

Introduction from Faith and Practice:

The **Advices** have served Friends for many generations in their search for a life centered in the Spirit. Arising from the experience and aspirations of successive generations of Friends, the Advices are illustrations of how they seek to carry their faith into all aspects of life.

Advices first appeared in the form of epistles sent among Friends to encourage and strengthen each other in their faith. The earliest surviving collection of Advices was issued from Balby in England in 1656. Its concluding statement begins, "Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by."

Friends find their essential unity in their profound and exhilarating belief in the pervasive presence of God and in the continuing responsibility of each person and worshipping group to seek the leading of the Spirit in all things. Obedience to the leading of that Spirit rather than to any written statement of belief or conduct is the obligation of their faith.

Yet the Advices should have a quickening influence in shaping our daily lives. Their reading is intended to remind us that all aspects of our lives are under divine guidance and to heighten our awareness that in all our relationships we act in the sight of God.

Friends have developed the **Queries** to assist us to consider prayerfully the true source of spiritual strength and the extent to which the conduct of our lives gives witness to our Christian faith. To these ends, the Queries should be read frequently in private devotions and regularly in monthly and quarterly meetings.

In using these Queries, meetings should be aware that our standards of conduct do not derive from an outward set of rules but rather from the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, from the examples offered by the spiritual experiences and lives of those who have preceded us, and from our own encounters with that inward revelation through which "the way, the truth, and the life" seek expression today.

Spiritual Life

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of the Holy Spirit. It is God's redemptive love that draws us, a love shown forth by Jesus in all his life, on the cross, and in his abiding presence.

Friends are advised to make a quiet place in their daily lives for prayer and communion with God and to be constant in the reading of the Bible and other devotional literature.

Let us cherish the seed of God in ourselves and in others, that we may be open to new revelations of truth. Let us look to our meetings to guide and stimulate our spiritual growth.

1. Do you live in thankful awareness of God's constant presence in your life?
2. Are you sensitive and obedient to leadings of the Holy Spirit?
3. Do you seek to follow Jesus, who shows us the way?
4. Do you nurture your spiritual life with prayer and silent waiting and with regular study of the Bible and other devotional literature?

Meeting for Worship

Consider with care how God reaches us in meeting for worship. To every Friend is given a share of responsibility for the meeting. Friends are advised, therefore, to be diligent in attendance at meetings and in inward preparation for them. Let us be concerned to enter reverently into communion with God and with one another, to yield ourselves to the influence of the divine presence. Then what is evil in us may be weakened and the good raised up. God calls each one to the service of the meeting; let us be obedient and faithful, whether by word, by song, or by silent waiting, and let us receive the messages of others in a tender spirit.

1. Are meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance?
2. Are you faithful and punctual in attendance?
3. Do you come in a spirit of openness with heart and mind prepared for communion with God?
4. Do both silent and vocal ministry arise in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit?
5. Do all other activities of your meeting find their inspiration in worship, and do they, in turn, help to uphold the worshipping group?

Meeting Business

In meetings for business, and in all duties connected with them, seek again the leadings of the Light; let our utterances be brief and without repetition. Let us keep from obstinacy and from harshness of tone or manner and admit the possibility of being in error. In all the affairs of the meeting community, let us proceed in a peaceable spirit, with forbearance and warm affection for each other.

1. Are meetings for business held in a spirit of worship and prayerful search for the way of Truth?
2. Are all members encouraged to use their talents in the service of the meeting?
3. Do you undertake your proper share of the work and financial support of the meeting?

The Meeting Community

Let us live in love as members of a Christian community. Let us be ready to give and receive help, to rejoice together in the blessings of life and to sympathize with each other in its trials.

Let us maintain unity: let us avoid tale-bearing and detraction, acknowledge differences and seek to settle conflicts promptly in a manner free from resentment and all forms of inward violence; let us visit one another, making sure that those who are alone are drawn into the wider family of Friends. Thus, we may know one another as fellow workers in the things that endure.

1. Do you love one another as becomes the followers of Christ? Do you share each other's joys and burdens?
2. When conflicts arise, do you seek in mutual forgiveness and tenderness to resolve them speedily?
3. Are you careful of the reputation of others? Do you seek beyond all differences of opinion and circumstance for unity in the divine life?

