

## Threshing Session Explainer

From “Meeting Space Threshing Process” by Martha Niemann (<https://ecquakers.org/article/meetingspace-threshing-process>):

The purpose of a threshing session is to provide a forum where Friends may hear one another's truths, a variety of differing opinions, and absorb information around a complex, controversial, or emotionally charged issue. Expression of diversity of opinion is welcomed and is one of the goals. The overriding desire is to sort out what is important from the multiplicity of available information and opinion. The threshing session differs from a typical Meeting for Business and Worship in that Friends are urged to express themselves openly and passionately; Friends may speak more than once, speak to a point previously made, or ask a question. It is more helpful to the Meeting to address difficult issues openly, rather than to hold back for fear of offending. "Hesitancy to share a strong conviction because it may offend someone, reflects a lack of trust." (Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches, Mathilda Navias).

This trust in each other is what makes community strong. We can be open and honest with each other if we trust that all will hold the other in tenderness, remembering that there is that of God in everyone.

Here are some helpful ground rules:

- No decision will be made in this gathering.
- Come with a sense of humility and openness to new insights and to learn about differing experiences.
- Listen to each person and receive their thoughts.
- Each person has the opportunity to declare what he or she is thinking, feeling, and perceiving.
- Speak from personal experience.

Some practicalities should be noted. Full notice of the planned threshing session will be given to all, in order to allow full participation. No minutes will be developed from the session; however, notes may be taken to capture ideas and information that may be useful in later decision-making. A recommendation may be forwarded to the meeting for worship with attention to business for further discernment. Length of the session is approximately 2 hours; if more time is needed for all to be heard, extension or additional sessions can be made.