

Spiritual Deepening: Invitation to a Personal Spiritual Practice

Invitation

In addition to exploring Quaker roots and sharing our spiritual journeys with each other, one key feature of the Spiritual Deepening Program is an emphasis on personal and communal spiritual practices that invite us to strengthen our relationship with the Mystery. During the time that we're meeting together as a Spiritual Deepening small group, **you are invited to consider adopting a personal spiritual practice.** You may already have a spiritual practice integrated into your life that you choose to continue. Or, you may discern to stretch yourself by trying something new.

It is important to remember that in our spiritual practice we are not trying to change ourselves, or to judge ourselves (or anyone else) either positively or negatively. We are simply opening ourselves to *That Which is Eternal*, the Light within, Christ, the Divine, as we are.

Practices

Some possibilities for your personal spiritual practice include:

- Journaling
- Bible study
- reading other spiritual writings
- holding someone or a concern in the Light (in prayer)
- centering prayer or other way of being in prayer
- chanting
- giving thanks
- singing
- body prayer
- art
- yoga
- time in nature

Choose something that feels right to you. There may be something that you feel called to try.

Commitment

Make an individual commitment to a personal spiritual practice. Setting aside a particular time of day for your spiritual practice will be very helpful, making it easier for you to be faithful to doing your practice every day. Some people find the first thing in the morning works well; you may need to get up half an hour earlier. Late evening, before you go to bed but not immediately before, may work for you.

When you miss a day, which you likely will, just continue with your practice the following day, or when you can. It is not helpful to blame yourself, or to think that this is something you can't do. Just start again. Even if you have been faithful to your chosen practice for several weeks, you may find that it just is not working for you. Simply let that practice go and try something else.

It may be helpful to keep a journal as part of the daily practice. Pray to be willing to be opened to being changed.

As you begin, consider the following questions. You may find it helpful to write your answers. These questions are just for you, to help you see more clearly where you are, how you feel, and where you want to be.

What do you hope to gain through a commitment to a spiritual practice?

What specific steps might you commit to take in order to open yourself to be available to Transforming Power?

What challenges do you anticipate?

What support do you need?

We will be checking in with each other every few weeks to examine how our spiritual practices touch our lives.

Resources

For help in deciding on a spiritual practice, see Patricia Loring's **Listening Spirituality, Vol. 1: Personal Spiritual Practices Among Friends**. From the QuakerBooks website: "This is an essential Quaker spiritual-formation text, which grew out of workshops that Pat Loring led for Friends for years. In this volume, Loring explores many personal practices, which can help to sharpen one's perception of God. She suggests setting aside time each day for spiritual refreshment, 'a time of "retirement" from outward concerns and activities, to attend exclusively to the movement of the Spirit.' She explores many possible practices and offers ingredients for Friends to make time for the holy in one's daily life. She offers a feast from which we can discover a rich daily meal." This book, as well as many other resources that support spiritual practices, can be purchased from QuakerBooks & More: <https://tinyurl.com/kx9y2xv>