Outreach

The power of God is not used to compel us to Truth; therefore, let us renounce for ourselves the power of any person over any other and, compelling no one, let us seek to lead others to Truth through love. Let us teach by being ourselves teachable.

Friends are advised to witness to the power of Truth and justice and to foster growth of the divine community at home and abroad. While remaining faithful to our Quaker insights, and ready to share them with others, let us seek to understand the contributions made by the people of God everywhere. Whenever possible, let us seek to enter into prayer and work with the wider community of faith.

1. Do you welcome inquirers and visitors to your meeting?
2. Do you encourage their continued attendance and participation?
3. Do you seek to share and to interpret the faith of Friends and to cooperate with others in spreading the Christian message?
4. Are you patterns, examples; do your lives preach among all sorts of people, and to them?
5. Do you walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one?

Personal Conduct

Let us bring the whole of our daily lives under the ordering of the Spirit. Let our faith free us from crippling fears so that we may live adventurously. In relations with others, let us exercise imagination, understanding, and sympathy. Let us live and work in the plainness and simplicity of true followers of Christ.

In view of the evils arising from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks and from the abuse of drugs, Friends are advised to consider whether they should refrain from using them, from offering them to others, and from having any share in their manufacture or sale. We should not let the claims of good fellowship or the fear of seeming peculiar influence our decision.

Let us maintain integrity in word and deed. Holding to the simplicity of truth, let us keep free of oaths. Remember how widespread and diverse are the temptations to grow rich at the expense of others, and how apparently harmless indulgence often leads by degrees to wrong-doing. Let us avoid and discourage every kind of betting and gambling and commercial speculations of a gambling character.

Friends have always held that the sacred nature of a sexual relationship is affirmed only

in marriage. In recent times, however, some Friends have found such affirmation in other contexts. Let us be certain, in any case, that we hold up to the Light any sexual relationship we may be considering and reject any relationship that may violate the integrity or spiritual welfare of either of the partners or of others. No relationship can be a right one which makes use of another person through selfish desire.

1. Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity?
2. Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in all your dealings with others?
3. Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates your life's activities?
4. Are your recreations consistent with Quaker values; do they refresh your spirit and renew your body and mind?

Home and Family

Let your lives benefit from the power of friendship and the solace of solitude. Rejoice in the beauty of those friendships which grow in depth, understanding, and mutual respect.

Friends are advised to seek divine guidance when considering marriage and to enter marriage with a commitment to cherish each other for life. In marriage, treasure the joys of intimacy, share the sorrows of losses, and mediate differences with patience. Be ready to seek the counsel of your own parents or of other experienced persons as it is needed. Consider together the responsibilities of parenthood.

Let us trust in the Light and witness to it in our daily living. We and our families are children of God with a rich accessible record of God's dealings with humanity. In dress, in furnishings, in manners, in diet, and in entertainment, let us choose the simple, the wholesome, and the beautiful. Let us be cooperative and creative in family recreation so that it encourages mutual activity and sharing.

Let us dwell with thankfulness on the blessings and happiness that life has brought us. Friends are advised to try throughout life to discern the appropriate moment to relinquish responsibilities to others. Let us face with courage the approach of old age, both for ourselves and for those dear to us, realizing that even as our outward activity lessens, our seasoned thought and prayer may liberate love and power in others.

Friends are advised to make provision for the settlement of their affairs while in health

so that others may not be burdened. Such provision may include maintaining an up-to-date will and discussing with family and doctors our wishes in the event of serious illness or death.

1. Do you make your home a place of friendliness, refreshment, and peace, where God becomes more real to those who live there and to all who visit there?
2. Is worship a daily part of your personal and family life?
3. Do you recognize marriage as a sacred, loving, and permanent relationship requiring mutual consideration and adjustments?
4. Should conflict or crisis threaten the stability of the home, are you open to seeking all necessary help, both from your meeting and from the larger community?

Care of Children

Care of the children of the meeting should be the responsibility of every Friend. Let us share with our children a sense of adventure, of wonder, and of trust and let them know that, in facing the mysteries of life, they are surrounded by love. Both parents and meetings need to guard against letting other commitments deprive children of the time and attention they need.

