

Eldering

The Conference was held on January 8, 2017. There were 24 Friends on the call, including six members of the NPYM Ministry & Oversight Committee.

Consultation Clerk: Dorsey Green, University Meeting

**How do we recognize or discern who among us has the gift of eldering?
How is this different from being a Seasoned Friend?**

Eldering is a gift of the Spirit. Seasoning comes from time and experience. One feels the Spirit in acts of eldering whether in corrective aspects or by nurturing. Eldering can be reassuring. One eldering statement: "God speaks well for thee."

Eldering is used in travelling ministry. The Elder, traveling with the minister, speaks with clarity and honesty.

What is our role as elders in helping Friends discern what they are called to do? How might we encourage those with ministries or concerns to center and still themselves enough to listen to the voice within for guidance - to find the next step with their Guide?

Humility and being grounded in love are essential for eldering, as well as educating Friends in the Quaker way of doing things. Eldering can be proactive, positive. Specific examples of eldering included helping Friends to find their gifts; meeting with Friends who have not-fully-formed concerns; listening at fellowship time; sharing Friends' ways of vocal ministry; acknowledging spiritual growth.

How do we hold the spiritual center of our meetings in troubled times?

We don't hold anything. The Spirit holds. We are to be awake and attentive and hold the creative tension. A Spiritually-centered Meeting is not necessarily a quiet Meeting. We call for worship as needed and remind Friends of Quaker customs and practices.