

## *What Happens Here?*

We welcome you to share this hour of silent worship.

In the historic practice of the Religious Society of Friends, worshippers come together and sit down quietly, each waiting in the silence to know at first hand the presence of the living God and to have an immediate sense of divine leading. There is no prearranged program, outward sacrament, paid minister, or set prayer. All of us share in the responsibility to be open to the leading to speak, or to continue to wait in silence.

Meeting for Worship ends with the shaking of hands, begun by someone to whom this task has been assigned. Coming opportunities in the community life are announced, after which there is fellowship and conversation.

Please feel at ease. Bow your head if you wish, look around you if you wish. Focus your thoughts on a meditation theme, or listen for the heartbeat of the silence.

We are glad you came.

*And so, I find it well to come  
For deeper rest to this still room,  
For here the habit of the soul  
Feels less the outer world's control,  
The strength of mutual purpose pleads  
More earnestly our common needs,  
And from the silence multiplied  
By these still forms on either side,  
The world that time and sense have known  
Falls off and leaves us God alone.*

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER  
in "The Meeting" (1868)

Our worship is our gift to God,  
ministry through words is God's gift to us.  
As we seek the Presence,  
let us honor these gifts by testing our leadings to speak,  
discerning that they are truly guided by the Holy Spirit,  
that they are messages for the assembled body  
and not ourselves alone,  
and by allowing each message to settle  
into the hearts of those who need it  
by keeping silence between each ministry.

Let us allow ourselves to be gathered  
by the power and grace of the Light

—From a leaflet at the 1995 Gathering  
of Friends General Conference.