

Guidelines for Worship Sharingⁱ

1. Whereas in worship we come purposing neither to speak nor not to speak, in worship sharing we come aware that we probably will speak.
2. However, no one should feel compelled to speak. A person may defer his/her turn until the end of the round or pass altogether if that feels right.
3. Those who speak will speak only once, distilling the promptings of the Spirit on the subject into a single statement.
4. Those who speak will speak from their own experience, avoiding ideas about the subject—especially the ideas of others, even if they have embraced them.
5. When we speak, we will not answer another person, discuss, dispute, disagree, correct or straighten one another out. We will speak from and for ourselves.
6. While others are speaking we will not be preparing what we will say when it is our turn.
7. While others are speaking we will not be listening critically for error, points of disagreement or places where we could improve upon what is said. We will lay aside our critical thinking skills which serve to separate us from one another and from what is said.
8. While others are speaking, we will try to listen to each person as a unique child of God, a unique gift of God to us. We will try to hear how God might be speaking to us personally in the other's words, in their situation, in their very being, even—and especially—when we find ourselves resistant to them.
9. When someone has finished speaking, we will take a time in silence so that we may really take in what has been said, be sure we have heard it, begin to identify our resonances and resistances before the next person speaks.
10. As we listen, we may also be mindful whether any pattern seems to be emerging in what is shared, whether it reflects any movement of the Spirit among us.
11. We must do this as though we had all the time in the world and yet be mindful of how much time we do have. If we divide the allotted time by the number of group members, we will know roughly how much time each person has for silence and for speaking. Each person can be responsible for disciplining him/herself to keep to the allotted time—mindful that to run over is not only to deprive another of an opportunity to speak, but to deprive the group of hearing what might have been said.
12. Everything we hear is to be held in the strictest confidence, from spouse, partners, friends, even overseers or ministry and worship, unless we have been given express permission to speak.

ⁱ Pat Loring, *Listening Spiritually: Personal Spiritual Practices Among Friends* (Washington DC: Openings Press, 1997), 175-76.