

**Below are the questions used by an evening Meeting for Worship group which was run by Eric Roberts and Lauren Rusk at Stanford University.**

**Our evening Meeting group is on Wednesdays, fortnightly, and meets from 7:45-8:30, with an hour's discussion afterwards. At the moment we do not have a themed structure to the sessions, but have simply been sharing things which came up during the Meeting for Worship – like a slightly longer version of 'Afterwords.'**

**So, the questions below are not ones that we'll necessarily use in a formal way, but I thought they might be of interest and we may decide to have a less spontaneous structure to our discussions at some point. Personally I like the idea of having something to think about ahead of time – these questions were suggested by a different person each time, and would be put to the group at the end of a session, so they could be considered in preparation for the next one. Thanks to Eric for sharing these with us 😊**

Queries for the Stanford Quaker Group

10-Oct-95 Initial meeting

17-Oct-95 What do we do to enhance our spiritual lives outside of meeting?

24-Oct-95 What does "spirituality" mean to us?

30-Oct-95 Who are our spiritual models and guides? What people in our lives have most influenced us along these lines?

7-Nov-95 How have things we've read -- fiction as well as nonfiction -- helped us focus our spiritual thinking?

14-Nov-95 What does the Quaker testimony of simplicity mean for those of us who live in worlds that are as busy as academic life at Stanford tends to be?

21-Nov-95 What are our fears and how do they affect the way we live?

28-Nov-95 How do we develop and maintain spiritual relationships with our significant others and families?

5-Dec-95 How can we express our spirituality in our work?

12-Dec-95 What makes a spiritual community and how can we foster its development?

9-Jan-96 How did we each come to Quakerism? How has this group contributed to our search for spirituality?

- 16-Jan-96 No topic -- many people attended the Alice Walker reading instead.
- 23-Jan-96 What leads us as Quakers to search for spiritual meaning when so many others seem uninterested in such questions?
- 30-Jan-96 What should we read?
- 6-Feb-96 Reading selections from Thomas Kelly's Testament of Devotion.
- 13-Feb-96 Reading selections from The Gospel of Thomas.
- 20-Feb-96 During last week's discussion, something came up about people having a "heavenly twin," a perfect version of yourself. As a starting point for tonight's meeting, we should each draw or write something that describes our heavenly twin.
- 27-Feb-96 The discussion focused on "flow states" in which we feel more absorbed in or in touch with that spiritual mirror of ourselves.
- 5-Mar-96 A continuation of the discussion of spiritual flow states, concentrating on what they feel like to us, what we have done to achieve them, and what impediments get in the way.
- 12-Mar-96 How does love -- in all its various forms -- enter into our conception of spirituality?
- 19-Mar-96 Discussion of Martin Luther King's essay, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence."
- 26-Mar-96 How can we follow more closely the principles of nonviolence in our own lives? What barriers stand in our way?
- 2-Apr-96 As preparation, we all resolved to do something actively non-violent during the week (just not hitting anyone doesn't count), something that breaks from the usual to promote peace and love between people. The meeting was a discussion of our experiences.
- 9-Apr-96 What brings us to this group and what do we hope to draw from it?
- 16-Apr-96 What can we do to reduce the incidence of interpersonal tension and antagonism in our work?
- 23-Apr-96 What strategies do we use to help us center -- to find that inner state of peacefulness that is at the heart of Quaker worship?
- 30-Apr-96 In what ways does nature influence and enhance our spirituality?
- 7-May-96 What are the landmarks in our spiritual quest?
- 14-May-96 What experiences in our lives do we regard as spiritual gifts?
- 21-May-96 How do our experiences with and conceptions of death influence our spirituality?

