

# Notes on Committee Service in Strawberry Creek Meeting

Serving on a committee allows Friends to engage in the life of the Meeting. New attenders learn Quaker decision-making process, and all committee members have an opportunity to deepen relationships and develop their gifts.

-- Pacific Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice* (2001)

A committee is a group of individuals who have been given special responsibility for some aspect of the life of the Meeting. Members ought to feel a sense of rightness of their service - even a sense of calling. Appointments should not be accepted or declined lightly. Their acceptance should mean willingness to be regular in attendance of committee meetings, reliable in fulfilling responsibilities and respectful in working with other.

Give fully of your time, energy, and spiritual resources. Committees are places where fellowship and connections with one another can be made and strengthened, and joy can grow.

## **Before accepting a committee position:**

1. Read the job description. Be sure you know what the committee is all about, how frequently it meets, and the extent of between-meeting responsibilities. Talk to current or former members of the committee.
2. Give adequate thought to:
  1. how this responsibility may affect your spiritual deepening within the Meeting community;
  2. whether, with your current responsibilities, you can be regular in attendance at committee meetings and participate in the work of the committee; and
  3. whether you can be prompt to meetings so that everyone may settle and focus together.
3. You may not feel ready to serve in the capacity suggested by Nominating committee.
4. Discuss this with Nominating committee. Sometimes others sense a gift you are unaware you have to offer. -If you continue to feel unready to serve, a definite "no" to the nominating committee's inquiry is generally better than if you accept and have to withdraw after a time.

## **Serving on a committee:**

Committees differ in how frequently they meet and how much of their work is done at committee meetings. Many committees meet monthly, some committees meet rarely, while other committees meet bi-monthly or weekly during certain periods. Responsible participation of each committee member at committee meetings helps the committee function so that it can serve the Meeting well.

## Participation at committee meetings:

1. Commit to attendance. Call the committee clerk if you cannot make it to a meeting
2. Come promptly and prepared.
3. Share responsibility for maintaining the Spirit-led gathering.
4. Participate attentively. Speak and listen with respect for others.
5. If notes are kept, take your turn as notetaker. Get the notes to committee members promptly (within one week) after the meeting.
6. Some committees have agendas available ahead of meeting time. Review the agenda before the meeting and keep focused on it during committee discussions.
7. Help your committee make clear decisions. Quaker committees are different from committees you may have served on elsewhere. Business is conducted according to the good order of Friends, without voting or insisting on one's own strongly-held views. Practice directing what you say to the clerk. While offering your best thinking, consider the good of the life of the entire Meeting.
8. If questions about committee business arise after the meeting, discuss with the committee clerk.
9. If personal circumstances change, and you need to withdraw from committee participation, discuss with committee clerk, who may then contact Nominating committee for an additional member, if needed.

Committees serve the Monthly Meeting not only by carrying on routine delegated functions, but also by doing important background work in preparation for decisions at the Monthly Meeting/or Business. They examine designated matters in depth, identify the issues, gather the most useful information, and make seasoned recommendations for decision by the Meeting.

Committees conduct business in the same manner as a Monthly Meeting, waiting on the Spirit to find direction in their operation and unity in their decisions.

- Pacific Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice* (2001)

You may want to consider the following questions with your fellow committee members, both early in your committee participation and in an ongoing way:

1. How does this committee serve Meeting and interact with Meeting for Business?
2. How does my committee participation follow and encourage the good order of Friends?

Ideas in this document were gleaned from experience and from thoughts shared in workshops and committees. You can read more about Friends' committees in *Faith and Practice* of Pacific Yearly Meeting (2001, p111), New England Yearly Meeting (1985, pp 225-6), and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (1997, p 23). See also Strawberry Creek "Notes for Committee Clerks".