

## Location

For Meeting or Quarterly Meeting Spiritual Formation Programs, the opening and closing retreats are usually held at a local Monthly Meetinghouse. The cost of the program is less than the gathered Yearly Meeting program, which has opening and closing retreats at a residential conference center. The cost to a Meeting or Quarter is usually \$50 per person, and must cover the travel costs of facilitators. This will be negotiated. One need: that the group undertaking the program designate a small group to serve as oversight committee for the duration of the program. It is their job to help keep the small groups on track, and to take care of administrative details.

### What You Need to Do—

—to insure the most positive experience in your Spiritual Formation Program—is to help find others in your region, Quarter and Meeting who want to participate in the program with you. A Regional Group of about 12 people, made up of three or four smaller accountability groups, is a good size. Go to your Meeting and the other Meetings in your Quarter and find those folks! Organize!



## Scheduling

When a Spiritual Formation Programs is organized at the Monthly Meeting or Quarterly Meeting level, the scheduling of the program is up to the group. Nine continuous months is the need. 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 for 12 months.

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Philadelphia Yearly Meeting  
Spiritual Formation Working Group

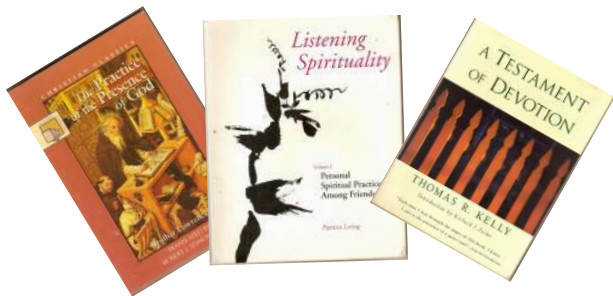
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Do you seek  
deeper  
spiritual  
experience?



Spiritual  
Formation  
Program in  
Philadelphia  
Yearly Meeting:  
Monthly and  
Quarterly Meeting  
Programs





## *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. The extent to which folks 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 critical component of spiritual formation.
- Each person is a member of two regional groups that meet monthly: a reading group and a spiritual friendship group.
- The reading groups (seven to ten people) gather to share, worship and discuss responses to assigned devotional readings. These are books about spiritual experience, prayer, scripture, community, 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 on-going experience of the daily spiritual practice and to share how the Eternal is breaking in on their lives.

# *Do You Seek A Deeper Spiritual Experience?*

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

## *Spiritual Reflection*

The Spiritual Formation Program components of retreats, 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*

When schedules permit Friends and attenders from a Monthly Meeting or Quarter will gather for an opening retreat to begin their commitment to a year in supportive community. During this weekend (or day) we will reflect on Quaker spirituality and how we are formed inwardly by God. Sub-groups will begin formation of their own community and will initiate planning of schedules.

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 disciplines, discernment and general encouragement.

The Religious Society of Friends has been mindful of our faith community as a "priesthood of all believers." In this spirit each of us may be led to some work of ministry.

A concluding weekend retreat will provide a worshipful opportunity to evaluate and enlarge on the program in daily lives of Friendly ministry. All participants in each local group need to attend these vital retreats of community formation.

## *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.

## *Reading*

Upon registration a reading list is provided. Each participant purchases (estimated cost: \$100) or borrows from Meeting or PYM Library a set of devotional books to read during the nine-month cycle. The reading groups explore the impact of the readings on their spiritual life and that of the community.