

Building Healthy Relationships

I bet you know a lot about your parents and relatives, don't you? Can I assume that you know your friends as well? How about those in your social circles? Better yet, how about those in your spiritual family of faith? Oh, yes, we know each other's names' or we know what we may do for a living. But do we really know each other like family? We are the body of Christ, the spiritual family of God. We are spiritual mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. But do we really know one another? Probably more important to ask, do we really want to know one another?

I received a book a while back from a friend entitled, "Brave Questions: Building Stronger Relationships by Asking All the Right Questions," by Dr. Allen R. Zimmerman. In the book Dr. Zimmerman mentions how when we are young or dating we were so much interested in the other person. One couldn't pry a young man away from his girlfriend. This young couple could talk all night and about anything. Questions were endless and finding out about the other person was paramount. The goal was finding out as much about the other person as possible. Notice how this inquiry also follows true friends. Dr. Zimmerman then describes a list of 20 questions that can be used to take 2 people beyond the surface information in a safe and mutually confidential way.

The Quakers were interested in developing strong relationships within their Christian Fellowship of Friends. In order to break through the spoken and unspoken barriers that exist between persons trying to build relationships and trust, the Quakers created a brief list of 4 questions. It is my hope that you will be able to cut out these questions, stick them up on the refrigerator, and use them at your next circle meeting, Bible study, or small group fellowship gathering. It is a great way to serve as an ice-breaker for getting to know one another and a great way to build healthy relationships. Please take a moment and read through each question. As you do, pause and reflect for a moment on where each question takes you into your own life journey and story.

The Four Quaker Questions:

1. *Where did you live between the ages of 5 and 12 and what were the winters like.*
2. *How was your home heated?*
3. (a) *What was the center of warmth in your life when you were a child. (This can be a place in the house, a time of year and perhaps a person.)*
(b) *Who was the center of warmth in your life? (This is a person.)*
4. *When did God become a "warm" presence to you and how did this happen?*

I stand committed with you in helping the church and community continue developing healthy relationships with one another.

Grace and Peace,
Dr. Trey Kuhne