

How have our practices in meetings for worship and business helped move us toward or away from unity as a spiritual community?

Cookeville friends continue to show up, try to have patience and tolerance for each other, and struggle to find unity when we disagree. We find that having potlucks, an annual retreat together, and doing projects with each other moves us closer to unity. Together we exceed our personal capacities and are encouraged to be more respectful of others needs and concerns. We could be better at listening to each other and sometimes cannot move past the flow of words to understand what a concern is really about. Our technical issues don't help matters(some of us are quite technically challenged), and being unable to all be in person when we worship prevents deeper understanding on occasion. We are striving to be more of a light in the world at a time when it's really hard to shine. We still experience a mostly quiet worship together and one of us questions that lack of vocal ministry and is led to try to deepen our meetings with a concern for business.

How have we as a spiritual community encouraged each other to answer the urgings of Spirit? What kept us from encouraging each other?

Because we all live quite some distance from each other and the majority of us are older, our lack of energy and ability to drive after dark impedes our answering of spiritual nudges at times. Despite this we do show up as often as possible and we share information about events and leadings. Some of us are puzzling out exactly what Spirit is urging us to do. Finding our larger world in such chaos can distract from listening more closely to the inner light, but our worship together draws us deeper and reminds us that we are all of God.

How have we as a meeting and as individuals used our worldly activities as acts of witness to answer that of Spirit in others?

We participate in and support local organizations and events that match our values and help create a more just and peaceful community. We communicate those values, let others know they are seen(acknowledging that of God), pick up trash in our neighborhoods, reuse and repair instead of buying new, wear our Quaker t-shirts and answer questions about our faith traditions when asked, care for abandoned animals, help our neighbors, listen, use preferred pronouns, act kindly, and do what we think of as "subversive Quakering".

Although we feel that we are lacking in many ways, and are not doing enough to create a better world, we keep showing up, persevering and persisting. We love and miss our younger attendees when their lives get too busy or they need to sleep in on a Sunday. We are rejuvenated when we are lucky enough to experience that energy in person together.