

Lectio Divina

Each week we will focus on a different scripture passage, alternating between the Old and New Testament. We will read the scripture multiple times, have times of silence, times of discussion, and prayer for one another. **Please bring a Bible, notebook, and pen!**

Each week we will ask two simple questions: *What does this scripture tell us about God? What does it tell us about God's people?*

Guiding principles:

- **Welcome a slower pace.**

We will take the time to read and pray slowly and let the Spirit guide our conversations.

- **Make peace with silence.**

Times of pause and silence will be built into our time together, don't feel pressured to fill the silence. Allow the Spirit to speak.

- **Respect the safe space.**

Be kind and considerate to everyone in the group.

- **Embrace curiosity.**

There is always more to discover in the Bible. Get curious and keep reading!

- **Hold paradox in open hands.**

Sometimes scripture can be confusing or seemingly paradoxical. Allow the Spirit to guide us into deeper trust and curiosity.

- **Immerse yourself in the story.**

Get creative, imagine yourself in the scripture, see from different perspectives, keep reading the whole story.

- **Voice the questions.**

Ask the questions that arise during our reading and discussion times. There are no silly questions!

***Lectio Divina*: Praying the Scriptures**

Use this practice when you want scripture to be the focus of your gathering.

What is it?

- A holistic, experiential way of reading scripture that uses mind, emotion, imagination, the senses, and prayer.
- Letting scripture soak deeply into us as we interact with a particular passage or story (*lectio divina* is Latin for divine or sacred reading).
- Listening prayerfully for what God wants to say to us through scripture.

Why is it important?

- Scripture is a record of human experience with God. It is the faith story in which our spirituality is rooted.
- Praying the scriptures opens us to hearing the scripture as it applies to our life experience.
- When we pray the scriptures, the story comes alive and we encounter God and Christ through the recorded word.

Scripture Reflections

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. —Hebrews 4:12, NRSV

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. —Psalm 119:105, NRSV

The Practice

- Sit quietly and enter a time of prayerful reflection. Breathe calmly, relax your body, offer a prayer for guidance as you interact with the selected text. (You can also use other sacred texts for this practice such as a hymn text, poetry, or other religious readings.) Read the scripture four different times, allowing time for meditation and prayer between each reading.
- ***Lectio*** – Read the passage to get a sense of the story. Who are the characters? What is the setting? Imagine the scene, the sights, sounds, odors, emotions, and tensions involved in the story. Enter the scene and allow it to become real to you.

- ***Meditatio*** – Read the scripture again but this time for meaning and understanding. Ask questions. Why was this story recorded? What are the surface and underlying meanings? What does this story tell me about God? If I were in the story, who would I be? Whom do I most relate to in the story?
- ***Oratio*** – Read the passage again, and this time pay attention to your emotional responses. What feelings surface as I read this scripture? Do I feel joy, sorrow, fear, anger, or guilt? Share your feelings with God in prayer. Ask for help in listening deeply to these emotions and meanings.
- ***Contemplatio*** – Enter a time of receptive prayer. Let go of the images from the scripture and all other thoughts, interpretations, and worries. Breathe deeply and calmly, entering a silent state of listening. Wait for whatever God may bring to you in the quietness. If any insights or impressions come, note them with gratitude and then return to receptive listening. If no particular awareness comes, let your mind return to the scripture passage. When you feel your prayer/meditation has ended, offer a word of thanks to God. Open your eyes, and return to the room around you.

• **TRUST THE MAP:** *The Prayer Template* your Spiritual Director gave you is like a map for your times of prayer. It may seem ill fitting at first, or perhaps another thing 'to do' correctly. Like the banks of a river directing the water, *The Prayer Template* makes a path for your heart to flow with the Spirit of God. It holds the banks of self awareness and God awareness.

First

I still my body, and put myself in the long, loving gaze of God. I let my body, soul, and spirit come to know I am in God's loving presence.

Second

I consider how I come to prayer. What is on my mind? What is in my heart? Am I feeling happy with life? Am I calm, serene, or perhaps tired, frustrated, fed up. God knows me better than I know myself, so I can be honest with God about my feelings. Write one sentence describing how I come to this time of prayer.

Third

What do I desire or most hope for from God as I come to this time of prayer? Write one sentence describing what I desire or most hope for.

Fourth

I read the scripture passage or meditation for the day, noticing what comes up in me. What is an aha moment, what increases hope, faith, love, what energizes, what is comforting, brings peace. Or what is disturbing, frustrating, unsettling, hard to believe or accept, or touches on hurtful memories or emotional wounds. I do not journal at this point. I sit quietly and am attentive to what is happening in the interior of my soul.

Fifth

I engage in a conversation with God, Jesus, the Spirit or all three. Ignatius called this a colloquy. A colloquy is a conversation friend to friend.

Sixth

I write a one or two sentence summary of my prayer time. How did I experience God? How did God experience me?

Finally

Now is the time to journal my thoughts, experiences, etc.

Let's begin together.

Sherri Harder



LECTIO DIVINA

A lullaby of scripture.

Compiled by Suhail Stephen

Silence

- Take a few moments to be still, patiently settling into this time and space of prayer.

Invitation

- Invite the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to lead and guide you; for the grace to notice and name, and to experience God.

Selection

- Choose a short (six to ten verses) passage of scripture with which to pray.

First Listening

- Read the passage slowly, simply *enjoying* hearing it. *Silence afterward.*

Second Listening

- Read the passage slowly. Notice what word, phrase, or image strikes you. *Silence afterward.*

Third Listening

- Read the passage slowly. Talk with God about the word, phrase, or image. What does God want to say to you; is there an invitation God is extending? What do you want to say to God? *Silence afterward.*