

## Chapter 22

### Close relationships

- 22.01 Love is the hardest lesson in Christianity; but, for that reason, it should be most our care to learn it.

William Penn, 1693

#### FRIENDSHIP

- 22.02 Our name, the Religious Society of Friends, suggests that we think of ourselves not only as Friends in the Truth, which the early Quakers saw themselves to be, but also as a society of friends, prizing friendship highly and recognising its value for the religious life.

In our intimate relationships, as in the wider community of our meeting, openness to one another can open us to the Holy Spirit and enable us to acknowledge that of God in our own hearts and in those of our friends.

1994

- 22.03 We are called to obedient love even though we may not be feeling very loving. Often it is through the performance of loving acts that loving feelings can be built up in us. We may start with small, perhaps very tiny steps. It is only as we begin to allow Christ's love to act in and through us that it can become a part of us.

Sandra Cronk, 1983

- 22.04 Throughout life, rejoice in every aspect of friendship. Blessed indeed are those who enjoy a rich diversity of friends and who participate in

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many varying relationships. We all have the capacity of being sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, uncles and aunts, wives and husbands, metaphorically if not through blood-relationships. As well we are all both teachers and learners, both thinkers and workers, both employees and employers, nurses, parents and neighbours. We are most fortunate in being friends and lovers. True friendships grow in depth, understanding and mutual respect, as friends value 'that of God' in one another.

Elizabeth Seale Carnall, 1981

- 22.05 There is a part of us which from childhood is absolutely alone. When we fall in love we imagine we have found an ultimate assuagement of loneliness. This is not so. In a true marriage or a near friendship what in fact is found is a companion in loneliness.

Damaris Parker-Rhodes, 1977

- 22.06 I wonder whether we do not need to rediscover the possibilities of a friendship in which the deepest areas of experience may be shared. Certainly that kind of openness seems to have existed in earlier generations among a group who were very significant in the life of the Society. Until this century it was not uncommon for Friends to travel in the ministry, following a real sense of leading in this direction. Often they went out in pairs, one older, one younger. The study of their travels shows, I think, that their friendship became one in which they could open to one another their struggles and failures, their hopes and visions, when they became for each other the way through to the presence of God. On their journeyings, too, they met with Friends in their homes, seeking times for worship and prayer together, sometimes with whole families, sometimes with individuals. In this way they shared help on the inner journey with those with whom they met.

Christopher Holdsworth, 1985

- 22.07 I came to realise that the best way to deepen my love of God was to use my experience of the love in my everyday life in all its variety, subtlety and uncertainty. Getting on with those I love is often a

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business demanding patience, discretion, tact and understanding. It gets complicated sometimes. It also gets strained, occasionally to the breaking point. But without expression it is barren. I show my love in the things I do, and I also show it by words of endearment. These things are all part and parcel of one another. This is what worship should be like. This is the idiom in which we should speak to God.

John Punshon, 1987

- 22.08 Sensitivity is the art above all that we need to cultivate. I feel this with great force because I am still trying to learn it. I recall with sadness my insensitivity years ago to the difficulties of one of my closest friends. His marriage was breaking up and although I saw him regularly during the period, I was completely unaware of his unhappiness. With such a lesson in my background, I should have learnt by now – yet I still manage to tread hard on tender toes. All this makes me even more certain that if we are to speak to others, we first need to learn to listen to them with sensitivity.

George Gorman, 1981

- 22.09 Have you ever sat with a friend when in the course of an easy and pleasant conversation the talk took a new turn and you both listened avidly to the other and to something that was emerging in your visit? You found yourselves saying things that astonished you and finally you stopped talking and there was an immense naturalness about the long silent pause that followed. In that silent interval you were possessed by what you had discovered together. If this has happened to you, you know that when you come up out of such an experience, there is a memory of rapture and a feeling in the heart of having touched holy ground.

Douglas Steere, 1955

- 22.10 In friendship we are beyond law and obedience, beyond rules and commandments, beyond all constraint, in a world of freedom. But did not Jesus say, 'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you'? Yes, he did. We, on our side, are apt to miss the quiet humour

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of his paradoxes. 'These are my commandments,' he goes on, 'that ye love one another'.

In other words, the friendship of Christ is realised in our friendships with one another. His command is that we rise above commandments, and therefore his obedience is perfect freedom. Make service your centre, with its laws and duties and self-sacrifice, and life is a bondage. Make friendship the centre and life is freedom.

John Macmurray, 1942

## SEXUALITY

- 22.11 Human sexuality is a divine gift, forming part of the complex union of body, mind and spirit which is our humanity. The sexual expression of a loving relationship can bring delight, joy and fulfilment.

For many, a life-long faithful relationship gives the opportunity for the greatest personal development and for the experience of sexual love which is spiritual in its quality and deeply mysterious. Others may find fulfilment in different ways. Whatever the moral climate, a sexual relationship is never purely a private matter without consequences for wider human relationships. Its effect on the community, and especially on children, must always be considered. Sexual morality is an area of challenge and opportunity for living our testimonies to truth, nonviolence, equality, integrity and love.

In our *Advices* of 1964 we are reminded:

No relationship can be a right one which makes use of another person through selfish desire.

1994

- 22.12 Our sexuality is an integral part of our being human, giving warmth and power to all our loving. Yet it is difficult for us to love both fully and wisely; too easy often to be niggardly and cautious in giving of

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ourselves, or grasping and selfish in satisfying our desires. These failures will lead to stress and conflict; but painful as they are, such experiences can still be a means of growth in understanding and an eventual strengthening of a relationship.

Elizabeth Seale Carnall, 1981

- 22.13 No doubt from the earliest days of Christianity there have been men and women for whom the sexual relationship was illumined and deepened by the Christian message of love, for whom it expressed a true equality, an equal-sided valuation and respect, for whom coitus was an expression of tenderness and unity, not merely the gratification of animal urges. But it is one of the great tragedies of history that not until recent times has this implication of Christianity found public expression...

Sexual activity is essentially neither good nor evil; it is a normal biological activity which, like most other human activities, can be indulged in destructively or creatively. Further, if we take impulses and experiences that are potentially wholesome and in a large measure unavoidable and characterise these as sinful, we create a great volume of unnecessary guilt and an explosive tension within the personality. When, as so often happens, the impulse breaks through the restriction, it does so with a ruthlessness and destructive energy that might not otherwise have been there. A distorted Christianity must bear some of the blame for the sexual disorders of society.

*Towards a Quaker view of sex*, 1963

- 22.14 In the journey through life, as we grow and mature, live singly or in a relationship with others our sexuality will grow, develop and change. Our sexual needs, drives and fantasies will be different at different stages in our life – as a teenager, a partner, a parent, an older person. Our sexuality is, throughout, an expression of ourselves. It is an integral part of our humanity and as such is subject to the leadings of the spirit. We should therefore give thanks for our sexuality and seek to nurture it both within ourselves and in our loving relationships.

Bill Edgar, 1994

*Sexuality*

- 22.15 It is the nature and quality of a relationship that matters: one must not judge it by its outward appearance but by its inner worth. Homosexual affection can be as selfless as heterosexual affection, and therefore we cannot see that it is in some way morally worse.

Homosexual affection may of course be an emotion which some find aesthetically disgusting, but one cannot base Christian morality on a capacity for such disgust. Neither are we happy with the thought that all homosexual behaviour is sinful: motive and circumstances degrade or ennoble any act...

We see no reason why the physical nature of a sexual act should be the criterion by which the question whether or not it is moral should be decided. An act which (for example) expresses true affection between two individuals and gives pleasure to them both, does not seem to us to be sinful by reason alone of the fact that it is homosexual. The same criteria seem to us to apply whether a relationship is heterosexual or homosexual.

*Towards a Quaker view of sex, 1963*

- 22.16 We affirm the love of God for all people, whatever their sexual orientation, and our conviction that sexuality is an important part of human beings as created by God, so that to reject people on the grounds of their sexual [orientation] is a denial of God's creation... We realise that our sexual nature can be a cause of great pain as well as great joy. It is up to each one of us to recognise this pain, ... to reach out to others as best we can, and to reflect on our own shortcomings in loving others... We need to overcome our fear of what is strange or different, because we are all vulnerable; we all need love.

Wandsworth Preparative Meeting, 1989

- 22.17 I was once asked by a young man with end-stage AIDS whether he would be acceptable to God, since he was a homosexual. I shall never forget the look on his face. I could not answer that depth of despair with pious phrases about the inward light or that of God in everyone... It is impossible to address AIDS without addressing sexuality... Being taught that one's innate bodily responses and

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sexuality are sinful does not give one a good basis for building loving, creative, intimate relationships. This is a problem for some heterosexuals too. Very many people with illnesses such as HIV and AIDS feel alienated, outcasts, cut off from normal human society. In the face of the losses, actual or potential, which pile up in the course of illness – loss of health, of strength, of work, of sex, of income, of friends, of home, of independence, of choice, of life itself – one can quickly feel stripped of everything that gives one any sense of self-worth. It is but a short step from this to feeling that AIDS is God's punishment. Yet the gospel (good news) is that enlightened Christian teaching is about a God who suffers alongside us, and helps us to transcend loss and suffering.

Gordon Macphail, 1989

- 22.18 Where there is genuine tenderness, an openness to responsibility, and the seed of commitment, God is surely not shut out. Can we not say that God can enter any relationship in which there is a measure of selfless love? – and is not every generalisation we make qualified by this?

