider coming under the care of a meeting.

1. The first thing to remember is that coming under the care of a meeting is not about “control.” It is about finding support, nurture, and learning more about the Quaker way from Friends who are already living it in community. It is a wonderful opportunity for your group to connect with spiritual friends, to share your enthusiasm, to learn, and to give the meeting a chance to practice ministry with you.
2. If your group approaches a meeting about coming under its care, they will most likely appoint a clearness committee. The clearness committee would meet with your group to examine what is being requested of them and why. Be honest about your needs and what sort of support you hope for. Do you want people from the meeting to be a regular part of your group? Or do you just need help and nurture?

The clearness committee will consult its yearly meeting’s *Faith and Practice* to see what procedures and processes it lays out for new groups and meetings having such a group under its care.

3. If the leadings are clear, the clearness committee recommends to the meeting for business that your meeting take your new worship group under its care.
4. The meeting will then nurture your group advice and counsel as needed. Friends who have been asked by the meeting to provide nurture will visit regularly with you new worship group, either in person or via Skype, email, or telephone.
5. Your group should plan to regularly attend meeting for business at the meeting and report your activities and concerns.
6. Most likely membership in your worship group will held by the parent meeting. Marriages will be taken under the care of the meeting. That’s because, in most cases, only established monthly meetings are able to exercise this kind of semi-legal authority.

7. When your worship group is strong enough to manage its own business independently, you may ask the meeting for recognition as a monthly meeting. The process is often laid out in a yearly meeting's *Faith and Practice*.

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