

Claiming a Place at the Table

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Morningside Meeting

When I considered the idea of membership, what popped into my mind was the novel *A Member of the Wedding* and its exploration of our need to feel included. My memberships in meetings have been essential to my sense of belonging. My first experience of meeting was a profound sense of relief at last finding a home for my restless spirit. When, much later, I moved to Brooklyn after years living in places with no meeting, I recall the then clerk, Larry, welcoming me and inviting me to consider transferring my membership. FLGBTQC (just Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns when I discovered it) doesn't involve a formal process. You show up and "voila." For some years I attended feeling envious of that core group who had belonged longer and had assumed various organizational roles. I finally realized that I simply needed to claim my place at the table. It was entirely up to me to redefine my relationship to the group.

The membership question often seems presented in terms of a member's responsibilities and the needs of a functioning Society. This issue's theme opened the opportunity to reflect on the benefit to each one of us to have these open doors: open to apply, meet with a committee of Friends to examine one's application before consideration in a meeting for worship with a concern for business, or as an "attendee" to know full acceptance and care regardless. No treatment of second class citizenship here.