*Towards a Quaker view of sex*, 1963

- 22.19 The Yearly Meeting has struggled to find unity on this [subject of sexuality], which comes so close to the personal identity and choices of each one of us. We are still struggling for the words which will help us, so that we may come to know the balance which allows us both to deal with the personal tensions of our own response to sexuality and also to see ourselves as all equal in the sight of God.

The extracts in this section are an anthology of the evolving experience of Friends and meetings. While our own [individual] experience does not identify with every extract, we recognise, in love, the Friend whose experience is not our own. We pray for ourselves, that we may not divide but keep together in our hearts.

London Yearly Meeting, 1994

*Sharing a home or living alone*

SHARING A HOME OR LIVING ALONE

- 22.20 Do you try to make your home a place of friendliness, refreshment and peace, where God becomes more real to all who live there and to those who visit it?

*Queries*, 1964

- 22.21 There are many ways of living together in a household where commitment and loving care are essential ingredients. For example: the care for an ageing parent by a daughter or son; brothers and sisters who live together for longer than many married couples; friends who share a home for many years; partners who, without the framework and legal protection of marriage, nevertheless love and care for one another for the rest of their lives.

Whether the foundation of the shared home is marriage or not, the essence of good relationships remains the same. They hold within them commitment, acceptance, sharing and trust. These qualities help develop the difficult skill of giving others both enough space to grow at their own speed and also security, so that the vulnerability engendered by growth and change does not lead to possessiveness.

Many Friends living alone have made their homes a place of welcome and support for those who need warmth and friendship. It is often their own experience of being alone that has helped them to understand and to listen with love.

1994

- 22.22 *At the age of 16 William Caton, an early member of the Swarthmoor household, wrote in 1652 of the love that enfolded all who became part of Margaret Fell's home:*

Truly willing we were to sympathise and bear one with another, to be helpful one unto another, and in true and tender love to watch over one another. And, oh the love, mercy and power of God, which

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abounded to us, through us and among us; who shall declare it? And hence came that worthy family to be so renowned in the nation, the fame of which spread much among Friends. And the power and presence of the Lord being so much there with us, it was as a means to induce many, even from far, to come thither, so that at one time there would have been Friends out of five or six counties... I was cherished and encouraged in the way of life by my entirely beloved friend Margaret Fell, who as a tender-hearted nursing-mother cared for me and was tender of me as if I had been one of her own children; oh, the kindness, the respect and friendship which she showed me ought never to be forgotten by me.

#### 22.23 *Testimony concerning Amy Lewis (1893-1951):*

In 1920 [Amy and Warren Lewis] joined the Society of Friends, and some years later moved to Eccles to establish the home which is inseparable from Amy Lewis's life and work. She did not allow her outside activities to impoverish her home, but rather enriched all her service with the generous warmth of her family life. She and her husband have shown us that under the exacting conditions of our modern world it is possible to build a new kind of Swarthmoor Hall; the outward circumstances may be different but the spirit is the same... Things were never easy materially, and faith and works, conjoined to prayer, were their principal resources. As the years went by, countless men and women, young and old, came to this home to talk out their problems and to share in its blessings.

Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting, 1951

22.24 In the busy years of home life the parents are upheld and strengthened by their dependence upon God and upon one another; the efficient running of the home, the simple hospitality, the happy atmosphere, are all outward signs of this three-fold inner relationship. Home-making is a Quaker service in its own right. It should be recognised as such and a proper balance preserved, so that other activities – even the claims of Quaker service in other fields – should not be allowed to hinder its growth.

1959

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- 22.25 There is something quite special about relationship with one's grandchildren, perhaps most of all in earlier childhood, when one slips into the garden of Eden with them for a spell. I don't even want to analyse what is so happy-making about this two-way relationship, although I constantly dwell upon it as one of the remarkable bonus joys of these later years of life. It is an experience that I have tasted for more than twenty years now, with six very different variations on the same theme.

Ruth Fawell, 1987

- 22.26 Friends do not take readily to being cared for. 'Caring matters most' has been quoted to us when seeking direction during our active years. But many of us will find that we ourselves are in need of full care in our old age. This will not be easy. It calls for 'a different kind of living', as one Friend commented when answering questions about experience in a home for the elderly. Uprooted from familiar well-loved things, of house and neighbours, released from stabilising responsibilities (however small), there will be adjustments to be made.

But there are compensations and opportunities. Loss of physical well-being can bring a new experience of the strength of the Spirit which can overcome pain and suffering. A new and fuller understanding of prayer can come, given the time to study and practise how to pray. And in the experience of living in a Home with others, a deep sense of sharing the darkness and the light can lead to a sense of community not known before. Finally, living close to physical death (our own and that of others), we come to recognise death as a natural and often welcome event. Yet another movement of growth into the fullness of the knowledge of God.

Margaret L McNeill, 1990

- 22.27 *In 1989 Rachel Rowlands wrote of her experience of living in the Quaker Community at Bamford, Derbyshire:*

This idea of people having sufficient separate space – the families with their self-contained units, single people in individual bedsits and a flat – stems from early discussions when we recognised that many

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communities founder through lack of breathing space and privacy. There is still much scope for 'being communal': twice-daily meeting for worship, four o'clock tea in the main kitchen, looking after other people's children, borrowing this, lending a hand with that, communal housework, a shared meal followed by house meeting each Friday evening, entering into each other's joys and sorrows, celebrating birthdays, gardening, developing new skills together in work on the roof or down the manhole...

We are called to recognise each other's boundaries, strengths and weaknesses, to be assertive and learn to handle conflict constructively. We struggle to face, rather than evade, our conflicts and this has recently been the focus of our 'Mary' meetings, which, named after a facilitator who helped us initially, are the one type of meeting which everyone makes a firm commitment to attend. As meeting for worship is the cornerstone of our spiritual life, so these meetings are for the nitty-gritty of living together.

- 22.28 It is surely the fear of the unknown which holds Friends back. I am a heterosexual, married for 23 years, mother of children, and divorced. Only since moving to London have I come to have as close friends same-sex couples or singles, many of them members of the Society of Friends. As a divorcee I, like them, do not fit into the 'norm', and the hospitality, support and sheer caring I have received from them has often been in sharp contrast to that of 'straight' couples, who often seem too busy, or too embarrassed, to ask me to their homes in the evenings. I had many of the preconceptions others have. Thank God I have learnt differently, although I still undoubtedly make gaffes, as ignorance still dogs my words. Ignorance is excusable, but intolerance? Having known at first hand the desperate loneliness of being on one's own, I can still only guess at the loneliness of many isolated lesbians and gays.

Margaret Glover, 1988

- 22.29 God's love is ministered to most people through the love of our fellow human beings. Sometimes that love is expressed physically or sexually. For me and my lover John, God's love is given through our homosexual relationship. In common with other people who do not have children to raise, we are free from those demands to nurture

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other vital things. This includes our meeting and the wider Society of Friends.

We both draw on our love a great deal to give us the strength and courage to do the things to which God calls us... Our spiritual journey is a shared one. Sometimes the pitcher needs to be taken back to the fountain. In order to grow, I need my church to bless and uphold not just me as an individual, but also our relationship.

Gordon Macphail, 1989

**The single life**

22.30 The amount of solitude which is attainable or would be wholesome in the case of any individual life is a matter which each of us must judge for himself... A due proportion of solitude is one of the most important conditions of mental health. Therefore if it be our lot to stand apart from those close natural ties by which life is for most people shaped and filled, let us not be in haste to fill the gap; let us not carelessly or rashly throw away the opportunity of entering into that deeper and more continual acquaintance with the unseen and eternal things which is the natural and great compensation for the loss of easier joys. The loneliness which we rightly dread is not the absence of human faces and voices – it is the absence of love... Our wisdom therefore must lie in learning not to shrink from anything that may be in store for us, but so to grasp the master key of life as to be able to turn everything to good and fruitful account.

Caroline E Stephen, 1908

22.31 Singleness is a state in which many of us find ourselves... Some of us choose, for various reasons to remain single – an absorbing career perhaps or the care of others which we feel demands all we have to give and in which we find fulfilment. We all need to love and be loved and for some of us this need is met, and can be met, in all sorts of nourishing ways. We need to look for these ways and then recognise them with joy when they come to us.

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For others of us though, this way would not be of our choosing and sometimes the path we tread is hard, barren and stony. There is for us an ache inside which does not go away. We long to be someone's nearest and dearest. We would like to have demands made upon us, to be needed, to be important for someone else's happiness and well-being. For some of us celibacy is a hard road – we long to be touched, caressed and for sexual union. What, we wonder, are we to do with the gift of our sexuality? In today's society we confuse sexuality with sex and fall into the trap of thinking we must have a sexual partner in order to express our sexuality. This is not true. Our sexuality belongs to us and there are many ways of expressing and taking delight in it.

We may fall into another trap – that of imagining that life with a partner is all bliss! Our partnered Friends will soon put us right on this, whilst rejoicing in all the good a happy partnership can bring.

All of us, partnered or single, need to feel that we belong, that we are valued and included – we need affirmation and recognition of who and what we are – we need, in our meeting especially, to make sure that this happens.

