



# A Quaker Wedding



The Religious Society of Friends has always thought it important that the ceremony of marriage should take the same simple quiet form as the regular Quaker Meeting for Worship. The couple, in the presence both of local Friends and of those specially invited to the wedding, take one another as partners in a lifelong commitment of faithfulness and love. Each makes the same promise, seeking God's help for its fulfilment. All who are present are asked to help by prayer and support, whether silent or spoken.

The marriage takes place during a Meeting for Worship appointed for the purpose. Every Quaker meeting is held on the basis of silent communion of spirit, in which there is opportunity for spoken ministry arising spontaneously from the life of the meeting. (This way of worship is described in more detail in a companion leaflet, *Your first time in a Quaker Meeting*.)

Go in as soon as you are ready. It is good if the meeting can settle quietly before the appointed time. At the start of the meeting it is usual for a Friend to explain briefly the procedure of a Quaker wedding. Early in the course of the meeting the couple take each other by the hand and make their solemn

declaration of marriage. Each in turn uses these words:

“Friends, I take this my friend, N—, to be my spouse\*, promising, through divine assistance (or with God’s help), to be unto him / her a loving and faithful spouse\*, so long as we both on earth shall live.”

After this the Quaker marriage certificate is signed by the married couple and two or more witnesses. This certificate is read aloud by the local Registering Officer of the Society of Friends, either immediately after the declarations have been made or towards the close of the meeting.

Wedding rings play no formal part in Quaker marriages, but many couples like to give each other rings after they have made their declarations.

The meeting continues as it began with a period of silence, in which anyone present may speak in ‘ministry’. This can be a time when the couple concerned gain inspiration and help which continues to be a source of strength to them during their married life. It is also an opportunity for those who attend the meeting to ask God’s blessing on the marriage and commit themselves to

supporting the couple in whatever way they can.

The meeting closes after the elders have shaken hands. As soon as the meeting has ended, everyone who has been present at the marriage is invited to sign the Quaker marriage certificate. While they are doing this, the couple and their witnesses will go with the Registering Officer to sign the civil marriage certificate.

\*alternatively: husband / wife / partner in marriage

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Further information about the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) may be obtained from:

Quaker Life,  
Friends House,  
173 Euston Road,  
London NW1 2BJ  
Email: [ql@quaker.org.uk](mailto:ql@quaker.org.uk)  
020 7663 1025

[www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)