

Lectio Divina

(Divine/Holy Reading)

“Be still, and know that I am God.” (Ps. 46:10, ESV)

Lectio Divina is prayerful reading of the Scriptures. It is a means of slowing down to encounter Christ in his living word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It can be done alone, or with a group where one person proclaims God’s Word and everyone else listens.

Before beginning, we ask the Holy Spirit who inspires God’s living Word to open our hearts and minds to its message. A leader can do this on behalf of the group. Following this, the Word is proclaimed three or four times with 30 second to 3 minute pauses between, following the process below:

***Lectio Divina* has four sections:**

Reading the Text (*Lectio*)

Read the text at a pace that you would like to have it proclaimed to you, then take 30 seconds to 3 minutes and let God’s Word sink in. Understand the text.

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

Repeat the above process, resting at the end. You may find yourself returning to a word or phrase; let it take hold of your heart, and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Stay with the part of the text that is speaking to you, and allow it to carry your heart into prayer.

Mental Prayer (*Oratio*)

As the proclamation of God’s Word continues, your meditation may lead you to a question that becomes a prayer. It may be an awareness of a personal need or longing. You may find yourself interceding for loved ones, for your community or for the world. You may be consumed by thankfulness, sorrow, wonder, grief or praise. Let these well up in your heart and entrust them to God.

Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

As your mental prayer quiets down, allow your heart to continue on where God’s Word has drawn you. Simply rest and allow your heart to gaze on (and be gazed upon by) the Word (Heb. 4:12).

If *Lectio Divina* is done with a group, at the end of this exercise (5-20 minutes or longer), participants may be invited to share their reflections on the experience. Our shared insights into God’s Word can lead us to a renewed appreciation for the unique gifts of the Spirit we bring to our communities, strengthening our faith in the process.

When you’re ready, give thanks for what you’ve received (a prayer of thanksgiving by the group leader is appropriate here). You may at times feel you have gotten nowhere with the text; simply trust your encounter with the living Word. The seeds God’s Word plants in your heart will break open at the right time, often when you least expect it.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Ps. 119:105, ESV)