Jennifer Johnson, 1990

- 22.32 Many of us, widows or widowers, divorced or separated, homosexual and heterosexual, bachelors and spinsters, will be living alone for at least part of our lives. Some may still be grieving over the loss of a loved one, and whether that loss is caused by death or by separation, the need may be to have time in which to rediscover oneself as a single yet whole person, with needs and strengths, potentialities and achievements. Another may be enjoying freedom from commitment to another, but feel guilty about being self-centred. Yet others may be perplexed, even tormented, by their sexual drives and fantasies, and may be seeking ways of sublimation. Some may still feel the wounds of an earlier broken relationship and fear to take further risks, or may have experienced at one remove the tensions and hurts of an unhappy marriage. Some may have doubts about their own capacity to give happiness to a married partner or may have romantic ideas of finding the perfect partner, while yet others do not know why, without making any conscious choice, they have remained single. But

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underlying all these differences there is the common need to love and be loved.

Some Westminster Friends, 1990

## MARRIAGE AND STEADFAST COMMITMENT

*See also chapter 16* Quaker marriage procedure

- 22.33 Marriage is a context for a relationship, not a guarantee of its quality. The choice of a partner and the decision to marry are crucial, and meetings may be able to help in the process of discernment and the counselling of couples.

In marriage a private relationship becomes public, and thereby receives legitimacy, practical support and blessing from social institutions and the worshipping group. Above all, marriage gives at present the most accepted framework for the raising of children in a secure environment.

The institution of marriage is sometimes questioned, but a life-long loving relationship, whether within that framework or not, is nonetheless a cherished ideal. We have to acknowledge that the social climate and our attitudes towards marriage have undergone profound changes in the course of the twentieth century. Close relationships other than marriage have become common and their value increasingly recognised. There is a greater openness about the strains of marriage, and the pain of separation and divorce is now common in our Society.

Whilst believing that marriage is different and special, we recognise the value of other relationships and the single state. Those who choose to marry make a conscious choice that this is the right framework for their commitment.

Much of what earlier generations of Friends have thought and written about 'marriage and the Quaker home' can be applied more widely. The wisdom and experience of earlier Friends are valued even

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when their language and concepts are perceived as exclusive by today's standards.

1994

- 22.34 I met my husband-to-be, Kenneth Boulding, in the spring of 1941, at the very gathering at which I was taken into membership by the Religious Society of Friends... During our whirlwind courtship (sedately conducted at subsequent Quaker gatherings) I caught glimpses of a new understanding of what family might mean in an era when war clouds were shadowing the world. Not yet twenty-one I was overwhelmed by Kenneth's idea that through our marriage we were to found a colony of heaven. In that summer before our marriage, I had the awed feeling that I had somehow to reconstruct myself to be a person worthy of such a venture. I was so unready! The summer was already programmed. I was enrolled in a civilian training programme for women, designed to ready us for service in war-torn areas of Europe. At the training camp I struggled to prepare myself for the double task of marriage and community service. I prayed a lot. Could I be ready in time? I know now ... that one is never ready for the next step in life's journey. We learn what we need to know on the road itself.

In joining the Society of Friends that spring forty-six years ago, I committed myself to becoming a peacemaker. But I didn't know very much about peace-making. Kenneth Boulding, ten years older, served as a teacher-companion-guide. Entering the marriage we both saw our task as creating a home of peace from which to help to build a more peaceful world. When the impatiently awaited babies finally started coming in 1947, the practice of peace in the home became more difficult and challenging than when there were only two of us. But we knew we had to practise at home what we wanted for the world.

Elise Boulding, 1989

- 22.35 Never marry but for love; but see that thou lovest what is lovely. He that minds a body and not a soul has not the better part of that relation, and will consequently [lack] the noblest comfort of a married life.

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Between a man and his wife nothing ought to rule but love... As love ought to bring them together, so it is the best way to keep them well together.

A husband and wife that love one another show their children and servants that they should do so too. Others visibly lose their authority in their families by their contempt of one another; and teach their children to be unnatural by their own examples.

Let not enjoyment lessen, but augment, affection; it being the basest of passions to like when we have not, what we slight when we possess.

Here it is we ought to search out our pleasure, where the field is large and full of variety, and of an enduring nature; sickness, poverty or disgrace being not able to shake it, because it is not under the moving influences of worldly contingencies.

Nothing can be more entire and without reserve; nothing more zealous, affectionate and sincere; nothing more contented and constant than such a couple, nor no greater temporal felicity than to be one of them.

William Penn, 1693

- 22.36 Having felt thee abundantly near this evening, I am free to write what revives for thy perusal, hoping it may be useful towards our rightly stepping along through time together. And first, dearly beloved, let me tell thee, that however short I may be of strict adherence to the Light of Life; yet it is my crown, my chiefest joy, to feel the holy harmonious influences and inshinings of the love of Jesus my Saviour upon my soul; and I feel that without this I must be miserable indeed. I also believe that the true enjoyment of the marriage union consists eminently in both being engaged to draw near to the Lord, and to act in his counsel; which I not only wish, but in a good degree expect, may be our happy case. If it should, though we have as it were a dry morsel to partake of, as to the things of this life; yet we may joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of our salvation.

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*Job Scott, 1780*

- 22.37 To choose as a life partner one who shares your interests and enthusiasms, who makes a good friend as well as a good lover – whose personality and freedom you respect, who shares the belief that marriage is a religious act, and that the love that unites man and woman is part of the great love of God – these are some of the foundation stones of a happy marriage.

Ruth I\_Midgley, 1950

- 22.38 About this time we read the landmark publication of British Friends called *Towards a Quaker view of sex...* I think there is great validity in the insight of that pamphlet that what makes a relationship sinful is exploitation, not whether it is legal. We all know that a great deal of exploitation goes on in legal marriages. What makes any relationship, any action, right is caring – caring for the other person, for things, for the earth, and for oneself. George and I put words from Walt Whitman in our marriage ceremony to express what we wanted our marriage to be: ‘a union of equal comrades’. I think that is a right goal for any relationship, not only between consenting adults, but between children and adults. George and I have been together forty-two years – we became engaged on February 22, 1935. Sometimes when I tell young people that I found marriage liberating, they respond, ‘You’ve got to be kidding.’ But it is true. We have kept the goal of being a union of equal comrades, granting each other space to be ourselves and to grow towards wholeness.

Elizabeth Watson, 1977

- 22.39 At the time of our marriage, early in the third decade of this century, we were not so knowledgeable about our sexuality as young people are today, although I suspect, as scientists, we knew as much, or more, than most people of our generation. This meant, however, that in early married life there was a definite period of adjustment before we were happily, and with mutual satisfaction, settled in our ways. Quite early we began to realise that however important the attractions of sex were, we were very dependent on other interests to unite us. We were fortunate to have such interests in common, which developed and made ever increasing demands on us, influencing the

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course of our lives. Wasn't it Saint-Exupéry, so widely read in our youth, who impressed on us that true love does not consist of gazing into each other's eyes, but turning faces outward together to face the world?

William G Sewell, 1982

22.40 *Testimony concerning Jessie Gadsden (1912-1990):*

Jessie and her companion Mary Mills were among a handful coming to Bewdley Meeting in the late 1950s when it was an allowed once-a-month-in-summer meeting for worship. When this small group of Friends were determined on a renewed preparative meeting, Jessie and Mary would be there early on Sunday pushing a murderously heavy hand-mower amongst the graves recently uncovered from three or four feet of grass and nettles.

Over the years her contribution to the home and life she shared with Mary was constant and faithful. It was a partnership and Jessie's support for Mary's dedicated work in school and in Guides seemed as unquestioning as Mary's was as the second pair of hands in Jessie's flower and vegetable garden.

This was Jessie's real world... But she always left the greenhouse or the bushes graciously for a caller at any time. 'Here's ...' Mary would call from her part of the garden, and no-one felt unwelcome. Their cakes and Jessie's home-made bread (not to mention gifts of vegetables, flowers and fruit!) made it hard for us to stay away.

Worcestershire & Shropshire Monthly Meeting, 1990

22.41 Marriage, says the Christian, is for life; and the wedding is a declaration that it is so. It is a fearsome declaration to make, and without the grace of God, arrogant and absurd...

This is why the wedding is an act of worship, and not merely a formal indication in a register office: because the Christian, saying these terrible things, dare not just nod them off before a clerk; but must come and put his vows into the hand of God, trusting that God will hold [the couple] where He wants them held. To turn a wedding

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into worship is to recognise that marriage is bigger than we are; that it is not just a pleasant arrangement we have made for our own convenience, but a vocation into which we have been drawn by nature and by God.

The truth is that very few marriages remain all the time, day and night, summer and winter, pleasant or convenient. We have to give things up for each other: sometimes hobbies and pastimes, habits of spending, friends. Some glib talkers about marriage say that we do not need to 'give up': we must enrich each other's lives, not rob them. But this is unreal... If we mean business about marriage, we shall throw a good deal overboard in painful but decisive abandon; we shall bring along with us whatever is shareable, and a few things that are not; and we shall discover new things that we never did alone, but which we can start together and use as the basis for 'mutual society, help and comfort, in prosperity and adversity'... Then the Christian knows he is committed, that he is in it for good or ill; and in a curious way the situation is lightened by the knowledge.

Harold Loukes, 1962

- 22.42 Love is the will to nurture life and growth in oneself and in another... Love is personal; it is the sacred trust of living things. Likewise, love is neither need nor dependency. 'I need you' is not the same as 'I love you'. Need as the basis of a relationship may lead one person to suffocate another through demands. Need may drive me to manipulate, intimidate, or coerce you into fulfilling me.

Love is so vastly different! It is freeing; it acknowledges the separateness of the beloved. It treasures the unique otherness of the beloved that is each one's contribution to the relationship. Love calls for submission and sacrifice. It does not seek to possess, but rather to empty itself in nurture of the loved one.

