



# Combining and Merging Meetings

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# Why might we do this?

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- We're looking for ways to release more spiritual energy for ministry.
- The meetings are struggling financially and need to combine resources.
- One meeting is very small.
- The community around us has decreased in size and no longer needs multiple Quaker meetings.
- Being online or partly online has shifted our identity as a meeting.

# How could this look?

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- One meeting comes under the care of another, possibly as a worship group.
- Two or more meetings become preparative meetings under a single monthly meeting but continue to have separate worship, facilities, and legal identity.
- Two or more meetings become preparative meetings under a single monthly meeting and continue to have separate worship *but* share facilities and a legal identity.
- Two or more meetings combine to become a single monthly meeting, worshiping together and sharing property and a legal identity as a single unit.



# What to watch out for

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- Assuming it can't happen
- Skipping over discerning a new vision together
- Waiting too long to let distant community members know what's happening
- Inconsistency between theory and action (for example, saying that we are merging two meetings but acting as if it is one meeting coming under the care of another)
- Promises that "nothing will really change"

# Questions for Discussion

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- Why did you join this conversation today?
- Can you identify one thing you heard in the presentation that felt challenging and one thing that felt hopeful?

# Additional Resources

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[\*Vital Merger\* by Dirk Elliott](#) – a book written for pastored Christian communities that offers step-by-step advice for merging faith communities

["The Life Cycle of Meetings"](#) – a themed issue of New York Yearly Meeting's *Spark* newsletter; stories of meetings in a variety of stages of their life cycles making various sorts of transitions

["Practicing Discernment Together: Finding God's Way Forward in Decision Making"](#) – an excellent book about discernment processes in general and how to move forward as a meeting through difficult decisions