

## A Nine Month Program...

The Spiritual Formation Program encourages Friends to take seriously God's call in their lives. This is done through a structured, supportive community where:

Each person commits to full participation in the entire program including three retreats in which all gather. The extent to which participants can honor this commitment guarantees that everyone will have a rich experience.

Each person undertakes a daily spiritual practice for the entire program. This is a crucial component of spiritual formation.

Each person is a member of two groups that meet monthly: a reading group and a spiritual friendship/accountability group.

The reading group (seven to ten people) gathers to share, worship and discuss responses to assigned devotional readings. Readings are about spiritual experience, prayer, scripture and community of the Religious Society of Friends and ministry.

Smaller spiritual friendship groups of three to five persons within the larger reading groups are also formed and meet on another day each month, sometimes over a meal, to relate their daily, on-going experience of the spiritual practice and share how the Eternal is breaking in on their lives.



# Do you seek deeper spiritual experience?

Here is a program that enables participants  
to deepen their spiritual lives,  
and  
build a more intimate covenant community

## Spiritual Reflection

The Spiritual Formation Program components of retreats, daily personal spiritual disciplines, readings, devotional groups and prayerful support combine to provide a structured community in which each member may discern God's call and prepare to follow it. Throughout the nine months many insights and deep relationships are forged in this intimate exchange.

## Retreats

In the retreat setting we seek opportunities to gather ourselves to follow our leadings in faithful listening to the Inner Light, mutual care, support in developing daily practices, discernment and general encouragement.

Participants will gather for an opening retreat to begin their commitment to nine months in supportive community. During the weekend we will reflect on Quaker spirituality and how we are inwardly formed by God. Subgroups will begin forming their own community and will schedule dates for group meetings throughout the

program.

There will be a one day Mid-Year retreat for participants to reconnect with others in the program, share stories of how the program has impacted them, and make decisions on how to make any needed improvements in the way it is working.

A closing weekend retreat will provide a worshipful opportunity to consider, name and claim the spiritual gifts that all participants bring to the community, and reflect and share what work we might be called to in the future. We will explore the Quaker understanding that we did away with the laity, and that all of us are called to ministry in service of God, our Meetings and the wider world.

In the closing retreat, we will consider what structures may move forward for some participants. Many small groups continue to meet and enrich the lives of the participants. As a result of this program, many positive changes have been intentionally brought to Meetings.



## Spiritual Discipline

Participants choose a discipline (spiritual practice) that adds positively to their life, and one that they embrace with joy. Traditional disciplines include journaling, meditation, daily worship or prayer, and devotional reading. Many participants in the program find that their chosen disciplines become life-long exercises of spiritual growth.

For Monthly or Quarterly Meeting Spiritual Formation Programs, the opening and closing retreats are usually held at a local Monthly Meetinghouse.

The fee to PYM for the program is \$50 per person. We encourage participants and Meetings to contribute to scholarships for those in their meeting who have difficulty paying this fee.

The group undertaking the program designates a small group to serve as liaison/ coordinating committee for the duration of the program. Initially they work to recruit participants. It is also their job to support the small groups, and to take care of the administrative details, as well as providing hospitality for the facilitators.

This group organizes food for the weekend retreats, which can be bag lunches, potlucks, or catered events. This group also organizes

gathering the required books and pamphlets that are an integral part of the program. They are sold to participants (Estimated cost \$125) at the opening retreat, or PYM Library books can be borrowed.

When a Spiritual Formation Program is organized at the Monthly or Quarterly Meeting level, scheduling of the Reading and Friendship groups during the nine months is up to each group. This is usually done at the opening retreat.

We have started programs in the Fall and in January. Usually the opening and closing retreats last from Friday dinner until Sunday lunch. For a January start, folks sometimes take a month off in the summer and extend the program up to 12 months.



## Contact us:

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## Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's

# Spiritual Formation Program

for

Monthly and Quarterly Meetings