

Queries for Friends considering retirement

Retirement is a major life change like marriage, having a child, moving or changing occupations. This stage of life offers an opportunity to listen to new spiritual leadings and to create practical and meaningful end of life plans. The two of us are soon approaching retirement age, so we searched for queries that Friends in such a situation might use either alone, with a spouse or partner, or in conjunction with a clearness committee. Since we could find none, we worked on writing queries that might be useful for ourselves and other Friends in the same situation. As invitations not just to organize but to embrace the future as retirees, queries seemed an ideal vehicle for guidance. As we worked and talked, we were surprised at the breadth of queries that emerged. We realized that, as one entered the final decades, these queries could be an empowering vehicle. It was particularly important to us that even the most practical of the queries stay true to Friends' beliefs and testimonies, and we have organized the queries to clarify the connection. We hope that these queries, put under general themes below may help those Friends considering retirement.

Queries

Leadings

What do I feel led to do in retirement?

How will I make space for the life of the spirit?

How does retirement offer a unique opportunity for me to simplify my life?

I am ready to retire because:

I am tired of working (at my present job anyway)?

I need a rest?

I feel led to do other things in my remaining years?

other _____

How would I like my retirement to sustain what I am doing now? What parts of my life would I like to be open to creative change? What parts to drop? What are the things that I have put on the "back burner" and can include in retirement?

Am I open in retirement to the possibility of a new path to which the Spirit could lead me?

How can I assist the Religious Society of Friends (RSF) after retirement? What new or further service can I provide to the RSF that I cannot provide now?

Who (if anyone) is a model for me of a 'successful' retirement?

Are there expectations (e.g. from others) for retirement that I do NOT want to do? If so, how can I best deal with this?

If I have a spouse or partner, have I integrated his or her spiritual paths and needs into my retirement plans?

Finances

Are my/our finances in order for retirement so the chance that I will outlive my financial support (besides Social Security income) is close to zero? What about long term care insurance?

If my loved ones and I need or want to earn more income during my retirement, what are my plans? What are my dreams? How can I start creating networks now?

What will living on less income mean to my loved ones and me in practice?

If I expect to still have some wealth when I die, how have I balanced what to leave for heirs and what to leave as legacy gifts to Friends organizations or other worthy causes? Some people have only Social Security income to support themselves in old age. If I need more than this amount, what reflections or insights does this give me on the equality testimony?

Daily Life

What daily routine do I envision after retirement?

How will the simplicity testimony enrich my daily life and allow me to manage competing demands on my time? How do I plan to ensure that I allow time in each day for myself?

Have I considered the possible 'down' sides of retirement?

- Missing the daily routine

- Missing colleagues at work

- Missing the stimulation/structure of the work environment

- Living on less income

Do I need more time to be with family and if so, what does this mean for me, for them?

How important is location to my retirement? What elements are important to me (weather, proximity to family and friends, cultural institutions, health care, transportation)?

Do I have a pet or pets and what does my retirement mean to them?

How important is independent living to me? Have I recognized that, as the years progress, independent living may no longer be possible, either for me or for my spouse or partner? Have I discussed these issues with my loved ones?

If I am planning to move to smaller quarters, have I prioritized what to keep and what to let go of and considered the process to do this?

How do I plan to downsize so I do not leave a lot of things for my heirs to go through? How does Friends testimony of simplicity guide me in these choices?

Have I made space for fun as well as rest and relaxation in my retirement?

Health

How is my health? How do I anticipate nourishing my mental, spiritual and physical health, not just for my sake but for those whom I love?

Have I taken steps to make changes in my home and life generally to minimize accidents to which older persons are more prone?

How have I prepared psychologically and spiritually for a time when I or my spouse or partner might have major health problems? Have I discussed with my loved ones what the role of caregiver might entail?

Where do I want to be if or when I am too infirm to take care of myself? Have I made potential arrangements for this, and are those whom I love comfortable with these arrangements?

Are my estate papers, advance directives, what to do with my body, and memorial arrangements in order? Have I discussed the advance directives with my loved ones and given them to the Meeting so that my final journey, difficult though it may be, can bring some measure of peace to all?

If my loved ones and I want to explore the alternative of assistance in dying, am I aware that it is not legal in most states?

How will my spirit open a window when my body starts to close down?

Community

How will I ensure that I remain a vital part of at least one community?

What kind of support would I like from my family and friends during my transition into retirement?

How will I plan to engage in diverse communities, particularly with people of different generations?

How will I use my life experience, both professional and personal, to encourage peaceful interactions in the nation, within my communities, and in my daily life?

As a senior citizen, how do I plan to advocate for equal treatment of and respect for seniors?

Legacy

Am I leaving a lot of cleanup of my things to my heirs/family or what things am I leaving for them to go through?

How would I like to be remembered?

What matters do I hope to have included in my memorial minute?

The Bible speaks of old people (men) having visions. How can I cultivate this gift in myself so as to help coming generations with the challenges they will face?