- 28-May-96 How does our spirituality enable us to experience the fullness and joy of life?
- 4-Jun-96 How does simplicity influence our spiritual lives? How do we find it?
- 11-Jun-96 How do we as Quakers approach conflicts and conflict resolution.
- 18-Jun-96 What is "Quaker culture" and how does it relate to the outside culture?
- 25-Jun-96 What do we do when we don't live up to our ideals, collectively or individually?
- 2-Jul-96 What does a life commitment -- whether marriage or committed partnership -- mean to us? What is the connection between such relationships and our Quaker faith?
- 9-Jun-96 What should a clearness committee ask a couple seeking to be married or united under the care of the Meeting? What should the members of a couple ask themselves and each other as they prepare to take this step?
- 16-Jul-96 How do we, as Friends, come to terms with the anger we feel? Is it possible to express our anger in a constructive way that speaks to that of God of everyone?
- 23-Jul-96 In what ways do gender roles and stereotypes continue to affect our lives within the Society of Friends? What can we do to counter sexism in the Meeting and in our own lives?
- 30-Jul-96 Is it possible for Quakers to find unity more quickly on issues -- specifically the same-sex marriage question with which the Palo Alto meeting has struggled for years -- in which most Friends feel that justice dictates one position but a small number of people are unwilling to join in that consensus? What can we do to reach out to people who disagree on this issue? What can we do to make gay men and lesbians feel welcome in meeting despite the ongoing controversy?
- 6-Aug-96 Listen to and discuss "Baptism" -- an album of songs and poems performed by Joan Baez.
- 13-Aug-96 Show-and-tell: everyone should bring in something that is spiritually important and share it with the group.
- 20-Aug-96 Role-playing: rehearse solutions to problems in our lives.
- 27-Aug-96 Continuation of the role-playing exercise from August 20.
- 3-Sep-96 What does it mean to be human?
- 10-Sep-96 What can we do to be more fully human?
- 17-Sep-96 Bourgeois spirituality: Is it an oxymoron? How does the relative comfort of our lives here on the Peninsula influence our spirituality.
- 24-Sep-96 What is Quaker silence?

1-Oct-96 Reading of a selection from Jack Kornfield's book A Path With Heart.

8-Oct-96 How well does rational knowledge -- or booklearning or whatever we choose to call it -- relate to spiritual understanding?

15-Oct-96 What kinds of intelligence are there other than the rational/academic kind? How can we recognize them in other people and value them, as part of finding the light in others? How can we cultivate them in ourselves?

22-Oct-96 What part does joy play in our lives as Quakers?

29-Oct-96 How does music contribute to our spiritual lives?

5-Nov-96 No meeting (election day).

12-Nov-96 In what ways do our lives as Friends lead us to political action? In what ways do these aspects of our lives reinforce each other, and in what ways do they conflict?

19-Nov-96 Are we forgiving in our lives? How can we live up to our ideals in this regard?

26-Nov-96 What is spiritual healing? What part does it play in our lives?

3-Dec-96 What role does laughter play in spirituality?

10-Dec-96 How do Christ and Christianity fit into our Quaker spirituality as we understand and practice it?

17-Dec-96 How do we keep up ties with our friends and our communities across distances and time?

14-Jan-97 What is a good topic for tonight?

21-Jan-97 How are individual and corporate worship different and similar for us?

28-Jan-97 How are our dreams spiritual leadings for us?

4-Feb-97 What do we do to hear spiritual leadings and how do we recognize them when we have them?

11-Feb-97 Continuation: What do we do to hear spiritual leadings and how do we recognize them when we have them?

18-Feb-97 How do we see the light in people whom we find difficult to get along with?

25-Feb-97 Continuation: How do we see the light in people whom we find difficult to get along with?

4-Mar-97 Some people see God as distant and universal; others see God as more close and personal. How do we each experience God along these lines?

11-Mar-97 Continuation: Do we see or experience God as distant and

universal, or more close and personal?

18-Mar-97 What is clearness and how does a committee help us find it?

25-Mar-97 What is evil?

1-Apr-97 How do we resist evil (or strengthen good)? How do we help others do the same?

8-Apr-97 Why do people worship other people (actors, professors, and so on)? How does this affect us as Friends?

15-Apr-97 What is the role of leadership in the Society of Friends?  
How do we reconcile standard notions of leadership and the Quaker notion of being led by the spirit?

22-Apr-97 What does the Quaker concept of unity with nature mean to us?

29-Apr-97 What is the connection between our spirituality and dealing with grief?

6-May-97 What is the connection for us between spirituality and dealing with change?

13-May-97 What is prayer?

20-May-97 What is God?

27-May-97 Continuation: What is God -- not as a philosophical question, but in our own opinions and experience?

3-Jun-97 In what ways does Meeting for Worship meet or fail to meet our spiritual needs?

10-Jun-97 How can we bring ourselves to a more spiritual frame of mind before and during Meeting for Worship?

17-Jun-97 How do we bring perpetual, intense spirituality into our lives?

30-Sep-97 What influences have shaped our individual perceptions of spirituality?

7-Oct-97 Welcome evening for new student members.

14-Oct-97 What role does art -- in a broad sense that encompasses music, writing, the visual arts, and any other forms in which humans create beauty -- play in our lives as Quakers?

21-Oct-97 In keeping with the Quaker tradition of closing meetings with the joining of hands, the meetings of our worship group end with everyone holding hands in a circle. What role does this physical connection play in our spiritual experience?

