

Quaker Vocal Ministry

Northern Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice “Vocal ministry and careful listening are equally treasured elements of our worship. We willingly share ‘promptings of the spirit’ out of the stillness. We wrap spoken ministry in a silence of its own, seeking a depth of understanding beyond the words and listening for the guidance of the Spirit in responding to the message....The quest for Truth among us is shared in community. We seek to be open to the call to provide vocal ministry.”

George Fox (1624-1691) “If but one man or woman were raised by His power, to stand and live in the same spirit that the prophets and apostles were in who gave forth the scriptures, that man or woman should shake all the country in their profession for ten miles round.”

Isaac Penington (1616-1679) “Only wait to know that wherein God appears in thy heart... that it may spring up and live in thee, and gather thee into itself, and leaven thee all over with its nature.”

Elias Hicks (1748-1830) “The more strictly every man and woman lives up to the guidance of this inward anointing... the more instruction and help they afford one another.”

Thomas Kelly (1893-1941) “The most dynamic speech is uttered from inward listening. The life that has become a channel of the divine springs with freshness into utterance.”

Wendy Swallow (Reno Friends Meeting, 2024) “Quakers worship together not because we need to speak, but because sometimes the Spirit gives us words that connect our hearts.”

Britain Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice (Meeting for Worship 2.60) “All true ministry springs from the reality of experience and uses our gifts of heart and mind in its expression. But ministry is not the place for intellectual exercise. It comes through us, not from us.”

Possible Queries for Reflection

- What has stirred during the quiet for you?
- What did that process feel like and were you moved to share your new insight?
- In what ways does silence connect to compassion and presence?
- Did the silence transform your understanding or move you toward a leading beyond vocal ministry?