



Queries for reflection, discussion and learning

Chapter 16: Communicating as Friends

Queries for individual reflection

1. 'Our main contribution as elders & overseers will always be the care we take with our own communications: our care will encourage others to care too.' When I am communicating with or to others, what does it ask of me to be aware that I am setting an example?
2. How do I feel when people offer me their genuine thanks for something I've done? Do I make a habit of thanking people when I appreciate them? What difference does it – or might it – make?
3. If I am angry or upset by someone, what is the next thing I tend to do? What do I need to take into account when considering the timing or nature of my response? What do I want my response to achieve?

Queries for pastoral groups

1. How clearly do we communicate to Friends about the work of eldership or oversight? Are there things we assume Friends will take for granted? How will we check that everyone understands what we intend?
2. How can we encourage Friends to be aware of the importance of inclusive communications, and the problems and discourtesies associated with excluding some people, however inadvertently? What actions can we take?
3. What can we do to support helpful and effective communications among Friends? Is there a need for discussion in the meeting about how communications affect the life of our community? How might we go about this?

Queries for meetings

1. How good are we as a meeting at taking care with our communications? Are we sufficiently conscious of how each careful, or careless, communication affects the ways we work together as a community? What does it mean to 'take care'?
2. What do we understand by the term 'plain speaking'? How is it a helpful concept to us in our meeting? When might it be unhelpful or possibly cause difficulty?
3. How good are we (individually) at accurately recalling things we are told? Are we aware of times when getting things wrong has caused a problem – for ourselves or other people? How should we take people's naturally flawed perceptions into account in the ways we communicate as Friends?