

In Quaker communities, people of different views and experiences find themselves accepted and valued; difference and diversity are celebrated. Because equality is so central to the Quaker view of the world, the Quaker community is one in which all are encouraged to share tasks and responsibilities. There is no formal hierarchy and each voice has equal value and weight.

Being a Quaker is a shared experience. Together, in community with others, Quakers find support and encouragement, seek guidance and inspiration, and open ourselves to new insights, ideas and possibilities.

We asked four Quakers to share their story with us and to tell us about their experience of Quaker community, living, faith and worship.

Find out more:

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QUAKER COMMUNITY

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“ **Jenn**

It was community that drew me in. I enjoyed chats and tea and cake afterwards and I felt a deep sense of connection, of belonging. I asked if there were books I could read to help me understand, and there were and they were helpful. But a very wise Quaker, instead of suggesting books, pointed to people I could talk to. She suggested I could listen to their experience and hear their stories to help me make sense of it all. And it was absolutely the right thing to do.

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“ **Kevin**

I met my wife, who had been brought up as a Quaker, at university during Freshers' Week. She introduced me to Quaker meeting and to her own Quaker family. I was accepted, cherished, embraced; I was valued for myself. As a black man, I had so often felt that I needed to prove myself, to overcome their expectations; but here I was accepted and valued for who I was. I became part of a community that welcomed and cherished my difference. I saw in the way they lived – living simply, peacefully, purposefully – something I had so often been looking for.

Quaker community, with its acceptance and lack of hierarchy, was very attractive to me. It seemed generous and open, a life shaped by faith and a faith lived out.

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“ **Abi**

For Quakers, equality is fundamental to our lives. When I transitioned from male to female I felt unable to continue going to my Anglican church but found a welcome with Quakers. I was a stranger and they took me in. Equality means we don't have a hierarchy. Each of us seeks the good of the group and the wider community, and we come together to get to know God in each other. We make decisions together, seeking God's loving purposes. I am fulfilled when the community accepts the service I offer in love.

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“ **Jon**

I found Quakers when I was a student, and I don't know that I was searching for anything as such at the time. When a friend mentioned them to me I had no idea who they were. We went to a meeting for worship in the chaplaincy centre at the university.

At a time when I didn't always connect closely with other students, this was a community where I was cherished and valued and loved. It was a community with a real sense of purpose; a small group of strong and diverse personalities. The relationships I built up there were really important, and still are. These were radical, committed people, rooted in their worship and active in the world. They weren't perfect people – Quakers don't pretend to be – but you could see the fire in them. I have been accepted and am able to be myself, but I have also been helped to become who I want to be, and I've been led in very different and unexpected directions.

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See our four Quaker journeys in full at www.quaker.org.uk/Journeys

