

# Guided Meditation: On Turning Aside

## Passage

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Exodus 3.1-6

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## Meditation

Take up a posture that is comfortable and close your eyes.

Now become aware of your breathing. Be aware of the air as it enters and leaves your nostrils . . . Not as it enters your lungs, just as it passes through your nostrils . . .

Do not control your breathing. Do not try to deepen it or change its rhythm. Simply observe your breathing, in and out, in and out . . .

Each time you are distracted, return to your breathing.

Now imagine yourself in the place between wilderness and mountain . . . the landscape and vegetation . . . the skies and the weather . . . the sheep lazily browsing . . .

Take time to imagine the whole setting as vividly as possible, its sights, sounds and smells. Compose yourself in the place . . .

Why have you come here? What are your feelings as you survey the scene? What are you doing? . . .

Gradually you become aware of an odd sight, a bush that is burning brightly but doesn't appear to be consumed. What do you notice about it? How far away is it? What are your feelings as you observe it? . . .

You go over to the bush. What else do you notice as you come near?

You hear a voice calling out of the bush: "this place is holy ground". It is God's voice. How do you feel when you hear it? . . .

God calls you by your name, and continues to speak to you. Listen to God's words, what God is saying, the sound of God's voice . . .

Notice your reactions . . . How do you respond? What do you do or say? . . .

Spend a while now in the scene in the company of God. You may continue to converse, or rest in God's presence . . .

If your attention becomes distracted, become aware of your breathing again and then gently return to the scene . . .

Now the flames are beginning to fade, and the scene is also fading as you return gradually to an awareness of your breathing and your posture. When you are ready, open your eyes.

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## Notes

This is the first of a series of meditations drawing on *Everyday God: The Spirit of the Ordinary* by Paula Gooder, one of the books which the Slow Book Group at Exeter Cathedral has been reading. The book is divided into six sections, for reflection over the six months between June and November 2022 (Ordinary Time in the Church's calendar). The theme of Section 1 is "turning / aside like Moses to the miracle / of the lit bush", as RS Thomas puts it.

The style of the meditation is based on Ignatian meditation as presented by Anthony de Mello in [\*Sadhana: A Way to God, Christian Exercises in Eastern Form\*](#) (pdf), Exercise 22.

Some people imagine in pictures, others in sounds, and others have a feeling of being present in the scene in another way particular to them. If you would find it more helpful than using your mind's eye, look around you instead. Survey the inside or outside the room as though you have never seen them before and as though everything has equal value. Let something come to your notice. What does God say to you through it?

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