

CLEARNESS COMMITTEE

[Replaces paragraph on p. 121 of 2018 edition]

Clearness Committees are focused, private meetings for worship intended to clarify a situation or a decision. Traditionally, the clearness committee is used in determining readiness for a couple to marry or for an individual to be approved for membership. Additionally, the clearness committee can be used for personal discernment—to address particularly stressful personal decisions, to reconcile Friends in conflict, or to seek clarity in leadings and ministries.

To set up a Clearness Committee for personal discernment, an individual or group usually approaches the committee of Ministry and Counsel or Pastoral Care within a monthly meeting, regional meeting, or worship group. The person or persons asking for clearness works with Ministry and Counsel to select a few people who will form the Clearness Committee. It is helpful to designate a convener who will be responsible for scheduling, opening and closing meeting, and managing discussion and worship. The person requesting clearness should have unencumbered participation in the meeting.

A Clearness Committee session begins with a period of worship and maintains the frame of worship throughout. Maintaining a spirit of openness and prayerful waiting, the committee seeks to help the individual discern the path forward. The members are there to listen without prejudice, to help clarify alternatives and their implications, to facilitate communication, and to provide emotional support for the process of seeking God's will.

Clarity may be reached in one session or it might take several sessions. This process should not be viewed as an occasion for advice nor as a substitute for therapy or professional counseling. When it works well, the Clearness Committee allows an individual to draw on the gathered discernment of Friends to address immediate problems, concerns, or decisions.

p. 114 paragraph 3 : replace overseers with pastoral care, lines 2 and 6