Quakers

Quaker meetings for worship take place in *meeting houses*, not churches. These are simple buildings or rooms.

A meeting begins when two or more worshipers come together to be in the presence of God.

They usually sit facing each other in a square or a circle. This helps them to be aware that they are a group together for worship, and puts everybody in a place of equal status.

The room is very simple, no pictures or icons or symbols. They think that these are a distraction from God, rather than a help to focus on Him in worship.

Everyone waits in shared silence until someone is *moved by the Spirit* (i.e. has a strong religious feeling) to do something as part of their worship.

A person will only speak if they are convinced that they have something that must be shared, and it is rare for a person to speak more than once.

The words spoken are usually brief and may include readings (from the Bible or other books), praying, or speaking from personal experience. Each speaking is followed by a period of silence.

Quakers believe that God speaks through the contributions made at the meeting. Some people say that there is often a feeling that a divine presence has settled over the group.

The words should come from the soul - from the inner light - rather than the mind. Quakers know that even if the words they feel moved to speak have no particular meaning for themselves, they may carry a message from God to other people.

There may be no outward response to the contribution from other people, but if there is it will be something that builds positively on the previous contribution. Discussion and argument are not part of the meeting.