

As you will see in the stories told by the five Friends in this leaflet, Quakers seek to balance the shared experience of an accepting egalitarian community with a deep respect for a great diversity of individual ideas, beliefs, and insights.

In the essence of the spirit of manaakitanga in Aotearoa New Zealand, all are encouraged to welcome newcomers, offer one another support and encouragement, and to share tasks and responsibilities.

Because equality is so important to the Quaker worldview, there is no formal hierarchy. Decisions are made by weighing each person's concerns in the light of what is best for all, for the community, and for the world at large. In this way, each person's views and varied experiences are celebrated and valued equally, and all are helped to open to guidance, inspiration, and new possibilities as we discern the best ways forward together.

We asked five Quakers to share their story with us and tell us about their experience of Quaker community, living, faith and worship.

**Q**uakers Aotearoa  
NEW ZEALAND  
Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri

**Find out more:**

[www.quakers.nz](http://www.quakers.nz)

**QUAKER  
COMMUNITY**

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**Moira**

I knew nothing about Quakers. I had drifted from my Methodist roots, so when a new friend invited me to a Quaker Meeting, I was curious. I found a rich diversity of people, a community with a spiritual heart and real sense of purpose. I felt accepted and free to be myself. I found my spiritual yearning to belong fulfilled. There are shared interests and passion for social justice issues and action. I am able to create opportunities for spiritual nurture, growth and education. I am part of something with wide reach in NZ and worldwide.

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**Eleanor**

I value Quaker decision-making, which allows everyone to contribute. My best experience of a Quaker community has been as a volunteer member of staff at a holiday school for teenage Quakers. We find ways for everyone to feel comfortable, welcomed and cared for in the group. The energy, creativity and lifelong friendships that come out of the supportive environment we create for these young people has been such a privilege to see and be part of.

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**Lucas**

I attended my first Meeting for Worship at the age of fifteen. It was a small provincial Meeting - there were about eight regular attenders, whose ages ranged between sixty and ninety. By all rights I should have been discouraged from coming back to Meeting by this great disparity in age between me and them. But the next week and the week after I came back to Meeting. Why? Because those Quakers made me feel at home. Like me, they were all searching for spiritual truth, and they fully invited me to join them as an equal in that search.

When I finished high school, I moved to a larger city for university, with a larger Meeting for Worship. The Quakers at that new Meeting were just as welcoming as those in my hometown.

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See our five Quaker journeys in full at  
[www.quakers.nz/Journeys](http://www.quakers.nz/Journeys)

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**Maia**

Being part of a community of people who don't tell you what to think or even necessarily ask you what you believe has been refreshing and a great strength to me starting out in a new place. I have found myself accepted, encouraged, and welcomed even when joining a Meeting I am only able to come to sporadically. I have struck up friendships with people I would never ordinarily have met in other aspects of my life.

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**Vincent**

Quakerism attracts people from every walk of life and spiritual tradition. As I get to know them better, it occurs to me that I have never before been in a space where everybody is so unconventional, each with their own story and philosophy. I feel totally at home, exploring the spiritual path from many perspectives. I cherish the kindness and humility with which they share their insights with me. Quakerism not only believes in the usefulness of doubt and speculation, it actively promotes them as the means to get to the heart of what is truly important, the heart of god, you might say.

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