Donald A Green, 1982

- 22.43 Marriage is to be taken seriously, but not always in grim earnest; its problems take perspective from fun, adventure and fulfilment, and joy and sorrow are mingled together. We rejoice in success, but we must also be glad that we can console each other in failure. 'With my

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body I thee worship' is to many a blessed phrase: but while some find a perfect physical relationship easily, others reach it the hard way, and it is not less precious for that. It is wonderful never to quarrel, but it means missing the dear delight of making it up. Children bring joy and grief; some will have none and will miss both the grief and the joy. For some, there is a monogamy so entire that no other love ever touches it; but others 'fall in love' time and time again, and must learn to make riches of their affection without destroying their marriage or their friends. Let us thank God for what we share, which enables us to understand; and for the infinite variety in which each marriage stands alone.

We thank God, then, for the pleasures, joys and triumphs of marriage; for the cups of tea we bring each other, and the seedlings in the garden frame; for the domestic drama of meetings and partings, sickness and recovery; for the grace of occasional extravagance, flowers on birthdays and unexpected presents; for talk at evenings of the events of the day; for the ecstasy of caresses, for gay mockery at each other's follies; for plans and projects, fun and struggle; praying that we may neither neglect nor undervalue these things, nor be tempted to think of them as self-contained and self-sufficient.

1959

### **Celebration of commitment**

*For Quaker marriage procedure see chapter 16*

- 22.44 According to George Fox the joining in marriage is God's work and that of no one else. Having found Friends rather late in life, when we were both approaching the age of sixty, the fact that in a Quaker marriage, partners marry each other appealed immensely to us and we so wished that this could have been our experience. Would it be possible to re-take our vows within a meeting for worship, we wondered? The elders of our meeting were approached and they could see no reason why, as part of the spoken ministry, we should not rise when we felt the time was right and make our commitment to each other using the words of the marriage ceremony but replacing the word 'take' with 'take again'. So on the first day of the

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ninth month 1991, exactly forty years to the day since we had been through a marriage service, we re-took our vows within a Quaker meeting for worship.

For us this was a wonderful experience. Several Friends felt moved to speak and after the meeting there were tears and hugs all round.

Don Grimsditch and Doris Mitchell-Grimsditch, 1994

*For George Fox's words referred to here see 16.01*

- 22.45 We recognise that many homosexual people play a full part in the life of the Society of Friends. There are homosexual couples who consider themselves to be married and believe that this is as much a testimony of divine grace as a heterosexual marriage. They miss the public recognition of this in a religious ceremony even though this could have no legal significance.

We have found the word 'marriage' difficult but we are clear that we have a responsibility to support all members of our meetings and to uphold them in their relationships. We can expect that some committed homosexual couples will ask their meetings for a celebration of their commitment to each other. Meetings already have the means whereby meetings for worship can be held for this purpose but we recognise that many find this a difficult matter. The acceptance of homosexuality distresses some Friends.

Meetings may well find it easier to consider this matter in connection with specific relationships rather than in the abstract, but we believe that meetings may be helped if something of the exercise of this meeting is shared with them.

Meeting for Sufferings, 1987

- 22.46 My partner and I decided we could not legally marry but were being led instead to have a 'celebration of commitment'. We came to this decision after a great deal of thought, and testing by family, (F)riends and our meeting. What seemed essential to us was the public witnessing of a commitment made before God by one's worshipping community who then also took a responsibility to

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uphold it. The form our relationship took had to be true to our inner conviction about equality, justice, honesty, openness and love. We could not participate in something that explicitly placed us above others in a hierarchy of worth. Neither could we ignore the valid criticisms raised by both homosexual people and the women's movement about the nature of the legal and conventional institution of marriage in our society.

We ended up having a wonderful 'celebration of commitment'. There was a warmth of overt, public support and acceptance at the meeting for worship for what we were doing and all its implications, not only for homosexual Friends but also in affirming the value of mutual spiritual ties in the face of devaluing legally binding ones. A number of (F)friends have told us how, for the first time in their lives, they had been made to feel truly included in such an event. For some it has made a huge difference in their relationship with their meeting in general.

We exchanged promises in the following words: 'I Alison/Mark choose to weave the strands of my life with those of yours, Mark/Alison, as a lifelong companion and a faithful lover. I am passionately committed to you, to us, and to our growth in God. I will dance with you, cry with you, laugh with you and pray with you. I know this won't be always easy but, with God's help, I will celebrate with you this gift that we have been given. Friends, I make this declaration before you and before God.'

Alison Davis and Mark Hughes, 1994

### **Facing change and difficulty**

- 22.47 Finding a true and faithful loving relationship may well be the greatest experience of our lives. It is in close relationships that we are helped to understand both ourselves and our partners, and to change and grow, emotionally and spiritually. Such relationships are, however, challenging as well as fulfilling, and the fulfilment does not come without the challenge. Tension can be either the source of learning and growth or the cause of hostility and the breakdown of relationships. Responding to the Holy Spirit, both individually and

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together, we may grow through problems and pain as well as shared joys and interests, and find deeper understanding.

1994

- 22.48 True love is proven when the loved one begins to be not only the mysterious beckoner of destiny, but becomes also the occasion of dull indubitable duty. At a frontier of life when one partner begins to say to him or herself: 'How can I love any longer? But I must love', then sometimes steadfastness and faith have power to nurse into existence the new being needed as companion and lover. What a triumph when old love is transformed into a deeper surer new love which can accept more fully what each has, and the pair find a rebirth together in those things which are eternal, and through this a renewal of their everyday living.

1959

- 22.49 Unfaithfulness is not necessarily physical. There is a kind of mental or spiritual adultery which can damage all three people concerned. Hard as it is to forgive physical unfaithfulness, it is equally hard, and sometimes harder, to forgive an apparently innocent friendship between one partner and a third person if it creates a sense of exclusion and deprivation, and destroys the confidence, respect and affection promised in marriage.

*Towards a Quaker view of sex, 1964*

- 22.50 Some situations which cause pain or suffering are avoidable, so part of our learning must be to analyse the situation and see if this is such a case. If it is, we must try to prevent it happening again. But perhaps the most painful situations are those that are apparently beyond our control. Another part of our learning is to recognise that there is unfairness, uncertainty, fear, loneliness and hurt in this world; learning to accept that this is the nature of the world can, of itself, be painful.

Initially we may be able to do little, bound up in an acute, self-centred pain. As we try to cope with the anger, the pain and grief that

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come through some unhappy experience, we can learn a lot about the less-well-articulated, darker sides of our personality. These darker aspects should not be ignored. Although we tend to equate evil with darkness, we should remember that in the plant world roots grow in the dark. Darkness (and shadows) are as much a part of the natural order as light.

S Jocelyn Burnell, 1989

*See also 10.23*

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN

### **The gift of children**

- 22.51 Take the decision to have children joyfully, even though it is a hard one to take consciously, for many adaptations will be necessary for both partners. Consider carefully what each parent's responsibilities will be and how you will share the various tasks of childcare and domestic life. Freedom to step aside from the career path for a while may be valued by either partner, or the traditional roles may be cherished, or both parents may agree to share work in the home and outside it equally.

Elizabeth Seale Carnall, 1981

- 22.52 Our lives have recently been transformed by the birth of a baby daughter. Nothing we read or were told could prepare us for the total revolution in our lives which the arrival of this beautiful spirit into our midst has brought. I feel that I am living on a new plane since the muffled kicks and hiccups of pregnancy were revealed to be a perfect and wonderful human being...

That moment of timelessness and joy was like a glimpse of heaven, seen through the miracle of birth ... with the endless possibilities for discovery, growth and love for all three of us.

## 23: Close relationships

Peter Wallis, 1987

- 22.53 The birth of a baby to a couple is, if all goes well, a joyful experience. It is also a time of tremendous change for the parents, who will be taking on new roles and responsibilities. Not everyone will find the transition an easy one. The exclusive relationship between the couple has to change as together they develop new parenting skills. All parents hope for a 'perfect' child, so it can be a grave disappointment if the child should be handicapped in some way. It may not only result in their grieving for the future they will not now have but can also make them feel emotions such as guilt or anger, however irrational these feelings may seem to be. Similarly a miscarriage or stillbirth needs to be acknowledged and mourned for in the same way as any other death of a loved one. The birth of another child does not wipe out the sorrow for the child which was lost. And some couples will not have children at all. In a small minority of cases this will be by choice, but for others it may be a life-long affliction.

Loraine Brown, 1985

### Difficult decisions in pregnancy

- 22.54 There are many reasons why a person may consider an abortion. Friends in this yearly meeting have no united view on abortion in general, nor is there agreement on principles. Understandably there has been little open sharing of experience, and therefore, sadly, almost no public discussion among Friends. As a result many individuals face a decision without feeling able to call on the practical and spiritual support of a gathered meeting or small group, without the help of Friends in seeking the Light. If a Friend asked in desperation, 'Where is God in all this? What can I do?' what could we say? We need accounts of personal experience that may offer starting points for a corporate search for that Light.

Anne Hosking, 1994

- 22.55 I once read in a feminist philosopher's work that only pacifists could logically be opposed to abortion since only they took an absolutist

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approach that it is always wrong to take life. But what if you are both a pacifist and one who believes that women should have a right to make choices about their own lives? Since we live in a society that both expects women to take responsibility for children and yet provides little financial or emotional support, how can we insist that a young woman takes on the burden of an unwanted child, or even the physical and emotional stress of bearing a child for adoption?

