

Quaker

A Member of the Religious Society of Friends is known as a QUAKER. Many Quakers in Britain would describe themselves as Christians, but many would not.

Quakers may meet for worship in a Meeting House, in a hired room or even in somebody's home. Nobody officiates in a British Quaker Meeting for Worship, there are no appointed Ministers, and there is no official creed or set service (some Quaker groups in other countries practice 'programmed worship' and have official Ministers).

In most Quaker Meetings for Worship in Britain the Quakers (or 'Friends') sit in silence in a plain room with a central table but no altar, icons or other 'focus'. If moved by the Spirit, they may stand up and speak, or sometimes even sing. This is called giving Ministry. Sometimes Ministry may take the form of reading aloud from a text, but it is not usual for a Friend to bring something along with the intention of reading it aloud.

A Meeting for Worship usually lasts for an hour. At the end, two Elders shake hands, which is the signal for everyone to shake hands with those sitting around them.

Dress

Dress casually: most Quakers do not 'dress up for church' and some may look quite scruffy! Very revealing clothes are not appropriate, as they may prove distracting. Avoid anything that looks too military, such as army surplus jackets, etc. It is quite OK to wear a hat in the Meeting room and all through the Meeting.

Books Used

It is permissible to read to yourself in Meeting, especially if you think you can't make it through the full hour otherwise. It is OK to bring something along to read for part of the Meeting but it is best not to read right through the whole hour. Copies of the Bible are usually provided, together with copies of *Quaker Faith and Practice*, a guide to both the spiritual and the practical aspects of Quakerism.