

# Prayer Tool: Listening to God's Word (Lectio Divina)

## What?

The Lectio Divina is a simple method of praying and meditating on scripture. This prayer tool will show you how to practice it individually, and in a group.

## Why?

“The Word of Scripture should never stop sounding in your ears and working in you all day long, just like the words of someone you love... Do not ask, “How shall I pass this on?” but, “What does this say to me?” Then ponder this word long in your heart until it has gone right into you and taken possession of you.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## Bible reference:

“Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night” Psalm 1:1-2

## A quick introduction to the Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a Latin phrase meaning ‘divine reading’. This is a form of meditation on the word of God that trains us to listen to His whisper speaking personally to our hearts, allowing His word to become one with us.

Lectio Divina is a reflective and repetitive way to read the Bible, that is not so much focused on becoming informed by the text but rather being transformed by it. It does not replace the other types of Bible reading - rather Lectio Divina adds depth and value to all other forms of Bible reading, facilitating a movement from our hearts to more active ways of wrestling with scripture.

Here we are reading purely in the devotional sense – reading for relationship with God more than a type of mental assent to learn more about God. We read the passage not so much as a student seeking to master the subject but as a son receiving a love-letter from a deeply committed and adoring Father.

“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.” Romans 10:17

## Do it: How to do the Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is described in four main phases:

1. Lectio: Read and Listen. Bite into the candy bar.
2. Meditatio: Meditate. Explore it. No question is off limits. What did the author mean? How does it make me feel? What does it mean to me?
3. Oratio: Pray and respond. A place of intercession and repentance.
4. Contemplatio: Rest in God's word. A space of silence, resting in God's presence.

However, this can be adapted in different ways. Here, there are six simple steps:

**1. Read:** Pick a passage. To begin with, choose any of the Psalms or a passage in one of the Gospels. After inviting the Holy Spirit to come and guide you, read the passage slowly, out loud if you can. Read it twice with one minute of silence in between.

**2. Relish:** We could use the word 'reflect' here also, but relish describes more what we're aiming for at this stage. Meditating on the passage you have read, savor one word or phrase that you have noticed more than others during your reading. Write this word down and begin pondering what God might be saying to you through this. How is this word speaking to your life?

**3. Re-read:** Read the passage one more time.

**4. Respond:** Speak out in prayer what you sense God is saying to you. Tell Him how you feel encouraged, challenged by what He is saying to you and ask that the seed of His word in your heart would develop deep rooted truth that would lead to fruitfulness in your life.

**5. Rest:** Simply take some time to allow God to wrap you in His love, and let the word He has given you rest on you

**6. Resolve:** Finish by articulating one way you might be able to live out the word that has penetrated your heart in your daily life

#### **Books on the Lectio Divina**

- Opening to God: Lectio Divina and life as Prayer – David G. Benner
- The Sacred Year – Michael Yankoski