These could have remained theoretical questions. But life is not like that. A member of my family became pregnant and a decision had to be made quickly, within twenty-four hours. A baby was not intended, neither of the young people concerned had financial resources, a child would affect the establishment of at least one, if not two careers. I was the sole financial support of the family, so that I too could not care for a child.

It was clear to me then, it was clear to all of us, that an early abortion was the right answer. That does not mean that abortion itself is right, but that when human beings get into situations where every choice is wrong, then courageous and responsible decisions have to be made, and the consequences lived with.

I am still sure that in the circumstances the right choice was made. It was made by the person who had to live with the consequences, and it was made with family support. In a sense, an unborn child carried for all of us the costs of being a broken family in a broken world. But when I see and hold other peoples' babies, there is in my heart a grief which I cannot share, since it is not my secret, for the grandchild I never had and shall never know.

Anonymous, 1990

- 22.56 Modern genetic techniques place us in dilemmas not experienced by previous generations. When, after years of trying to conceive, I found I was expecting a baby, I insisted that it have its chromosomes checked. This was not because I thought that anything was wrong, but because I believed it to be irresponsible knowingly to bring a severely handicapped child into the world.

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When the bad news came a decision had to be made quickly. I knew that even if it was born, my child would probably live for less than six months, unable to feed normally. Perhaps we would be advised to leave it in the hands of hospital staff to await its fate. Meanwhile I faced the rest of a pregnancy, supposedly a happy time, constantly telling people and convincing myself that my child was not going to be healthy. There would be no joyful preparation of cradle, clothes and toys for us. I also knew that the majority of babies with serious abnormalities abort naturally in the early part of pregnancy; but this time nature had left me to make the cruel choice.

With family support, I decided to end the pregnancy. I never saw my child – I was afraid to. There was no funeral, indeed to this day I do not know what happened to the body. We were left bereft: of the normal child we had longed for, of the child I had carried within me for those months, and, after a long waiting, of the possibility of another child. These griefs were hidden; we were not offered professional support; a pacifist among pacifists, I did not feel able to ask my meeting for theirs. Friends do not discuss the subject of abortion easily.

Then, from the darkness, came our miracle child, healthy and much loved. But I still look at those of an age that my first one would be now, and I feel the wound will never close.

Jane Heydecker, 1994

- 22.57 However one views it, and for whatever reason it is carried out, an abortion is a deliberate taking of a potential life. The arguments around the right to life versus the right to choose do little to help those who believe in personal morality yet whose religion lays down no hard and fast rules about moral issues such as abortion.

As a nurse who was asked to become involved in the procedure of therapeutic abortion I was forced to decide. My final decision, made after much heart-searching, was to say 'No'. As a result I had to move to a less conveniently placed hospital, but my decision was accepted and at no time was my livelihood threatened.

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The right of medical personnel to choose not to become involved in the procedure of therapeutic abortion is enshrined in law. In my case I used my right to choose, but this left me with a dilemma. Where should I stand on another's right to choose to have an abortion? My choice was respected and my rights maintained. My responsibility had to be to respect another's choice and maintain their right to my compassion and understanding. To do less would make my decision nothing more than a pious declaration which ignored the very real pain suffered by many women who decide to have an abortion.

Pauline Condon, 1994

- 22.58 Faced with an unexpected and unwanted pregnancy Friends will no doubt consider the options open to them earnestly and prayerfully. The chosen course of action will not always be the same as each instance requires its own solution. Among the options is the possibility of having the baby and letting it be adopted. With loving counselling a mother can come to see that this course of action gives her baby the prospect of development within a loving family. It can give great joy to the adopting family. It is a solution which, if carried through in a spirit of love for the baby, can be an uplifting and positive one, emancipating the mother from feelings of sadness and guilt, and enabling the child to know that its mother was concerned to do the best she could for it.

More than twenty years ago we adopted a child. We and our three other children will always be grateful to the girl who not only carried and bore that child in spite of the difficulties, but had the courage to give the baby away. We hope that one day they may be able to meet again and she will know what a charming, talented and hard-working child she gave life to, and the great joy she gave to another family. It is not something we often speak of as we do not wish to add to the pain of others who make a difficult choice. We hope that Friends will always remember this option when involved with an unwanted pregnancy.

Anonymous, 1994

- 22.59 Although my wife had repeatedly expressed her aversion to babies and the idea of maternity even before we were married, I had lived in

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the hope and expectation that if ‘it’ happened, her feelings would change. After about eleven years ‘it’ did happen, accidentally and unplanned, and I waited for the transformation but in vain. My wife’s distress at her condition was painful to bear and although I persuaded her to seek counselling, she saw abortion as the only way.

My feelings were very mixed. My yearning for parenthood was acute, yet, if I had been in her position, I would want to decide for myself what happened to my body, so I tried to give her all the support I could. Also the talk was all about ‘battered babies’ at that time, and as I could not bear the thought of exposing our child to the risk of maternal rejection, I saw that an abortion was inevitable.

The weather as I remember (for all this happened about twenty years ago) was perfect, bright and sunny when I took her to the hospital, a few miles away from where we lived. And the next day I went to work as usual, although my thoughts were far away. Late in the morning the strangest feeling came over me, a sense of intense desolation and emptiness, but at the same time a conviction that all was well and that my child was safe.

I found out later that the feeling occurred at the time my wife said she went down to the theatre and although the timing could have been coincidence and I could have been suffering a reaction to emotional strain, some would regard it as a spiritual experience. All I know is that it was comforting as well as painful and helped me to come to terms with my grief.

Anonymous, 1994

### **Pressures on parents**

- 22.60 We recognise the new freedom and equality of those marriages in which both parents are able to pursue careers and to share the duties of the home. We are proud to think that in the past, by liberating women in the ministry and encouraging them in service, we have helped to create this pattern. But we know, too, that it brings its own tensions and dangers. If parents pursue their own interests and vocations (however worthy) without consideration for their families,

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the children will suffer. There are times when family calls must be put before all others, even those of our Society. We do not believe that rules of conduct can be strictly laid down, but we beg parents to be ready, in this as in other ways, to sacrifice monetary advantage, the pleasure of liberty, or the interests of their professional life, in order to preserve and build the family.

1959

- 22.61 I remember the time when I first instituted 'Mother's quiet time'. There was family resentment and I had feelings of trepidation and guilt. No, I would not come to the door, I would not settle a quarrel, I would not answer the phone, I was going to be all by myself without interruption! This started with a meagre half an hour and finally stretched into a much longer period, becoming an important ingredient in my lifestyle. It seemed to make the whole ensuing day more relaxed and less under pressure of feeling hyperactive.

Damaris Parker-Rhodes, 1985

- 22.62 I think parents need to be aware of how vital it is to leave everything to answer a young child's reaching out to you to 'come quickly' to share a sunset or the beauty of a discovered wild flower, or the trick of the pet dog, or to listen with full attention, no matter what seems prior on your agenda, when children burst into the house from school eager to have you listen to a tale of woe or a triumph they have experienced during the day. There is little question that if as a parent we have not taken the time really to listen to children when they are young, listened not only to their words but to their feelings behind the words, they are unlikely to want to come with their sharings in later life. Learning to listen to each other in families can help to make us better listeners to others and to the Inner Guide.

Dorothy Steere, 1984

- 22.63 Our children are given to us for a time to cherish, to protect, to nurture, and then to salute as they go their separate ways. They too have the light of God within, and a family should be a learning community in which children not only learn skills and values from

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parents, but in which adults learn new ways of experiencing things and seeing things through young eyes. From their birth on, let us cultivate the habit of dialogue and receptive listening. We should respect their right to grow into their own wholeness, not just the wholeness we may wish for them. If we lead fulfilling lives ourselves, we can avoid overprotecting them or trying to live through them... The family is a place to practise being 'valiant for the truth'. We can live lives of integrity, letting both 'yes' and 'no' come out of the depth of truth within us, careful of the truth in all our dealings, so that our words and our lives speak the same message. We cannot expect our children to be honest with us or anyone else if they hear us stretching the truth for convenience or personal gain. They are quick to catch such discrepancies. Moreover, we should trust them enough to be honest with them about family problems – disasters, serious illness, impending death. It is far harder on children not to know what is wrong.

Elizabeth Watson, 1980

22.64 'Write about the joys, traumas, challenges, insights or revelations of being a Quaker parent' said the letter in *The Friend*. Well, I've seen all those in the last sixteen years. Joy was there on becoming an adoptive parent, trauma on discovering our daughter's severe medical condition. The challenge came when adopting again and the revelations when knowing that sometimes we just could not cope.

Learning how to be an effective parent goes on and on, a learning which for me has been very revealing and given me insights into those parts of me which I did not care to discover. My experience has not been an easy one, but yet I feel very privileged to have been allowed to bring up someone else's children...

How should I have reacted when feeling angry, frustrated and physically exhausted? Those elements of gentleness, compassion and understanding which I want to apply have flown out of the window. No wonder I had times of great guilt feelings. Entrusted with the care of children not born to you gives a heightened sense of responsibility and the feeling that you must 'get it right', while always being more conscious of the approval of others. Adoption need not always bring difficulties and can be and is a wonderful experience. I

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feel very close to my children, perhaps closer than some parents feel to their natural children. I have tried to give them a sense of warmth and belonging, a feeling that they are loved and respected. They both know about their adoptions and if and when the time comes when they wish to know more than we can tell them about their backgrounds, I hope we shall be able to help and support them. Our extended family has always been totally supportive of our children, which has helped them to 'belong' through their growing years. Over the years too, we have come to see that the Meeting supported us like an extended family, propping us up in times of need and being available with advice and care.

