



Simplifying Committee Structures

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Why might we do this?

- It's hard to fill all the committee positions we have.
- A vital role is sitting empty, such as clerk or treasurer.
- We want to recognize and nurture the gifts of people who work full time, who are raising children, or who are going to school.
- The Meeting feels spiritually dry.
- We're having trouble finding the energy to do ministry in our neighborhood community.

Focus on people, gifts, and leadings.



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Think about tasks, not roles.

We need a
clerk!

Think about tasks, not roles.

We need
someone
to...

Think about tasks, not roles.

- Keep track of what's going on in the meeting committees
- Ask, remind, and nag committee clerks for reports and agenda items
- Assemble an agenda for meetings for business
- Anticipate potential reactions to meetings for business and do behind-the-scenes work
- Appear on time and reliably for meetings for business and listen without being distracted
- Introduce items of business, including their history
- Hear and articulate the sense of the meeting
- Follow up promptly on all matters requiring clerk's signature, etc.
- Occupy a visible leadership position in the meeting and care for things that are "no one's job" in particular



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Tech savvy and
organized

Spiritually deep
and long-time
member of the
meeting

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Really good with people, loves social connection

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Finds paperwork easy and fulfilling

- Appear on time and reliably for meetings for business and listen without being distracted
- Hear and articulate the sense of the meeting

Gifted listener and discerner

Use the whole toolbox.

- **Committees** – Great for things that need to be done repeatedly or in perpetuity; appointments by nomination; specific charge; difficult to lay down
- **Working groups** – Great for concerns when we don't know the specific tasks; appointments by volunteers; sometimes there is mission drift
- **Task groups** – Great for temporary work; appointments by volunteers or in-the-moment choosing; specific charge by minute; automatically laid down when work is done
- **Volunteer roles** – Great for things that just need doing; temporary, rotation, or semi-permanent; can be reorganized fairly easily; can become mini-domains
- **Staff** – Great for tasks that take a lot of time or that the group can't do; this is ministry released by financial support

What about staff transitions?

- The Quaker perspective on staff is *released ministry*. We trust our staff to do the work they've felt called to do that we have asked them to do, and we support them in it.
- Start with tasks and gifts. Remember the “ideal” job description will change as the community changes.
- But this is also an employee relationship. What level of compensation and service represents justice?

Change might be hard.

Source of
Value

Gradualism:
Cycles and
Spirals

Saviorism

Responsibility
to Spiritual
Ancestors

Confusing
Concerns
with Leadings

Questions for Discussion:

- How do you, or how could you, let every person in your community know that they are valued?
- What is one thing you find scary and one thing you find hopeful about today's conversation?

Additional Resources

- ♦ [“The Calcification of Committees”](#) – a blog post about why it’s important to use multiple approaches to work, rather than always defaulting to committees
- ♦ [“Revamping the Job Descriptions”](#) – a blog post giving an example of the tasks-not-roles approach
- ♦ [Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order](#) – in particular, the chapter on community stewardship of our spiritual gifts provides an entirely different way of looking at service to the meeting
- ♦ [Transitions: Making Sense of Life’s Changes](#) – a book about change in general and how we navigate it