28-Oct-97 Violent images and metaphors permeate our culture, turning up in song lyrics, movies, television, video games, sports, and even our own language. How do we, as Quakers, deal with the violent imagery that surrounds us in our lives?

5-Nov-97 What can we do, either as individuals or through our Quaker community, to reduce the violence and violent imagery that

surrounds us in this culture?

12-Nov-97 How are our lives as Quakers affected by the fact that we live in an increasingly capitalistic world?

19-Nov-97 How do individualism and honoring the individual work together with and/or conflict with your spirituality?

26-Nov-97 No meeting (Thanksgiving).

3-Dec-97 How do we deal with death and loss?

10-Dec-97 How can we best maintain and nourish our friendships?

17-Dec-97 As Quakers, what feeling do we have about Christmas? How do we integrate the spiritual and secular dimensions of the holiday?

7-Jan-98 Welcome for new members.

14-Jan-98 How do we find a balance between the contemplative and active components of our lives as Friends?

21-Jan-98 What should we read?

28-Jan-98 Most Friends Meetings today are universalist in the sense that the messages people offer often weave together ideas from many different sources. How can we integrate the different perspectives to achieve a more holistic understanding?

4-Feb-98 Where are we in our lives?

11-Feb-98 Where are we going in our lives?

18-Feb-98 Inspirational poetry: Gibran

25-Feb-98 Inspirational poetry: Oliver, Manley

4-Mar-98 Inspirational poetry: Sabelman, Hughes

11-Mar-98 Inspirational poetry: Tagore, Blake, Rich

18-Mar-98 Inspirational poetry: Rich

1-Apr-98 Inspirational poetry: Levertov, Eisley

8-Apr-98 What are we doing to work toward a right sharing of the world's resources; toward a balance between human life and the limited resources of our earth, so that all may have an opportunity to fulfill their lives?

15-Apr-98 What are our reactions to Easter and its meaning in our lives?

22-Apr-98 How does play fit into our spirituality?

29-Apr-98 What does it mean to be an adult?

6-May-98 What forms of prejudice are active in our lives and how can we seek to control its negative effects?

13-May-98 How do we find the light in everyone, including those whose actions hurt others?

20-May-98 Quakers often talk about the light: the light in everyone, holding friends in the light, seeking the light, and so on. What is that light, and what does it mean to each of us?

27-May-98 Through these Quaker night discussions, we have created a strong community that has fostered deep friendships and spiritual growth. As we go through changes that take us away from old friends and introduce us to new ones, how we can maintain those communities that strengthen and enrich our lives?

30-Sep-98 How have we come to this point in our spiritual lives?

28-Oct-98 What are our mysteries?

4-Nov-98 Why do we worship?

18-Nov-98 What are our sources of joy?

2-Dec-98 Our topic for this week follows from our discussion two weeks ago of the query "What are our sources of joy?" This week, we will consider "What keeps us from experiencing that joy?"

16-Dec-98 Discussion of the bombing of Iraq.

6-Jan-99 Welcome event for new members.

20-Jan-99 What parts of your life and activities give you the strongest sense of meaning and make you the most proud?

3-Feb-99 How can we develop our virtues?

17-Feb-99 No prepared topic.

3-Mar-99 What are the defining moments in your life?

17-Mar-99 What are our experiences with unconditional love?"

7-Apr-99 Welcome event for new members.

21-Apr-99 How have our travels contributed to our choice of life direction and our spiritual understanding?

5-May-99 Have you found a spiritual home?

6-Oct-99 How have we come to this point in our spiritual lives?

19-Oct-99 In what ways does fun play a part in our spiritual practice? In what ways does our spirituality contribute to our enjoyment of life?

3-Nov-99 Does the afterlife play a role in our personal sense of spirituality? How does our faith and practice as Quakers help us to think about the issues involved?

17-Nov-99 Does life have a purpose?

1-Dec-99 Our query this week concerns how we resolve questions in what one of our members described as "ethical gray areas." In our day-to-day lives, how do we choose our actions when these questions come up? Are our actions consistent with our philosophies as Quakers?

4-Oct-00 Brainstorming about topics for the quarter.

18-Oct-00 What are your spiritual anchors?

1-Nov-00 The topic we chose last time is "possessions." Particularly in this modern age, most of us have many of these. How do this fact influence our spirituality?

15-Nov-00 How does our spiritual practice interact with the way we experience and express our emotions?

6-Dec-00 What music has been most compelling to us spiritually? As we decided at the end of last time, everyone is encouraged to sing, perform, or play a recording of short segments of the music that has affected them most strongly.