Juliet Batten, 1994

### **The needs of children**

- 22.65 Difficult and painful divorces; an alcoholic parent; the death of a small child or of a parent – how do children cope with these situations? Adults who find them difficult believe that children need to be protected from them. Are children indeed more robust than we think? Perhaps children are enabled to cope when they see that adults are coping.

But other 'difficult questions' will face children and us parents. How can we prepare children to withstand the drug abuse culture? To resist inappropriate touching and sexual abuse? Children need to be lovingly warned at an early age about possible dangers without filling them with fears about the future.

Perhaps more importantly, is there a Quakerly way of coping with the strong feelings of anger and guilt that can be aroused by family relationships, particularly when they are going wrong? Just being able to admit to having angry feelings can be strengthening. Is there a Quakerly way of discussing difficult issues within the family and of reaching decisions, perhaps in a 'family meeting' set in the context of worship? The family is a system in which each member needs to be allowed to assert her or his needs and have them met in the loving interaction of family life.

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Douglas and Jenny Butterfield, 1986

22.66 Small babies cling to the mother's breast. They need comfort, warmth and cherishing, yet they can equally kick and scream to demonstrate their independent will. From the cradle to maturity the desire to belong and, at the same time, the need to assert our independent existence are in constant tension as we discover new facets of ourselves. At first a child sees the world as an extension of itself, but it learns quite quickly that other people have to be taken into account – either because parent figures enforce obedience or because the child wants to please those who nurture and bring it up. Whether the early environment is loving and caring or whether the child feels unwanted or rejected, each stage of growth is accompanied by joy and painful set-backs, by love and sometimes violent feelings of hatred or rage. A child that feels it is understood and loved will find it easier to develop inner security...

Development of personality is a continuing process – never completed. A child may be clear about its needs and wants, but then come the often tumultuous years of adolescence, of coming to terms with new and powerful sexual drives. Teenagers begin to realise themselves as separate and different from parents and friends. It is no easy task to live up to ideals and at the same time to accommodate rival claims and impulses. It is at this time that Quaker children often experience particular difficulties in adjusting to a world beyond their own home where values, standards and expectations are different from those they have grown up with. Do we try to understand the difficulties, stresses and failures of our growing children and make them fully aware that, come what may, they are still loved? This does not mean that we give them unlimited licence. They still need an adequate framework within which it is safe to experiment and rebel.

Rosalind Priestman, 1985

22.67 I am a product of multi-faceted parenting. I can boast about five parents and numerous other individuals and institutions that shaped me throughout my childhood and adolescence. As an adult approaching thirty I am only just beginning to recognise the riches of my experience, the pain and the joys. I long to talk to and read of

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others who have not been products of a nuclear family. We need to develop ways of supporting each other towards an understanding and acceptance of a chaotic family history...

My time with my foster parents provided me with a crucial stability and predictability into which each of my parents descended periodically to take me out or to take me on holiday. I was very confused as to who were my real parents, at one point being convinced that my foster family were, and these visitors were imposters. I cannot look back on that time as happy. I increasingly recognise and remember that I was a very unhappy child full of powerful feelings of needs which I felt I could not express for fear of losing what security I did have. These feelings are only now beginning to surface in consciously identifiable ways.

So on to boarding school, which very much became my parent... I wonder if some of the teachers there realised the full power of their 'parenting' and shaping me as an individual. There the Quaker philosophies planted themselves firmly into my personality as guiding lights. I was led into Quaker activities such as workcamps and the Leavers. These became a vital part of my parenting as I began to feel part of an extended family, with a coherence, loving acceptance and creativity that met many of my still undefined but strongly felt needs...

I recognise that my experiences are not unique, although the specific combination may be. What I want to do is to allow myself all the feelings and thoughts that I may have repressed, both negative and positive, so that I may celebrate and mourn my lack and my experience of parenting.

Caroline Jones, 1994

- 22.68 It was only after working with 'Questabout' that I realised how hard it is to be a Quaker teenager. Young people are thrown together at school with all sorts of people, whereas their parents may well be able to move in a selected circle. The rules of social intercourse in schools are usually not as refined as in the office. While Dad and Mum may work beside people with whom they disagree, politeness will prevent too much overt friction; the boy or girl from a Quaker

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family in an area where the majority of people have more conservative attitudes may be made to feel very isolated. Not many people will be challenged to a fight at the office, but many Quaker teenagers have to defend daily a peace testimony which they may not yet have worked through for themselves. It is here that support from older Friends not in the immediate family can be vital.

Hugh Pyper, 1986

- 22.69 Parents will normally expect their children to be heterosexual, to provide them with '2.1 grandchildren' and share proudly in the conventional marriage pattern. Hence the shock of knowledge of homosexuality can be very real, and acceptance and love are not often an immediate reaction.

Yet the gay person desperately needs this reassurance and understanding, and longs for the parents to embrace them, and to extend this feeling to their partners as well; to be accepted and treated in the same happy way that would be accorded to a heterosexual relationship. For the gay person, coming to terms with the knowledge that they are gay in a world that is mainly heterosexual is difficult. The way is fraught with bigoted people, barriers of discrimination, hostility, sneers and even violence. Above all, they need support, love and complete acceptance in a joyful secure understanding from those close to them outside the gay community, from friends and relations, families including sisters and brothers and, in the case of Quakers, from Friends and meetings.

Arthur Hardy, 1989

### **Letting go**

- 22.70 We cannot hope to transfer more than a little of our wisdom to our young people – if wisdom it is. We have increasingly to stand back as they grow older, knowing that the problem is passing out of our hands. They go off to college – or to live in a flat of their own, that aim and delight of so many young people. At last they have privacy, freedom from supervision and criticism, independence – but they are now fully exposed to all that we fear. Often they have much more

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self-confidence than is justified ('I can take care of myself'), and they little know that to avoid disaster they must avoid the circumstances in which the first sequence of events takes place. Many are carried headlong into sexual experiences that they did not intend or foresee.

This is the moment of disengagement, when parents must tell themselves that the young people are no longer their children and that they are outside their discipline. The decisions made by the young men and women mustn't be clouded by confusion with parental emotions ('How can you bear to hurt your mother?'). Parents cannot help being anxious, but they must bear that in themselves, not project it. They cannot live their children's lives for them.

It is also the moment for parents to tell themselves that their children are not alone. They are in the hands of God. God does not offer any kind of perfection in the actual circumstances of life, nor freedom from exposure to evil. Nor will parents ever be able – if they are honest – to look back over their experience of parenthood without being conscious of imperfections in their own understanding and handling of their children.

Kenneth C Barnes, 1960

- 22.71 We help [our children] not by futile attempts to 'keep them in the Society' (they must make their own explorations), but by recognising their own full stature as God's children. If we, the important adults in their lives, respect their integrity, their capacity to worship and experience God, then they will respect it too. If we share the skills that we are learning, then they will practise them too. If we are truly touched by God in worship, and realise that we can all, both young and old, open up to God, then we have made a good foundation. A lot else will follow, in the children's religious education, but God comes first.

Anne Hosking, 1984

- 22.72 Children who are brought up in freedom, who rightly make their own lives, do not naturally all separate themselves, but return, coming and going at their convenience to their old home. Their

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parents discover in time that instead of having children and grandchildren to love and care for, it is they themselves who are possessed by their children and their children's children. It is a reversal of earlier relationships that may lead so naturally to the happy closing of long married life.

William G Sewell, 1982

## **ENDING OF RELATIONSHIPS**

22.73 Grieving is a proper and common response to any significant loss. It may be particularly difficult when the loss being mourned is not immediately obvious. It might, for example, be the death of love or the end of commitment in a relationship whose outward form continues; or the relationship which is ending may never have been made public. A meeting whose members know each other well may be a source of real support at times of crisis. Feeling valued as a member of the meeting and having the opportunity to continue giving service at such times can be very important to somebody whose life is disintegrating. We must be aware that it may, for a time, be beyond our capacity to help those who are grieving.

When ending a relationship entails breaking up a shared home, and especially when children are involved, it is important to consider the feelings of all those affected. Thoughtfulness cannot dissolve irreconcilable differences but loving attention may help to generate creative solutions even in unpromising circumstances.

Appropriate financial arrangements will have to be made by the partners for each other and for any dependents. It is essential that these arrangements are properly and clearly made, registered and kept. Against a background of loss of trust, this will not be easy but responsible financial conduct can assist all parties towards the slow process of rebuilding lives.

It should be borne in mind that the law on these topics is itself developing all the time and up-to-date professional advice should be obtained.

*Ending of relationships*  
1994

*See also 4.20-4.21, 10.23 & 20.74*

22.74 Changes in ourselves and others may lead to relationships coming to an inevitable end. Whether the loved one is removed by death or by separation, the time of re-adjustment is stressful and difficult. We need time to mourn. We all know of the heartache and sometimes the liberation that divorce brings. We encounter these experiences in the Quaker community of our local meeting just as much as in our families and neighbourhood. There are many single-parent families and reconstituted families with step-children, where all those who are involved have been touched and deeply affected by the events that led up to the crisis and what followed. As a result, there are many people who are in great need of imaginative and ongoing support from their meeting. There will be feelings of bereavement, as of losing part of themselves, of loneliness, frustration, resentment and anxiety. This may lead to depression and an acute feeling of isolation, but it is then that we often discover new strengths in ourselves, and the value of true friendship... The ability to forgive and to accept the forgiveness of others may be the doorway that leads to new beginnings.

