

An Introduction to  
**Quaker**  
Testimonies



WILTON QUAKER MEETING

# Table of Contents

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Quaker Testimonies.....       | <b>1</b> |
| Simplicity and Peace.....     | <b>2</b> |
| Integrity and Community.....  | <b>3</b> |
| Equality and Stewardship..... | <b>4</b> |
| SPICES.....                   | <b>5</b> |

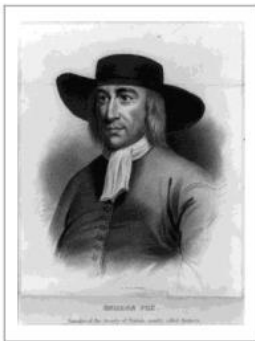
# Quaker Testimonies

## Definition



Quaker testimonies can be defined as a set of principles that we try to live by. There is no “official” list, and the actual number and make-up of the list has changed over the years. However, one popular list uses the handy acronym SPICES: Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship, which will be discussed in this pamphlet.

## History



From the very beginning of Quakerism in the late 1600s, individual Friends have had social concerns. He or she would prepare for that cause, always with the inner belief that there that of God in every person.

Some old testimonies related to the keeping of one’s hat on in the presence of one’s superiors, or the keeping of slaves, or drinking of alcohol. As customs changed, so did the need for these “rules”

# Simplicity



Historically, Quakers were known as “the peculiar people” because we dressed in “plain clothes” (broad-brimmed hats and bonnets) and spoke “plain language” (thee and thou). After a while, we realized that approach no longer represented the simplicity that we sought. Now, we just dress in regular clothes and interpret the Simplicity Testimony to mean not letting possessions get in the way of what is real and meaningful in life: open communication with others and one’s own spirituality. Clear away the clutter!

# Peace



Quakers believe that to engage in war is to kill those who have that of God within them, and thus abhorrent. Instead we seek to eliminate causes of war, such as poverty, intolerance, and exploitation. In renouncing war and violence, Friends embrace the transforming power of love and the power of nonviolence, striving for peace in daily interactions with family, neighbors, fellow community members, and those from every corner of the world.

# Integrity

This testimony comes from Jesus' advice that "All you need say is 'yes' when you mean 'yes' and 'no' when you mean 'no.'"

(Matthew 5:37) So Quakers do not take oaths, because one should speak the truth all the time, not just when on the stand. Quaker merchants were one of the first to put firm prices on their goods instead of bartering. The idea was to set an honest price for something and stick to it.

Integrity is more than being honest, however. There is a sense of being whole, integral, to oneself, as you go through life, so that the Light shines bright.

# Community



When Friends gather to worship in silence, it is different from one individual gathering in silence. We are a community, and it is a gathered silence, more than the individuals that make up the group. Beyond the worship time, we meet for fun, too. Regular hospitality time allow us to catch up on what has been going on with our lives, and we schedule parties, retreats, forums, to make us closer in spirit.

# Equality

Because there is that of God within each of us, each person should be treated equally. Early Quakers, from George Fox on, believed and wrote about this. Many women were preachers and leaders in the struggle for prison reform in those early days. Now, we are working for racial justice and struggling against white supremacy. Our sign in front of our meetinghouse says, “All are welcome” and we mean it!

# Stewardship



We must take care of what has been given, not only for ourselves but for the future generations. Let us use our resources wisely: conserve energy, recycle, reduce waste.

Also, use our own gifts wisely. Take time to think things out.

“All things are bound together. All things connect. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls also the children of the earth.”

Chief Oren Lyons, Native American Pathkeeper.

# S P I C E S

Simplicity

Peace

Integrity

Community

Equality

Stewardship



## Who we are

Wilton Quaker Meeting belongs to the unprogrammed Quaker tradition, in that we have no real program during the hour of worship every Sunday morning between 10-11, no sermon, no hymn singing, no readings. We sit in expectant waiting for that “still, small voice” to speak to us. Wilton Quaker Meeting is a Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends; in other words, we hold a business meeting every month. We also belong to the Purchase Quarterly Meeting and the New York Yearly Meeting, to put us in the larger context of Quakerdom.

## Acknowledgements

This pamphlet was inspired by a similar booklet created by the American Friends Service Committee. See [AFSC.org](http://AFSC.org).

## Contact Us

### WILTON QUAKER MEETING

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

317 New Canaan Rd

Wilton, CT 06897-3322

Phone: 203-762-5669

Email: [clerk\\_01@wiltonfriends.org](mailto:clerk_01@wiltonfriends.org)

Web: [www.fgcquaker.org/cloud/wilton-monthly-meeting](http://www.fgcquaker.org/cloud/wilton-monthly-meeting)