

Lectio Divina for Personal Meditation on Scripture

Lectio Divina is a Latin word for “divine reading”. This way of reading the Bible has been practiced by Benedictine monks since 300 AD. It has been practiced by many people in the church down through the centuries. What is unique about reading the Bible this way? Lectio Divina helps us to be aware of how God is speaking to us through the Scripture. In other words, we are praying and listening to God when we use Lectio Divina. The living God speaks to us and the primary way that God does that is through Scripture. Lectio Divina helps us to listen to God. This spiritual reading of the Bible is not necessarily an intellectual study of the text. Rather, through repetition we are able to meditate on Scripture. This helps us to listen for how God’s Word speaks into our hearts. Then we are able to discern what God seems to be saying and we respond to God in prayer. The process of Lectio Divina is as follows:

Nehemiah 1:4-7 NRSV

⁴ When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said,

“O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁶ listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! ⁷ We have sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and regulations that you gave us through your servant Moses.

1. Begin with silence. Ask the Spirit of Jesus to use Scripture to speak to you. Choose a passage of Scripture that is short (5-8 verses). Read the text. Listen for the word or phrase that evokes a response in you. What captures your attention? When the first reading is complete, make a note of the word or phrase. "The word or phrase for me is

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2. Read the passage again. During this reading, be attentive to the emotion this word or phrase evokes in you. Make a note of what you are feeling. "I am feeling

_____."

3. Read the passage again. In this text, there may be an invitation for you from the Lord. You are encouraged to ask yourself: What is God's invitation to me in this text?

4. Now spend time in silence and allow yourself to meditate on the passage. You may wish to go for a walk or sit quietly, enjoying the presence of God. Choose a place and a posture that helps you be aware of God’s presence and to pray.

5. At the end of your time in prayer you might consider journaling what you have heard and the one truth God has revealed to you. How have you been encouraged, assured, or challenged? Has God invited you to make a change in some area of your life? Thank God for speaking to you and for transforming you.