



# The Role of Record Keepers

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# Definitions

<b>Statistician</b>	A Friend who tracks data of any kind, possibly including number of members, age of members, attendance at worship, number of visitors, financial records, births, deaths, etc.
<b>Recording Clerk</b>	A Friend who writes minutes reflecting the sense of the meeting either in business meeting or committee meetings.
<b>Recorder</b>	A Friend who tracks changes in membership for a meeting, including births, deaths, acceptance of members, release of members, and transfer of members. This Friend may also track personal information such as addresses, phone numbers, and birthdays.
<b>Historian</b>	A Friend who tells, writes, reads, remembers, or records in art forms the stories of the meeting, most often as narrative (not data).
<b>Treasurer/Bookkeeper</b>	A Friend who maintains the financial records of the meeting.
<b>Archivist</b>	A Friend who stores various types of meeting records or submits them for storage elsewhere, primarily for the sake of historic preservation.



“The author Orlando Tibbetts ‘maintains that careful record keeping is one of the most important aspects for a successful ministry. He says church records are “remembering instruments”. This puts record keeping and record preservation in the historical context of the Old Testament and God’s command to Moses to preserve God’s words for the people of God. In fact, he maintains that records management in the congregation is a ministry and a sacred trust of remembering which is essential for a congregation’s well-functioning.’ The sacred trust of remembering that we steward in our churches’ stories is the record of our spiritual journey responding to the presence of God in our history.”

– Stewarding Your Church’s Story,  
by Taylor Billings Russell





What is a  
healthy  
meeting?

Vitality

Can discern  
God's call

Viability

Can act on  
God's call

# Tracking Membership

What does membership mean for your meeting? How are individuals who are not included in the membership figures interacting with your meeting?

What other ways could you capture how the people in your community are directly or indirectly connected to or impacted by your meeting?

What trends have you noticed in other organizations in your community, such as churches, schools, and nonprofits?



# Worship

How does weekly in-person worship attendance usually shift in your meeting throughout different times of the year?

In what ways does the worship experience differ among a smaller group compared to a larger group?

Are the people who worship at your meeting the same as or different from the people who are members?

Are non-members who attend worship looking to join a meeting, just visiting your area for a short time, or present other reasons? How do you know?





# Financial Stewardship

Does the meeting experience anxiety about meeting its financial obligations?

Have individual Friends' giving patterns changed, and if so, do we know why?

How does your meeting balance between internal expenses and mission giving to the yearly meeting and other organizations?

Is the meeting's budget an accurate reflection of the leadings of God for the meeting? How do you know?



*What do I do  
with my  
answers to  
these  
questions?*







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## The record keeper can:



Report observations and trends



Pose good queries to the meeting



Research how changes have been handled before



Provide data



## The record keeper can:



Tell the stories: “the record of our spiritual journey responding to the presence of God in our history.”



Place the transition in context, both historical and future-oriented, and in the wider world of Friends



Create avenues for Friends' stories to be recorded



Propose ways forward that honor the meeting's essence and history



The record  
keeper  
doesn't:



Solve the problem alone



Push for specific next steps



Separate past, present, and future



Deserve shame or guilt for the  
condition of the meeting

# Questions for Discussion

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What have you heard today that was new or inspired a new thought in you?

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What else would you add about the role of record keepers?

# Additional Resources

- [The Swarthmore Friends Historical Library](#) – the website has information about Swarthmore's archival policies and links to archival policies of other Quaker groups
- *Unforeseen Joy: Serving a Friends Meeting as Recording Clerk* – available [online](#) or [for purchase](#), an excellent resource for Friends who write minutes
- [Britain Yearly Meeting's resources on preserving records](#) (multiple downloadable resources)