

First Parish Church of Groton, Small Group Ministry
Spring 2012 Session No. 4: Patience *

Facilitator _____

Date _____

* Adapted from Chapel Hill, NC session by Maj-Britt Johnson

Supplies Needed: Chalice, matches, writing paper or drawing paper, art supplies for drawing (markers, crayons, colored pencils), questions on the session to be handed out.

– **Chalice Lighting/Opening Words:** 2 mins.

Do you have the patience to wait
till your mud settles and the water is clear?

Can you remain unmoving
till the right action arises by itself?

The Master doesn't seek fulfillment,
but not seeking, not expecting,
is present, and can welcome all things.

– Lao Tse

– **Check-in/Sharing:** up to 30 mins.

Each person takes a few minutes to check in. Invite them to share a spiritual moment they have experienced in the past week. Or they might answer the question *How is it with your spirit?*

– **Topic:** total time 60 mins.

A. Introduction and Questions: 10 mins.

"In your patience possess ye your souls." Luke 21:19

"We find patience by surrendering to our feelings. Patience can not be forced. It is a gift, one that closely follows acceptance and gratitude. When we work through our feelings to fully accept who we are and what we have, we will be ready to be and have more." Melodie Beattie, *The Language of Letting Go Daily Meditations for Codependents*

“The alternatives to patience in the spiritual life are frustration, anger and waste of energy. By trying to force ourselves to grow we hinder our growth. If we try to force others to change we prevent them from changing. Patience is needed to further our own spiritual growth and to help others to grow. This does not mean a lack of effort; in fact it means great effort. Patient effort,

enduring effort, persistent, consistent effort is greater, more noble, than the violent effort of frustration and anger.” –Rathnagosa

B. QUESTIONS:

See the list on the last page.

Participants are welcome to respond to one, all or any of the questions. And if none of these questions speaks to an individual's experience, he or she is welcome to create their own question and respond to that.

B. Silence for Reflection/Writing/Drawing: up to 10 mins.

Participants are invited to use this time for writing and drawing their responses to the questions if they wish. If another question/aspect of the topic comes up for them, they are welcome to respond to that.

C. Sharing: 40 mins.

Coaches should invite each person to share their response as they feel moved, rather than clockwise. Give each person equal time to share. *If there is time* after each person has shared, invite people into a more free flowing discussion of the theme. Coaches may need to repeat the questions, direct the conversation back to the questions, or gently ask how something relates to the questions/theme of the meeting.

– Check-out: 10 mins.

Encourage people to check out with a final thought or reflection about the theme (or any other thoughts or reflections about the session) and how having shared and learned about this might impact their life in the week ahead. (Coaches can encourage participants to make a connection between the topic and actions, steps, new directions they might take in their daily lives by going first with the check out for the first couple of weeks and modeling this sort of check-out if they wish.)

– Closing Words and Extinguish the Chalice: 2 mins.

Let nothing disturb thee; Let nothing dismay thee; All things pass; the eternal One never changes. Patience attains all that it strives for. – St. Theresa of Avila

– Blessing

May the efforts we have made here today
To listen with caring and compassion
Sustain us in the days ahead
May these efforts bring peace into our lives
And into the lives of all those whom we touch.

May love surround us
May joy gladden us

May peace lie deep within
May our lives, and the lives of all those we love
Go well.

QUESTIONS for Reflection: Patience

You are welcome to respond to one, all or any of the questions. And if none of these questions speaks to your experience, please create your own question and respond to that.

Who or what has taught you patience? Children? Age? Your pets? Your job? Difficult experiences? How has that happened for you?

In what ways do you practice patience? How does that practice affect your being, your relationships or your work? When you do not practice patience, how are you affected?

When, or in what ways, can you see yourself able to “welcome all things”?

The Buddhists say patience is the antidote to anger. They define anger broadly on a spectrum from impatience to rage. Are you able to sit with anger, patiently, and learn from it? If so, what have you learned?

What are you still needing or wanting to learn about patience?