

## Praying in Nature

Praying outside in nature is perhaps one of the ways that we find most life giving, for our senses to be stimulated by the noises we hear, touch, smell, what we see and even at times what we taste! What it requires mostly though is for us to notice, to see more than we have ever seen before, and this takes



time, but essentially it slows us down to appreciate what God has entrusted and given to all humankind. The whole experience reminds us of God's goodness, connecting his loving heart to everyone. And a 'piece of nature' may simply be a bunch of flowers, or something in your garden if you have one, a bird feeder, things you see on your walk, such as a dandelion, growing in a crack in the pavement, a shell on the beach, a pine cone, a tree, a mountain or whatever you come across. So, let yourself be drawn to whatever God places in your way. At this time of isolation, we need more than ever to go out each day into the amazing beauty of God's natural world. To see and to remember God's faithfulness, hope and love for us all.

There are many ways you might like to pray in nature, but here are a few suggestions:

**You might like to read a psalm:** to help you draw closer to God, so go outside, sit peacefully and chose your own or read aloud Psalm 100. Reflect on what fills your mind (the concerns you have, what you desire, any regrets, lists of what you need to complete) Take time to notice the Psalmists words and what you feel about being immersed in your surroundings. Then sit and look, praise God for all you see.

**Go for a walk:** notice what you see on the path that you are treading upon, is it soft, straight, full of debris, smooth, where does it lead? What do you sense be might significant for you in your current situation? And if you have time, imagine Jesus walking alongside you, what might he say to you?

**Pick up something:** like a stone, a leaf, a piece of bark, a petal, or a live creature like an ant...let it in some way find you, then again sit, maybe on the ground this time. Be open to God, notice the colour, its shape, the crevices, patterns & texture. What is it that you see, that you have not seen before?

There are many other ways, there is no right or wrong way, ask God to draw you into this experience with an open heart and let him guide you. And when you have finished, reflect a while and if you would like to, ask yourself these questions.

What is staying with me as I reflect on my praying in nature?

How do I feel?

What do I want to give thanks for?

How am I drawn to respond to God? Might I write, draw or make something?

I hope you might be inspired by this way of praying and find God in it, who is full of surprises.

Let me close with a prayer

*God of delight, source of all joy, thank you for making me part of your creation, for the rhythms of life and for the fruits of the earth which you provide for me. Lord, help me to be wholly present always to you, and let me know deep, deep within, that I am always standing on Holy ground, surrounded by you.*

Sharon Seal