

# Guidance for Giving and Receiving Vocal Ministry in Meeting for Worship

## Deciding

As you settle into the silence, clear your mind of stray thoughts. Listen for the small quiet voice, the Inner Light, within you. Sometimes, when you hear this voice, you may feel a building imperative that compels you to rise and speak! Other times, it's less clear. If a thought arises and you are not sure whether to speak in Meeting, ask yourself:

- "Is this message coming to me as an inspiration?"
- "Is this message for me or for the Meeting?"
- "Is this message for now or later?"

If the message feels like inspiration, relevant to the Meeting's spiritual life now, please share.

## Speaking

Some people who attend Meeting find it difficult to hear quiet voices. Please speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard by everyone. It may be easier for others to hear you if you stand to speak.

- Speak succinctly, and then allow the silence to return.
- Speak only once.

## Listening

Listen with open mind and heart. Listen for that of the Inner Light within everyone.

- Listen for the meaning behind the words.
- Honor the language of the speaker's heart.
- Receive what fits for you. Some messages are not for everyone present. If a message does not find a place in your heart, let it go and return to Listening for your Inner Voice.
- Do not be distracted by spiritual references or the speaker's theology. Everyone has their own words for their experience of the divine. Even if the speaker uses different words than you do, the message may be profoundly relevant for you.
- Allow a period of silence between messages.

Vocal ministry is not debate, or even discussion. Friends do not respond to one another's messages in worship. However, the vocal ministry of one Friend may inspire another to speak from their own leading, later during the same Meeting for Worship.

Address questions, comments or concerns about these guidelines to a member of Worship and Ministry Committee after the rise of Meeting.

(Approved 2016. Updated 2022 with change of name from Ministry and Counsel to Worship and Ministry.)