

A Simple Form of Lectio Divina

- **Lectio Divina:** *Lectio Divina* means “divine or sacred reading” and is an ancient form of contemplative prayer found in many religious traditions. In the Christian tradition it has been an essential part of monastic prayer and is now common for Christians in all walks of life. It is a method for using the Bible as a path to contemplation through listening and responding to God’s voice in scripture. Its purpose is listening, rather than abstract analysis or study.
- Find a relatively quiet place and sit with your back straight, but not rigid.
- Find a brief, perhaps familiar, passage from sacred scripture in your tradition and read it slowly three times with a period of silence after each reading.
- After the first reading, listen for a word or phrase that may attract you in a special way.
- After the second reading, let the passage speak to you personally and respond to what you may hear God saying to you in the passage.
- After the final reading, simply sit in silence for five or ten minutes, without further reflection on the passage, and rest in God’s presence and wisdom.
- When your silent period is ended express simple thanks to God.

For learning more about lectio divina see:

Thelma Hall. *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina (With 500 Scripture Texts for Prayer)*. New York: Paulist Press, 1988 ISBN 0-8091-2959-0

Norvene Vest. *No Moment Too Small: Rhythms of Silence, Prayer, and Holy Reading*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1994. See Chapter Two. ISBN 1-56101-092-8

A Form of Praying with Scripture called Meletè

(adapted by David Keller from a practice of the desert Mothers and Fathers that was a forerunner of the modern practice of *lectio divina*)

Recommended as a complement to daily Bible reading or study...

1. After reading or studying portions of the Bible, take some time to sit quietly and come into an awareness of God's presence. Leave your activity of the mind and enter a time of silence and solitude.
2. Choose a passage (from those you have been studying or reading). Read the passage slowly, aloud if you are alone. Read it three times and then sit quietly, in silence, for five minutes. Avoid the desire to analyze the passage.
3. Take a word or phrase which stands out from the passage and let it enter your heart and mind. Repeat it several times.
4. End your time of solitude with a prayer.
5. Live with the word or phrase for the rest of the day, in the midst of all you do.
6. Just before bedtime recall the word or phrase. If there is time, write some thoughts in your journal. If not, simply recall the word or phrase. In either case, once you have recalled the word or phrase, give it up and let it go. End with a short thanksgiving.

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*Lectio Divina (Holy Reading) expands the scope
of what it is possible to hear.*

- surrender yourself and yield before the Holy One.
- a listening spirit is essential if you are to respond to God, who is already seeking you.
- silence is an opportunity to listen with your heart as you seek to understand God's ways.
- ponder with openness that which lies beyond what you can conceive or understand with your mind.
- lectio divina is an opportunity for you to experience, to be with, to remain in God; this is a threshold to contemplation and a place where the Holy Spirit leads you beyond saying prayers to become a person of prayer. You will become like the One you experience in prayer.