

Praying with a Tree (Guided Meditation) – Instructions

What you may need: a journal to write in, a pinch of tobacco or cornmeal (if possible); possibly a blanket or portable chair to sit on.

The following meditation is a suggestion. You may find that you end up just doing one aspect of the meditation. That's fine. You may start on step 1 and stay there. That's fine. Or get to step 2 and that's all you need.

You may find that you are not able to sit under the tree. Then find a place where you can sit and feel connected to the earth. Focus your eyes on a tree you can see. Ask for the tree's help and guidance. Sit and go through the meditation, aware of the energies of the different directions. Welcome that energy in.

Please do not rush this process. Take time. Be present to yourself, the tree, the world around you. **Slow time down.** I suggest you take a journal with you, so at certain points you can capture what notice.

Whenever you are finished, please send out a prayer to thank the tree, and all the loving ancestors who accompany you.

This meditation takes an hour.

Step 1

Walk outside. Send out your prayer, asking for a tree to work with you. When you find the tree, ask with your left hand placed on the tree, if you can work with it. If the tree says 'yes', then offer a pinch of tobacco and begin. If you don't have tobacco, you can offer cornmeal, or your own saliva. The idea is that whenever we ask something of the Earth, we give something of ourselves back. If the tree doesn't say 'yes', (this very seldom happens) thank the tree and send out your prayer for another tree.

Step 2

When the tree has chosen you, spend some time getting to know it. Look at it closely. Feel its bark, feel its shape, smell its aroma. Hold the tree, allowing your heart to listen to the inner workings, to the inner life of the tree itself. Just be with this tree. Feel the love you have for this tree, pour your love out for this tree. Feel how the tree loves you. Receive from the tree. Feel how this tree is your sister or brother. Be aware of how this feels. With the ear of your heart, hear the song of the tree. You may end up spending all your time just on this one step. And that's just fine.

Step 3

Sit facing **south**, with your back to the tree: How have your relationships taught you of the presence of the Beloved in your life? How has the Beloved revealed her/himself through your relationships? Including your relationship with the earth. Notice what the breeze is doing as you consider this question. Notice any animals about; any sounds or sights.

Step 4

Move to the **west** and sit with your back to the tree. Take a few moments to breathe. Come in touch with your breath. Allow your breath to bring you into your body. Now be aware of the Earth, how she holds you as you sit here. Be aware of all the ways she sustains all of us and you personally. If you wish, lie on the Earth, with your belly on hers. Allow her to hold you. Give to the Earth all your sorrows, your losses, your hopes and your joys. Hear her support of you; her advice to you, her wisdom. What does she say to you? Feel your deep connection with the Earth. Again: notice what is going on around you with the air, the animals, the flowers.

If you cannot lie down, or don't wish to, still feel the energy of the Earth travelling through your body, up through your feet to your spine, all the way up. Feel your deep connection with her. Feel how she holds you. You are sitting on the lap of Grandmother Earth, her child, safe and sound. Journal if you wish.

Step 5

Move so you are facing **north** and sit with your back to the tree. The north is the element of Air. Allow yourself to be fully present, sitting here with this lovely tree, in this one moment. Feel the bark of the tree, the earth beneath, the scent of the sea air. Be with all that is in this moment. Receive all that is here for you. Don't think. Just be. Practice being. Be here. Feel how this particular tree holds you. And through the love of this tree, allow yourself to experience the unconditional love that the Great Mystery holds for you, just as you are. Be aware that all that you see, hear, smell and taste is a reflection of the Beloved. Journal if you wish.

Step 6

Move so you are facing **east**, and sit with your back to the tree. The east is the place of the element of Fire. Here we encounter passion, desire, longing. Allow yourself to be in touch with your own heart, this place of deep wisdom. As you do this, be aware of what you long for at this time. What do you long for? Allow this longing to grow. Feel how the tree supports you in your longing. Send out your prayer for whatever you long for at this time. Journal if you wish.

Step 7

Move once again so you are facing **south**. Be still. Be present. Be aware of how the Divine Beloved has visited you today, in your meditation with this tree. Feel how this

very tree embody the love that the Great Mystery holds for you. And whatever prayers come, offer these knowing that the Creating One hears your spoken and unspoken prayers, and is already responding. Journal if you wish.

Step 8

Stand now, facing the tree. Give thanks for all the ways this lovey tree has helped you in this meditation.