

Spiritual Accompaniment for Climate Activists

What is it?

A scheme run by Woodbrooke that links members and attenders of Quaker meetings who identify as climate activists to people who can:

- support them to be spiritually grounded in their activism
- provide a listening ear
- suggest resources or practices that they might use to stay spiritually grounded
- support them to take time out if necessary

How does it work?

People who feel they can benefit from the scheme can apply to Woodbrooke by sending an email to learning@woodbrooke.org.uk. They will then receive information about the scheme and will be able to talk with a member of the Woodbrooke team to explore whether it would be suitable for them.

If they decide that it is, they will be matched to a spiritual accompanier. The spiritual accompanier and the participant will agree a specified period of time and level of contact. Once this period of time is over, Woodbrooke will discuss with the spiritual accompanier whether the contact should continue and for what length of time.

What is spiritual accompaniment?

Our model of spiritual accompaniment is one of companionship and spiritual hospitality - putting aside everything including our own selves in order to listen. It's about being on our own spiritual journey, with the door open to anyone who calls. It is a model of listening eldership. Being there for a person as they explore how the Spirit motivates them to act and how this can sustain them.

Spiritual accompaniment is a practice and an art, not a science. The aim is to help the person accompanied to feel that their activism is spiritually grounded and they have the spiritual support they need to be able to undertake their activism with joy and courage and not end up feeling burnt out and hopeless.

We do not offer professional counselling or non-violent direct action training. We do listen with open heart and, if requested, we may draw from our own experience of activism and Quakerism and suggest resources and networks that might provide support and nourishment.

Information for prospective participants

The scheme aims to support you in developing and maintaining a spiritual grounding for your activism. You are free to talk about anything you like with your accompanier. They will listen and encourage you to think about how you can address issues you have in a way that is consistent with your values. They may give suggestions on how to deepen your spiritual practice and be connected to your Quaker community.

Once you have decided to join the scheme, Woodbrooke will assign you a spiritual accompanier based on discernment, including any preferences you have regarding gender or geographical

proximity. All our spiritual companions are experienced in accompanying others and want to support those who are engaged in spirit-led climate activism.

When you first meet with your spiritual companioner, you will agree for how long and how often and how you will meet. It is important that you set timescales and levels of contact that work for both of you. The companioner will inform Woodbrooke what you have decided. If you agree together to change this, you need to inform Woodbrooke. At the end of the agreed period, you and the spiritual companioner can let Woodbrooke know if you would like to continue meeting and the proposed new terms of your relationship.

Confidentiality: your spiritual companioner will not share details of your conversations with anyone without your consent. The exception is that they may need to share something about your conversations with the spiritual companions group as part of their peer support. Nothing will be shared outside this group.

If you are concerned with any aspect of your relationship with your spiritual companioner, you should raise it with them in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so or are still concerned, please contact tracey.martin@woodbrooke.org.uk

Woodbrooke will ask for feedback on your experience of spiritual accompaniment at the end of the accompaniment period. We may also ask for feedback at other times in order to improve participants' experience.