

February: Lectio Divina



Introduction

Lectio Divina, from the Latin meaning “divine reading,” is an ancient prayer practice. It can be used by an individual, with one or two others, or in a group. This form of prayer allows God to speak in and through scripture.

How it works

- a. Select a small section of scripture. You can select a few verses, a story, but do not select more than a chapter. Some Bibles have sections of verses with a subtitle. If your Bible does, this can be a helpful guide. Any part of Scripture can be used, but you may find selections from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Psalms to be a good place to begin.
- b. Slowly read your selected passage aloud. Try to notice a word or phrase that grabs your attention. Spend a minute or two in silence pondering this word or phrase. If you are doing Lectio Divina with another person or in a group, have each person share the word or phrase they chose (without discussion).
- c. Read the passage aloud a second time. This time, after a period of silent reflection, think about (or talk together about) your initial impressions or questions and how this connects to your own life.
- d. Read the passage aloud a final time. Listen for what God may be saying to you through this word, phrase or passage. What would you like to take away with you? What do you feel called to do, or to become, or to ponder further?
- e. Close your time with the Lord’s Prayer and with a prayer of thanksgiving for your time with God.

Suggestions

If you are doing this prayer practice alone, you might want to create a journal where you can write down the passage you chose and a bit about what you feel God calling you to do, become or ponder further. If you are doing this practice with another person or with a group, some further guidelines will help you. It is important to remember that this is a practice of prayer and not a Bible study. Try not to “dissect” the passage with questions about who wrote it, when it was written where the places named are on the map etc. This prayer practice is formed with the belief that God God and will make ancient words meaningful for Christians today. It is also good to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit will move in people in different ways. Every passage of scripture has many messages and there is no “right” word or phrase. It is important in group Lectio Divina to listen to others but not to engage in debate or instruct or instruction. This type of prayer can be done with people of different ages and with people whose spiritual journeys are diverse. What others hear is for them. You may be enriched by what another person shares and this is a wonderful benefit of doing Lectio Divina as a group.

Resources

Hall, Thelma. *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina* (Paulist Press, 1988).
Hall offers wonderful insights about prayer and the back of the book has about 30 themes for Lectio Divina with suggested Bible passages for each theme.