

Lectio Divina

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Hebrews 4:12 - "For the word of God is alive and active."

Lectio Divina is a Latin term that means "divine reading" and it is a slow and reflective way of engaging the Scripture so that you can really open yourself up to what God wants to say to you. It is an ancient monastic practice that was first established in the 6th century by Saint Benedict. In Lectio Divina, you are basically taking a passage in the Bible and reading it over and over again and really soaking it in. As an analogy, it is like how a cow chews partly digested food, regurgitates it and chews it again and again until it gets digested. The process of Lectio Divina will definitely require you to slow down and be patient as you literally chew on the Bible passage. It involves reading a selected passage 3-4 times, where each reading is followed by different activities to help you connect with God.

Use the simple acronym **T.I.M.E.** to help you remember the process of Lectio Divina.

First prepare your heart to encounter God through His Word. Sit in silence, take a few deep breathes and ask Holy Spirit to come and guide you.

1) TEXT - (Objective Focus) - Read the passage slowly and aloud for the **first time** and let the words sink in. Take the next 2 minutes (or however long or short you want) of silence to identify key words or phrases that strike you. This portion of Lectio Divina asks, "What are the main ideas of the passage?" This is the time for a studied examination of the passage when you identify the objective dimensions of its meaning. You can read commentaries and look up meanings of words if you wish.

2) IMMERSE (Subjective Focus) - Read the passage slowly and aloud for the **second time**. Take the next few minutes of silence to meditate on what the passage personally means for you. While the first reading sought the text's objective meaning, now we are reflecting on subjective meanings and personal associations that come to mind. Use your sanctified imagination to enter into the text - What do you see, feel, hear as you enter the scene? "What are you feeling as you read the text?" "What personal longing is God speaking into?" God may give you a picture or a living (rhema) word at this time. Take what God gives you and unpack it. Explore it with Him.

3) MINISTRY (Prayer & Response) - Read the passage slowly and aloud for the **third time**. Take the next few minutes of silence to see what prayers emerge and stir up within you based on the previous two movements. "What is God inviting you into through this text and how will you respond?" Pray them out to the Lord. The goal here is intimacy with God so this may be a time to simply dialogue with Him, to wrestle with Him or to do something He asks you to do.

4) ENCOUNTER (Resting) - You can read the passage for the **fourth time** if you would like. It's optional at this point. During these last few moments of silence, simply dwell in God's presence and rest in what He said to you. This is the time to let God's living Word soak into you for your ongoing formation.

* The above guideline for group Lectio Divina can easily be adapted to individual practice. When doing Lectio Divina individually, the process can be more fluid and flexible. You may feel led to jump back and forth from one movement to another as the Holy Spirit leads.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. **6** You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! **10** For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **11** Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

1) TEXT - (Focus on the Objective) - Make observations on an objective level. What keywords or phrases strike you? What are the main ideas of the passage?

2) IMMERSE (Focus on the Subjective) - Meditate on what the passage personally means for you. What are you feeling as you read the text? What personal longing is God speaking into? Take whatever living (rhema) word God gives you and explore it with Him.

3) MINISTRY (Prayer & Response) - What is God inviting you into through this text and how will you respond? This may mean just sitting on it for a while, dialoguing with God or doing something that He asks of you. The goal is engaging with God towards more intimacy.

4) ENCOUNTER (Resting) - Simply dwell in God's presence and rest in what God spoke to you. This is the time to let God's living Word soak into you for your ongoing formation.