Rosalind Priestman, 1985

22.75 We need to encourage an understanding of, and action upon, our marriage testimony. This suggests three consequences for our meetings: we have to take greater care of those preparing for marriage; we have to encourage the strengthening and enriching of all marriages; and we have to consider how to help those whose marriages are in crisis to deal with their spiritual responsibilities. This ... means having an understanding of our faith and of how we can reconcile the highest ideals with human failure. We must not give up the ideals just because acting on them is difficult. So we cannot say that the breaking of marriages is right. The attempt to reconcile, to forgive, to start again, must always be of first priority. However, from time to time, there may be situations where a couple have genuinely tried but have come to feel that their marriage is no longer sustainable. At this point, we have to recognise that Christianity places people and their needs before the keeping of rules. The

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question must become, what is now the most loving way forward for the family? It may be that the answer is ... separation or divorce. This must be an occasion for sorrow and grief at failure, but also of hope for new life. The role for members of the meeting may be to provide support and reassurance that they too discern that a right decision has been reached.

However, where people are married and especially where there are children, the commitment to be loving and faithful cannot be cancelled but has to be renegotiated for a new situation. The partners still have a responsibility to each other, to care about and support each other... Too many divorces result in hostility and bitterness. Where there has been a decision to part, couples may need help in determining what love for each other will mean in the future. Clearness committees, and perhaps a meeting for worship to mark a divorce and to make a new commitment to lifelong friendship, may be ways.

‘Chris’, 1986

- 22.76 If a couple have failed, and broken away, and suffered; and if there comes into their lives a new hope of building a home, and they approach it responsibly, gravely; then it is surely right ... to stand by them in love and sympathy and hold them up before the Lord. If this is not so, then ‘sins-in-marriage’ become a special sort of unforgivable sin, beyond the reach of the grace of God. But as any married couple know, ‘sins-in-marriage’ are easy to commit and hard to avoid. Other sins, like robbing a bank, are easier to avoid, yet are open to forgiveness...

The Quaker view is that this forgiveness is part of God’s intention, and that the business of the Church is not to judge but to inspire and sustain: not to say to a quarrelling couple, ‘We shall not bless you if you drift apart’, but ‘We will try to help you now in your quarrel. And if you fail we will still try to help you to find God’s will for you then.’ It is thus that the sanctity of marriage is asserted, rather than in the denial of a new start.

Harold Loukes, 1962

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- 22.77 Years after my husband had left me and our children I was very ashamed at how much private anger and resentment I still felt towards him. I confessed this to a very dear Friend, Maria Bruce, who was surprised and said: 'But your anger and resentment have sustained you – without them you might have sunk into depression or despair. So don't be ashamed of them – you have used them to good purpose.' I never felt either guilt or anger again.

Anonymous, c 1980

- 22.78 For me the certain realisation of God came at the time of the breakdown of my marriage. The unthinkable had happened and I seemed to be at my lowest state physically and mentally. There seemed to be no present and no future but only a nightmare of dark uncertainty. One distinct message reached me: to 'go under' was out of the question, I could only start again, learn from my mistakes and take this second chance at life that I had been given. I found a strength within I did not know I had, and I believe now that it came from the prayers and loving support of so many people round me.

This rebirth was for me a peak experience, the memory of which is a constant reassurance in times of emptiness and doubt. Facing the future, even with a sure faith, is not easy. I am cautious at every step forward, taking time and believing I shall be told where to go and what to do. Waiting patiently and creatively is at times unbearably difficult but I know it must be so.

'For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come.' (Hab 2:3)

Jennifer Morris, 1980

- 22.79 When a divorced or widowed person wishes to remarry it is a time for rejoicing. Remarriage is a new commitment to the ideal of life-long partnership and it takes much faith, strength and courage to remarry following the traumatic loss of a spouse. While there are many differences between losing a partner by death and by divorce there are also basic similarities and problems. Anger, hurt, resentment, loneliness, feelings of failure, unreal expectations are

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only a few of the spectres from the past which may haunt a remarriage. Realistically coming to grips with problems and seeking solutions before the wedding may give a remarriage the solid base it needs.

Family Life Sub-committee of New England Yearly Meeting, 1985

*See 16.17 & 16.19-16.21*

### BEREAVEMENT

22.80 Maybe we face the fact of death for the first time when someone near and precious to us dies, and we then wake up to wrestle spiritually with the feelings of anger, dismay and acute deprivation that take us by surprise and question our hard-won faith. Or we may be called upon to stand by another person suffering great grief in bereavement. It is through such experiences that we struggle towards an attitude of our own towards death, so that we can speak from where we stand, and from the acceptance of the strange and paradoxical nature of death as of life.

Ruth Fawell, 1987

22.81 Loneliness after loss is a bitter and unproductive fruit that generally has to be eaten, skin, stone and all. Meanwhile the table bearing the accustomed spiritual refreshment has vanished, as though it never existed.

In the immediate shock of loss there is help. Friends rally, nature supplies an anaesthetic, the doctor offers valium. The crux comes later, just when you supposed the worst was past: companions consider the crisis over and return to their own affairs; the first sharp sting has worn off, and you will have decided to give up drugs. You have no idea what is lying in wait.

But now the real battle begins, the formidable adjustment has to be made. The caring and the sharing will never come back, at least in their past form, and a cold, apparently comfortless, independence has

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to be shaped to create a life of value. The temptation is to look round for a substitute for the one lost – but people grieving are not their normal selves, they are off balance and their judgment is impaired. A new companionship, if it is to be, is like happiness: no good searching for it, if it arrives it will be as a by-product.

The other temptation is to shirk experiencing the loss to the full when the time has come. A readiness and an openness to the approach of that dark night are necessary. Easy to fill the conscious mind with work, or a contrived ‘pleasure-seeking’, or do-gooding. The unconscious is preparing the pit, and down into it you will eventually be driven. Better go willingly, with all your armour on. For this is in fact the training ground of your spirit, where you will learn how much, through your own pain, you have to offer to others. And so the first and greatest step out of the dark place becomes recognisable: self-absorption begins to give way to empathy with a world of suffering you previously didn’t know existed. People in the first shock of grief will be drawn to you, and you, no longer a newcomer to that world, will have found your listening skills.

As to that delicious and sustaining food you were accustomed in happier times to peck at, why, there it is again, and you haven’t recognised it. The former sustenance was only fit for children, and has been replaced by helpings of insight appropriate to your increased maturity.

Margery Still, 1990

22.82 I thought back to my own times of sadness. They had been acute and I had prayed for relief. But gradually I had felt towards the awareness that there was a harsh reality about pain and sadness more tangible than words and phrases. To write about pain is to run into the danger of wrapping up sadness in words and pushing it outside. But sadness had brought home to me that all wisdom fails, all books are empty, in the face of the inescapable experience of pain. Sadness has its own authority.

It built a bridge to others. But to do this the pain had to be accepted, acknowledged as a companion. If pain brought bitterness and an irresistible desire to blame others and punish them, then it was

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isolating. If it was accepted as a personal burden, it opened a door to the souls of others seeking answers to the mystery of suffering.

I was also made aware that when I had met other people of different faiths or of none, who seemed to know the same experience of loss and bewilderment and search below the level of words and creeds, then we found that, despite differences, we were strangely at one.

Could this be the path to a new sense of unity, the community of those who had known pain, and thence had found depth, so that creeds and traditions became but signposts to an acceptance of sadness and an entry into a depth where we found harmony with each other? Was this the way forward to a deeper unity with people of other religions or indeed of none? Perhaps we could start with the simple discovery that words divide and sadness unites.

Robert Tod, 1989

- 22.83 The good minister who spoke at the baby's funeral service said, 'Do not be afraid of crying for him, because tears of love are able to heal the wounds of love. Such wounds are not healed by forgetting, but by remembering in such a way that memories are healed. The saints of old were wise when they spoke of tears as a gift, a healing flood to wash clean the soul.'

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ... blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. But there is no comfort now, there are only the empty arms and the empty cot. How are we to live with this emptiness which will never be filled, the broken promise of a life that never unfolded? ...

Anger, there is so much anger. Anger for a life denied is a wholesome healing anger. And if part of that is anger at a God who we thought was kind, and who now brutally turns his back, then so be it...

A God we cannot be honest with is no God. If we bow the head and say, Thy will be done, when our heart is aflame with protest, we only increase our own pain. Better to rail, rail on God at the passing into night of this small sweet innocence than to assume unreal acceptance. And then, with small steps, treading the way of sorrows,

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we may gradually, or perhaps with blinding suddenness, look up from the dark road and see – see that He has been treading the Way with us, holding us when we faltered, giving us the strength to go hesitatingly forward.

Sheila Bovell, 1988

- 22.84 *The following experience relates to the death of his son Lowell at the age of 11, while Rufus Jones was on a visit to England in 1903:*

The night before landing in Liverpool I awoke in my berth with a strange sense of trouble and sadness. As I lay wondering what it meant, I felt myself invaded by a Presence and held by Everlasting Arms. It was the most extraordinary experience I had ever had. But I had no intimation that anything was happening to Lowell. When we landed in Liverpool a cable informed me that he was desperately ill, and a second cable, in answer to one from me, brought the dreadful news that he was gone. When the news reached my friend John Wilhelm Rowntree, he experienced a profound sense of Divine Presence enfolding him and me, and his comfort and love were an immense help to me in my trial... I know now, as I look back across the years, that nothing has carried me up into the life of God, or done more to open out the infinite meaning of love, than the fact that love can span this break of separation, can pass beyond the visible and hold right on across the chasm. The mystic union has not broken and knows no end.

