What do Quakers believe?

Quakers believe that spiritual life does not depend on the acceptance of doctrines nor the observance of rituals. Generally we recognize six central tenets: Simplicity, Integrity, Equality, Community, Peace and Care for the earth. These are not rules but ways of living in the world. Quakerism is an experience-based religion, meaning that we all have the capacity to know and be known by God directly, without clergy. We seek this direct communication and guidance during Meeting for Worship and in our everyday lives.

"Testimonies" are what Quakers call the ways we have found to live and act based on our beliefs. As a group, we find that listening to and following God leads to:

- **Integrity**—living as whole people who act on what we believe, tell the truth, and do what we say we will do.
- **Simplicity**—focusing on what is truly important and letting other things fall away.
- **Equality**—treating everyone, everywhere, as equally precious to God; recognizing that everyone has gifts to share.
- **Community**—supporting one another in our faith journeys and in times of joy and sorrow; sharing with and caring for each other.
- **Peace**—seeking justice and healing for all people; taking away the causes of war in the ways we live.
- **Care for the earth**—valuing and respecting all of God's creation; using only our fair share of the earth's resources; working for policies that protect the planet.

For contacts and more information visit us at [www.capecodquakers.org](http://www.capecodquakers.org)
What happens at Quaker Meeting for Worship?

Entering the Meetinghouse in silence, we sit down wherever we choose. In silent worship, we still our mind and body to more fully center our awareness upon the presence of God, or the Divine, in our own personal way.

Understandably, there are times when silent worship does not come easily. Some people find that prayer, a breathing technique, or reading the Bible or other devotional literature at the beginning of Meeting helps them settle down, thus opening the connection and more fully feeling the presence of God.

Sometimes the hour passes in complete silence and sometimes people are moved to share. Speaking, when there is any, arises from a deep spiritual experience and is preceded by a conviction that it must be shared. This is often sensed as an upwelling of the spirit, sometimes as an insight following study, meditation, and prayer. There is no need to respond verbally to such “vocal ministry” during the worship. Often such messages seem to reflect the concerns of others and may bring comfort or insight.

A previously designated person will indicate the end of Meeting for Worship by initiating the shaking of hands which is followed by introductions. At this time anyone is welcome to share afterthoughts from our silent worship experience. After some brief announcements, we adjourn to the Community Building across the way for fellowship.

What can you tell me about the Meetinghouse?

Beginning in 1658, the earliest Sandwich Friends Meetings were held in various homes and occasionally out of doors. The first Meetinghouse was built in 1672 on this site. This was followed by a second and then the third and present building. The lumber for this Meetinghouse was hewed in the Kennebec Valley in Maine, transported here by water, and erected in 1810. A few changes have been made over the years. The gallery opening in the ceiling has been closed and a movable partition installed. Historically, this allowed the men and women to hold their separate business meetings in close proximity at the same time. Today we enjoy the group effort that is required to raise the panels each late spring and lower them in the fall, so that only half the great room need be heated by our only heat source, the wood stove.

You are cordially invited to learn more about the beliefs and practices of Friends. We encourage you to check out our website: www.capecodquakers.org. Also, books and pamphlets are available in our library in the Community Building and members of the meeting will be glad to offer information and answer questions.

The Religious Society of Friends, an historically Christian movement, was founded by George Fox (1624-1691). It holds as a basis of its faith the belief that every human being is endowed with a measure of the Divine Spirit which may be directly experienced. Our manner of worship embodies this belief. We gather together in quiet assemblies, mindful of the spirit which speaks to us as we become aware of this Light Within.
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