**Praying Outdoors**

The natural world has long been a place for encountering God. The Bible is full of imagery from creation and Jesus uses the natural world around him to illustrate so much. It is clear that creation is core to God’s revelation.

Like Jesus we are drawn to stillness and solitude to foster a relationship with our God. Take time now to listen and be attentive, develop a sense of awe and wonder, and respond in gratitude. Here are some ways to pray.

**1) Imagine taking a walk with Jesus whilst paying attention to creation around you**. Be present and aware of creation’s rhythm at this time.

Some things to consider:
• What in you has been planted, waiting to emerge?
• Where do you need hope and trust in new life?
• What new life or buds are you noticing?
• What in you has come to fruition?
• For what harvest or abundance are you grateful?
• What do you need to let go of? What needs to die for new life to
emerge?

**2) Allow the natural setting you choose to pray in to form your prayer.** Remain in the landscape for while, and let the beauty, intricacy and mystery of the environment inspire you and draw your heart to God.

*“Be still and know that I am God” - Psalm 47: 10*

**3) Meditate.** Creation often opens us to the significant times in our life. For example, watching the leaves, buds and flowers emerge may remind you of the changes in your life and the promise of new life, love and growth – or draw you back to memories. Watching the wind blow through the grasses or new growth may inspire you to reflect on the strength and growth God has given you, and the beauty in our vulnerability and flexibility.

*“I will meditate on all your work and muse on your mighty deeds.” Psalm 77:12*

**4) Find a tree to sit near or under and consider**. Let the tree symbolize yourself; for each part of the tree reflect on the following questions.

ROOTS: Who and what has given you nourishment and vitality in your life?
Who and what “roots” you in the times of significant change?
TRUNK: What are your strengths? What has channelled new life into you?
LEAVES: What fresh growth from former seasons is emerging in you?
How do you feel called to trust?
BARK: Who or what protects you, comforts you?
BUDS: What is your hope for the future?
FLOWERS/FRUITS: What beauty and bounty has come to you?
Who or what are you providing nourishment for?

**Bible Verses to reflect on**

In the solitude. . .
*Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 47: 10
For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from God. Psalm 62: 5*

With the trees. . .
*The righteous flourish the palm tree and grow like a cedar. They are planted
in the house of the Lord. They flourish in the courts of our God. They still
bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green. To show that
God is upright; My rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness. Ps 92: 12-15*

With the wildflowers. . .
*Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you,
even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Luke12:27*

With the water. . .
*As a deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. Psalm 42: 1,2*

In the fields…
*Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the woods
sing for joy before the Lord, who comes. Psalm 96: 12*

With the wildlife. . .
*Hide me in the shadow of your wings. Psalm 17:8
Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself
Where she may lay her young, at your altars, O lord of hosts. Psalm 84:3*

With the sounds of creation. . .
*Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;
Sing the Glory of God’s name, give God glorious praise. Psalm 66*

*But ask the animals, now, and they shall teach you; the birds of the sky, and they
shall tell you. Or, speak to the earth, and it shall teach you. Ask the plants of the
earth and they shall teach you. The fish of the sea shall declare to you. Who
doesn't know that in all these, the hand of God has done this, in whose hand is the
life of every living thing, and the breath of all humankind? Job 12:7-10*

**A Prayer**

Heavenly Father

We, your family, are tired. We desire to be in your living presence anew
Form us as your rain, quenching parched souls with hope
Form us as your fire, illuminating indifferent hearts with faith
Form us as your wind, refreshing dusty minds with wisdom
Form us as your soil, embracing all with compassion
In all these ways of life form us, so that your seed of justice sown deep within us
will flourish, bearing abundant fruit of peace and integrity
Joined together with all creation, we will once again sing in harmony. Amen