

Minute on Sexual Orientation

Northampton Friends Meeting wishes to affirm that we extend to all members of our community, whatever their sexual orientation, the same quality of love and support. We are one community of faith; we experience the varieties of love in our community as gifts of God and that we all have the same potential to reflect the Divine Light in our lives.

Our faith underlies these affirmations:

First, concerning the spiritual basis of our beliefs, as a group our hearts resonate deeply with the biblical injunctions to “love your neighbor as yourself.” We experience all forms of loving relationships as manifestations of God's love on earth.

Second, we believe that Friends' testimony on equality is central to our Quaker faith. Just as Friends have historically witnessed for equality among all races and both sexes, so do we now witness for equality among people of all sexual orientations. We understand equality not as sameness but as equality of respect.

Third, we affirm that our sexuality and sexual identity are integral components of who we are, not separate from who we are as spiritual beings. For lesbian, gay and bisexual members of the community, this allows for a wholeness of being, a feeling of personal unity within the context of the community. We bring our whole selves to our relationship with the Divine and find that sexuality within a loving relationship, whether homosexual or heterosexual, has the potential to

bring us closer to God.

We as a Meeting feel that we have been blessed by the presence and participation of lesbians, gays and bisexuals as individuals and, for some, as partners in same sex couples. We are committed to providing spiritual care and acceptance to all these individuals, believing that the spiritual growth of each person best ripens in the context of a community of faith and with the support and loving regard of that community. Furthermore, we are committed to seeking out ways to actively provide that love and support, being mindful of the oppression lesbians, gays and bisexuals face in our society.

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