

First Week in Lent

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:23-24

The Lent small group studies follow a pattern of word ... humility ... worship.

The study guide leads the group through a spiritual practice called "lectio divina" or holy reading.

It is a way of reading the Bible together that humbly listens for God's Spirit in the word.

Personal sharing is held until after the holy reading.

Word ... Matthew 4:1-11

As you gather, begin with 2 minutes of silence together.

Read through Matthew 4:1-11 once as a group for understanding. What questions or insights strike you in this passage?

Humility

Before doing this together as a group, read through this entire description so everyone is clear what is coming next. You will want to have one person that reminds the group what is happening at each step. You may want to have a number of people as the readers at each step.

Now you'll read through the passage several times to sit with humility under the word, in community.

First 2 Readings — we read (lectio) ...

Read the story twice, listening for a word or a phrase that strikes us, touches us. Leave 1 minute between the first and second readings but do not speak. After 3-5 minutes of silence, each person shares their word or phrase without elaborating on it. **No questions or comments on what another person shares.**

Third Reading — under the eye of God (*meditatio*)

Read the story a third time, letting the words sink in deeper, and listening for the place that this passage intersects with our lives (what you see, sense, hear, feel in this words). This may be a "heart" step rather than a "head" step. Does a situation in your life, a feeling, an image come to mind? After 5-10 minutes of silence, each person shares what they saw, or felt, or sensed during this latest hearing. Share briefly, and no cross talk for clarification during this step.

<u>Fourth Reading — until the heart is touched (oratio) and leaps into flame (contemplatio)</u>

Fourth hearing of the passage, listening with the question "Is there an invitation for me here?" After 10-15 minutes of silence, each person shares what invitation they heard in this passage. **No cross talk!**

First week in Lent ...

Worship (obedience in all of life) —

Prayer

After you've shared the sense of invitation, reflect on the specific actions you are being asked to take in the next 24-72 hours to worship / obey that invitation in humility.

Before praying, ask if anyone has something additional to share — a challenge or comfort they encountered from God in the past week on the Lenten journey, or a situation that is a test and could use prayer.

Pray for one another in light of the invitation that each received and any other sharing.

Notes — our small group usually had the person to our left praying that night and all week about what they heard. Here is space to note the reflections / invitation / request for prayer of the person sitting to your right so you can pray for them (you are the person on the left ...)

Resources for Lent

Here are the resources that Pastor Laurie spoke about this week with further notes from Sunday

The humility to recognize my habits and patterns of life are out of control ...

Justin Whitmel Early, The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction (InterVarsity Press, 2019)

The humility to recognize my interpersonal interactions are out of sync with my faith ...

Peter Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day: A 40 day journey with the daily office (Zondervan, 2018)

The humility to return to total reliance on God in the losses and fears of life ...

Dallas Willard, Life Without Lack: Living in the Fullness of Psalm 23 (Thomas Nelson, 2018)

The humility to recognize we've replaced trust with certainty in essential areas of life

Jeffrey F. Keuss, Live the Questions: How Searching Shapes our Convictions and Commitments (Intervarsity Press, 2019)