Friends are advised to seek for children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education. All Friends are cautioned against harshness of tone or manner when offering counsel or reproof. To the child, even a seeming harshness may check the beginnings of repentance or growth, and a lack of sympathy may cause harm where only good was intended. Let us nurture a spirit of common concern, thereby giving children a sense of belonging to a larger community.

1. Do children receive the loving care of your meeting?
2. Does the meeting nurture their religious life and give them an understanding of the principles and practices of Friends?
3. Are you an example to your children in your faithfulness to the ideals you profess?
4. Do you promote your children's moral and spiritual development by loving oversight of their education, recreation, and social activities?

5. Do you listen to children, recognizing that the Spirit may lead them along paths you have not foreseen? Do you assist them to assume their rightful responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the community?

Stewardship

Friends are advised to consider our possessions as God's gifts, entrusted to us for responsible use. Let us free our time and our abilities to be able to follow the leadings of the Spirit. Let us cherish the beauty and variety of the world. Friends are urged to speak out boldly against the destruction of the world's resources and the difficulties that destruction prepares for the future generations. Let us guard against waste and resist our extravagant consumption, which contributes to inequities and impoverishment of life in our own and other societies. Let us show a loving consideration for all God's creatures. Let kindness know no limits.

1. Do you revere all life and the splendor of God's continuing creation?
2. Do you try to protect the natural environment and its creatures against abuse and harmful exploitation?
3. Do you regard your possessions as given to you in trust, and do you part with them freely to meet the needs of others?
4. Are you frugal in your personal life and committed to the just distribution of the world's resources?

Vocations

In our relations with others in our daily work, let us manifest the spirit of justice and understanding and thus give a living witness to the Truth. While trying to make provision for ourselves and our families, let us not be anxious, but in quietness of spirit trust in the goodness of God. When we suffer from unemployment, let us seek the support and encouragement of our meetings. When we have a choice of employment, let us think first of the service that we may render. Let us be ready to limit our engagements, to withdraw for a time, or even to retire from a business that we may be free for new service as God appoints it.

1. Do you respect the value of all useful work, whether paid or unpaid, whether physical or intellectual, whether performed in the home or in the larger community?
2. Does your daily work use means and serve goals which are consistent with the teachings of Jesus?

3. Are you honest and trustworthy in all business transactions, prompt and just in payment of debts?
4. By counsel and example, do you encourage young people to enter vocations which will serve society?

Social Responsibility

Friends are called, as followers of Christ, to help establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Let us strengthen a sense of kinship with everyone. Let that sense of kinship inspire us in our efforts to build a social order free of violence and oppression, in which no person's development is thwarted by poverty and the lack of health care, education, or freedom. Friends are advised to minister to those in need but also to seek to know the facts and the causes of social and economic ills and to work for the removal of those ills. Let us cherish every human being and encourage efforts to overcome all forms of prejudice.

1. Do you respect the worth of every human being as a child of God?
2. Do you uphold the right of all persons to justice and human dignity?
3. Do you endeavor to create political, social, and economic institutions which will sustain and enrich the life of all?
4. Do you fulfill all civic obligations which are not contrary to divine leadings?
5. Do you give spiritual and material support to those who suffer for conscience's sake?

Peace and Reconciliation

Every human being is a child of God with a measure of God's Light. War and other instruments of violence and oppression ignore this reality and violate our relation with God. Let us keep primary, therefore, Friends' concern for removing the causes of war. Let us seek, through God's power and grace, to overcome in our own hearts the emotions that lie at the root of violence. At every opportunity, let us be peacemakers in our homes, in our communities, and in our places of work. Let us take care that we who declare against war do not nourish the seeds of war in our possessions. Friends are urged to support those who witness to their governments and take personal risks in the cause of peace, who choose not to participate in war as soldiers nor to contribute to its preparations with their taxes. Let us support in all possible ways the development of international order, justice, and understanding.

Finally, dear Friends, let us follow steadfastly after all that is pure and lovely and of good

report. Let us be prayerful, be watchful, be humble. Let not failure discourage us. Let our whole conduct and conversation be worthy of disciples of Christ.

1. Do you "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars"?
2. Do you faithfully maintain Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in war, as inconsistent with the teachings and spirit of Christ?
3. Do you strive to increase understanding and use of nonviolent methods of resolving conflicts?
4. Do you take your part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations?
5. When discouraged, do you remember that Jesus said, "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears"? John 14:27 NEB