

**Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website**

Covenant Group Topic

**Humility**

Rev. Maj-Britt Johnson, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, \*March 2009\*

**\*Chalice Lighting:** Hildegard of Bingen (adapted, in “Singing the Living Tradition”)\*

Fire of the spirit  
Life of the lives of creatures  
Spiral of sanctity,  
Bond of all natures,  
Glow of charity,  
Lights of clarity,  
Taste of sweetness to the fallen,  
Be with us and hear us.  
Compose of all things,  
Joy in the glory,  
Strong honor,  
Be with us and hear us.

**\*Brief Check-in\*:** How is it with your spirit today/tonight?

**\*Introduction to the topic and readings** (you could go around the circle and have members of the group each read a paragraph)\*

The word humble comes from the root word: Humus, of the earth, lowly. As we practice acceptance we increasingly find ourselves humbled. We find we’re not always right, or acting as we would like, or in charge, or in control. Sometimes this makes us feel small or low. Sometimes it is a relief, and a new freedom. The content of our own minds and hearts can surprise us, both positively and negatively when we practice acceptance. Again resulting in a new awareness of our self in relation to others.

Some say humility is about becoming “teachable”.

Humility might also be about becoming “right-sized”, in other words, about finding our place in the “family of things”. Not being invisible, but not needing to be “the one” either.

Here is a paragraph from Alice in Wonderland that speaks (wonderfully) to the journey of becoming “right-sized”.

\*“It was so long since she had been anything near the right size, that it felt quite strange at first; but she got used to it in a few minutes, and began talking to herself, as usual, “Come, there’s half my plan done now! How puzzling all these changes are! I’m never sure what I’m going to be, from one minute to another! However I’ve got back to my right size: The next thing is, to get into that beautiful garden—how is that to be done, I wonder?”- From Alice In Wonderland\*

**\*Questions\*** – Which part of the reading, or which definition of humility speaks to you?

Does being humbled ever feel like a humiliation to you? What is the difference between humility and humiliation?

\*Remind of guidelines for sharing\* – One person speaks at a time without the rest of us interrupting. There is no cross talk (ie. trying to fix, correct, judge or re-educate someone else). Try to listen to each other as if you were listening to, or watching your own thoughts. Let others' words fall down into your heart. When it is your turn to speak it is not necessary to respond to the persons who have gone before you. Find out what your own inner wisdom wants to say. Together we create a quilt of wisdom, the design is a surprise.

\*Facilitator can repeat the questions...\*

\*At the end of the session the facilitator asks members to share their “likes and wishes” (again using the same guidelines, no cross talk etc)\*

What did you like about this session, what are your wishes for future sessions?

**\*Closing words** – \*You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your  
Knees for a hundred miles  
Through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal  
Of your body love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and  
I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear  
Pebbles of the rain are moving  
Across the landscapes, over the  
Prairies and the deep trees, the  
Mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in  
The clear blue air; are heading home  
Again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how  
Lonely, the world offers itself to  
Your imagination, calls to you  
Like the wild geese, harsh  
and exciting—over and over  
announcing our place  
in the family of things.

- Mary Oliver