- 22.85 It was just five words on a quiet Sunday afternoon that changed our lives: 'Your son has been killed'. An unbelievable, shocking message. I was split into two parts, half knew what had to be done but the other half was paralysed. I should never see my son again, never hear him speak, never touch him and never tell him our news. Never, never, never – what a terrible word! Never again do what I so much loved. What a hellish thought. Never again tell him by a smile and a wink how much I loved him. Never, oh hateful word. My heart was cut out and I was overwhelmed by grief...

It is hard to find consolation in the written word, but it is there. Dear William Penn: 'And this is the comfort of the good, the grave cannot hold them...' We grasp at that hope and then, when quite unprepared,

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there is a feeling, a presence which cheers the heart. Yes, I am sure our son is still hereabouts...

Somehow in the depths I feel sure that life is continuous through the grave. It is like a stitch of embroidery which appears above the canvas, runs along and is seen, then dips back below out of sight. The thread, the wool is continuous and only appears to disappear. Indeed I had a strong feeling that only humans need starts and finishes, beginnings and endings. In the real spiritual world there are no starts and ends, all space, time and life are boundless and eternal. This feeling has been so strong it is now a great support...

It is impossible now to watch the news unmoved, to see repeated daily all over the world tragedies and weeping parents. We must suffer in this world if we are to understand the suffering of others. One must pluck this lesson of understanding from the icy pain of grief.

Peter Tatton-Brown, 1989

- 22.86 Losing a child is devastating. When that child, at any age, finds life so unbearable that he destroys himself, for the mother who conceived, carried and then bore him the pain is terrible.

We each have to find our own way through such experiences, and these ways will vary. Always first is the help given through the love and understanding of those closest to us, and those near enough to suffer with us...

Thank heaven this first desolation doesn't last for ever, nor do the various physical ills one can be afflicted by when grieving, and family and friends eventually become real again, and their love and care a comfort...

In the extreme need of early days the hills brought their healing. I went out again on my solitary walks, not able ... to reach the tops, but with my eyes on their strength and their changing beauty. And in time ... they brought joy – joy that in a mysterious way is the other side of the coin from pain.

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Joan Fitch, 1988

22.87 On the morning of Frances' death, as I stood by her bedside, I made a secret resolve somewhere deep in my being which has only recently come to the surface. I made an agreement with God that from that day onward, everything I have to say about God, everything I have to say theologically, has to stand with me by Frances' bedside. If it cannot stand at the side of death, if it cannot stand by the side of a fifty-five-year-old woman who wanted to live to see the trees again, it had better not stand at all because it is probably not worth very much.

Zoe White, 1988

22.88 My father chose to end his life, after three years of chronic pain and illness which increasingly robbed him of his faculties. Towards the end of his life he came to resent medical science, which provided oxygen for sixteen hours a day to keep him alive. His life was being unnaturally prolonged and he felt he had a right to end it when his pain and suffering became intolerable.

During the years of his illness I saw my father change from caring parent to dependent child; a brave man, overwhelmed by pain and immobility, became a broken man. Yet in those years of caring I came to know my father in a way I had never done when I was a child. I had long discussions with him, gave him treats, took him to his favourite places; an opportunity to give to someone who had given so much to me.

My meeting helped sustain me. My father was constantly on our healing list. I was surrounded with love and support when I came to meeting with tears of frustration and despair. After his death, meeting helped me to celebrate his life and supported me in my grieving and recovery from emotional exhaustion. I can now see my father's decision as an act of courage.

Vivien Whitaker, 1994

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22.89 Few things make us feel more inadequate than being faced with another's grief. Although every grief is unique yet there are feelings common to many or all griefs. It helps us to be ready to stand by someone in [their] loss if we know a little of what to expect... Grieving is a necessary and arduous task. It should not be a state but a process; but the griever needs courage and support from others to go right through it and not get 'stuck' at some point.

Death comes in so many forms. Some deaths leave us sad for a time but do not really upset the balance of our lives, especially if the death was of an elderly person, quietly rounding off a full and happy life... Whilst waiting a long time for an expected death can be a great strain, it does give the people involved time to adjust and work through some of their feelings. On the other hand, sudden death can bring an overwhelming shock. The survivors are left with a great sense of the precariousness of existence; the experience can be shattering, a permanent alteration of life. Some are broken by it completely, and in the desire to help it is as well to be aware of this possibility.

However much a death has been expected and prepared for, it is still a shock when the moment comes. This shock produces a numbness at first which is merciful. It may enable the bereaved person to carry out the practical tasks which follow a death. But it may not. If we are sensitive we will see what help the bereaved person needs... How often we hear people say in those early days, 'She is being marvellous'. But this stage passes, and a period of great inner chaos can follow... [The] loss of one's partner can be one of the severest forms of psychological stress. The emotions can be quite overwhelming. Some say it feels like insanity...

Slowly life can be found to have meaning again, and at the heart of that meaning lies the word 'love'. 'Growth into true life', wrote one widow, 'lies in love of one another. We have the choice of letting grief shadow our lives or growing from it.' This healing love is beyond us and within us, and continually seeks us out. Those whose privilege it has been to come right through grief know this in a deep and personal way. They can in their turn reach out to others in distress. The true meaning of the word 'compassion' is 'suffering together with someone'. Perhaps they have discovered for themselves that the sense of the absence of God which came with the depression made them know how much they need God.

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Diana Lampen, 1979

- 22.90 *Margaret Torrie, with the help of her husband, Alfred, and others, founded CRUSE in 1958 to help widows and their families. Its work helped to change social attitudes towards widowhood and to break through the existing taboos on death. She later wrote from her experience of the counselling service thus established:*

There are clearly-marked signposts which, if followed, lead the way to recovery. First there has to be the wish, however transient, to find the way to better things. It is the beginning of hope, that basic ingredient for all life. From there, confidence and belief develop, and the certainty that in spite of all evidence to the contrary, good is in us and around us offering support. In such a situation of positive thinking we cease to be dreamers and accept fully our present lot. It is the material from which we are to build our future, whether long or short in time... The remarkable discovery we can make is that love has not deserted us, and that it is available to us now in a new way. Our own willingness to love and to give in the world about us is the secret of recovery and the new beginning.

1970

- 22.91 After we passed our eightieth birthdays, we had to admit that the days of our autumn had arrived. We had lived together long lives of interest and adventure; in many ways we knew they were complete. Younger folk were coming along to take our places. Life was good and we still enjoyed it; but we recognised that each day was a bonus, to be accepted with grateful thanks. As the fires of life sank lower, we knew that the bonus days must end, and the life-long partnership must close. When after increasing weakness the time came for my wife to leave us, grief was lost in the joy of a life well lived and thankfulness for the many years it had been shared with mine.

William G Sewell, 1982

- 22.92 On the occasion of a funeral, words of comfort and reassurance may be found in the Bible and other spiritually profound writings, including those of Friends. The reading of an appropriate passage

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chosen with sensitivity to the bereaved and the circumstances of their bereavement, can minister to the varied needs of those present and deepen the quality of their worship.

1994

*See 17.01-17.10*

22.93 There are lives so rounded and crowned by their completed deeds of love, that death seems to have appeared in the fulness of their prime only to consecrate them for ever; others stand apart from human ties in a solitude which makes time seem of little consequence, and the grave a not unfamiliar country... We do not know to what unfathomable necessities the times and seasons of life and death may correspond; and as little do we know, in looking at each other's lives, what may be unfolding or what may be concluded, as seen from within. That which seems to others a cutting short of activity, may be to ourselves the laying down of arms no longer needed; our eyes may see the haven, where our friends can see only the storm; or if we cannot see a fitness in the time of our death, is that a strange thing in such a life as this?

Caroline E Stephen, 1908

22.94 Love bridges death. We are comrades of those who are gone; though death separate us, their work, their fortitude, their love shall be ours, and we will adventure with hope, and in the spirit and strength of our great comrade of Galilee, who was acquainted with grief and knew the shadows of Gethsemane, to fight the good fight of faith.

John Wilhelm Rowntree, 1905

22.95 The truest end of life, is to know the life that never ends. He that makes this his care, will find it his crown at last. And he that lives to live ever, never fears dying; nor can the means be terrible to him that heartily believes the end.

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For though death be a dark passage, it leads to immortality, and that's recompense enough for suffering of it. And yet faith lights us, even through the grave, being the evidence of things not seen.

And this is the comfort of the good, that the grave cannot hold them, and that they live as soon as they die. For death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity. Death, then, being the way and condition of life, we cannot love to live, if we cannot bear to die.

They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies. Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle, the root and record of their friendship. If absence be not death, neither is theirs.

Death is but crossing the world, as friends do the seas; they live in one another still. For they must needs be present, that love and live in that which is omnipresent. In this divine glass, they see face to face; and their converse is free, as well as pure.

This is the comfort of friends, that though they may be said to die, yet their friendship and society are, in the best sense, ever present, because immortal.

William Penn, 1693

*See also 21.49-21.58 for extracts on facing death & chapter 17 Quaker funerals and memorial meetings*