

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a contemplative reading of Scripture. We invite the living Spirit to be present with us as we sit with the living Word. We allow God to speak into and heal our hearts. Being with the Father, we are restored and refreshed by His great love. We practice receiving the peace of Christ, knowing that it is available to us at any time, if only we chose to turn towards it.

Choose a brief passage of Scripture. Spend a moment preparing your heart. Close your eyes. Breathe with a soft belly. Let go -for the moment- of your worries and your plans. Settle in to where you are.

Read

In the first movement, we simply read the verses slowly and then sit in silence. This is a practice of letting go of our attachment to our own thoughts so that we can better hear the small still voice of God.

As you read the Scripture passage, ***choose one word or phrase that resonates with to you. Use that word as an anchor.*** When you notice that your mind has wandered, gently bring your attention back to that word or phrase. Then when your mind wanders off again, silently say the word or phrase again. If your mind is particularly active, keep repeating your anchor word with each breath or as often as you like. The point is not to 'empty' your mind. This is an exercise of focusing our attention, noticing when we are following our own thoughts, and returning again and again to an open posture with God.

Meditate

In the second movement, we read the passage again and listen for how God is speaking to us through the text. ***How does this Scripture apply to your own life in this moment?*** We may receive comfort, guidance, conviction, strength. Continue to use your anchor to focus your attention, listening with the "ears of the heart".

Renew

Using your anchor as a focus, ***listen for how the Spirit is calling you into transformation.*** How does this Word pull you into a deeper relationship with God? How does it move you to reflect the image of Christ? Remember we are called into the fullness of life out of God's great love for us. Lean into the strength He gives us to walk in new life.

Pray

After listening to God, we now ***respond in prayer.*** You may want to give thanks for what you have received, repent from where you have been convicted, praise God for the grace you have experienced, or ask for help with your struggles. If you are practicing Lectio on your own, this can be personal silent prayer. Today we will pray for each other in pairs.

Rest

In our final movement, we move from conversation to communion. We have passed through a process of reconciliation, submitting our own thoughts and will, leaning in to the Father. Now we simply ***rest in the presence of God- in the forgiveness, peace, love, and joy that only He can give.*** Thomas Keating describes this progression: "The external word of God in Scripture awakens us to the interior Word of God in our inmost being." We will read the Scripture passage again, then sit in silence for a few minutes.

The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
The LORD protects the unwary;
when I was brought low, he saved me.
Return to your rest, my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.

What shall I return to the LORD
for all his goodness to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.
I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.
For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.
Praise the LORD

-Psalm 116:5-117:2