

## Wait and Watch: Spiritual Practice, Rehearsal, and Performance

By John Andrew Gallery. Pendle Hill Pamphlets (number 485), 2024. 30 pages. \$7.50/pamphlet or eBook.

### Reviewed by Hope Ascher

I wish I had understood previously what John Andrew Gallery makes clear in this engaging pamphlet about how what we do in meeting for worship and meeting for worship with attention to business (meeting for business) can inform and enhance our living as Friends in the world beyond our meetinghouses. The metaphor of the subtitle, “Spiritual Practice, Rehearsal, and Performance”—borrowed from theater, music, and sports, and previously explored by Gallery in two *Friends Journal* articles published in 2006 and 2022—sets the stage for the structure of the pamphlet as Gallery explains the relationship between each of those three phases of the Quaker experience.

The section on “Meeting for Worship as Spiritual Practice” details both Gallery’s personal journey to discovering the Religious Society of Friends and very practical, concrete ways to develop and deepen an individual’s worship experience. The words *wait* and *watch* undergird the specific advice offered: be present; be patient; remember God; be open to the unexpected; be nonjudgmental; know when to speak; and have courage. Cultivating these seven skills prepares

one to participate more fully and effectively in meeting for business in the manner of Friends.

Gallery defines *rehearsal* as “an event where you take the skills you have learned in solitary practice and apply them together with others in a setting that simulates reality but is not the real situation.” He explains how the skills practiced in meeting for worship prepare one to understand how meeting for business is the bridge between practice and performance. Here, too, he offers suggestions on how to use the skills learned in meeting for worship to participate more fully in meeting for business.

The section “Daily Life as Spiritual Performance” then explains how these same skills built through worship and business meeting have been preparation for living out in the secular world. By further developing the skills introduced in the first section, a person is better prepared to follow the Light and practice Friends testimonies wherever the journey leads.

Gallery is generous in sharing personal anecdotes to explain how learning and honing these skills in worship and business meetings has enabled him to live a more spiritually led life in the conflict-laden secular world. He includes a list of these skills as a quick reference in the back as well as a list of discussion questions to help the reader consider some of the weighty issues addressed. This pamphlet holds value and insight for both new and seasoned Friends, and would be a wonderful shared reading for a book discussion group.

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