

Engaging Scripture

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a means of listening to God by meditating on his written word. The spiritual reading of the Bible is not an intellectual analysis of the text or even a mental exercise by which we decide how it applies to us. Rather, it is an opportunity to receive, to hear what God would say to us through a familiar passage and then enter into a dialogue by responding to Him.

- Begin with silence. Then ask the Holy Spirit to bring the Word to life as you read it through slowly. Once you reach a word or phrase that evokes a response in you, note that down and resist the urge to continue. What captures your imagination or attention?
- Read just that word or phrase several more times, not in a mechanical way or in order to analyze it or attach meaning to it. Simply soak it in, savoring the truth at a deeper level than the intellect.
- In time you will become aware of an impression the words have made on you, a feeling or attitude they've evoked.
- Make a note of it and then respond to God by expressing that, asking questions, or simply listening further. For example:
 - What do you want me to know about this?
 - What do you see that I don't?
 - God, what is your invitation to me in this text?
 - Jesus, what is the longing or need this is bringing to the surface for me?
 - Lord, in what way does this word, phrase or passage apply to me?
- Now spend time quietly allowing yourself to dwell in the Word. This time of focused silence may take a variety of forms. You may wish to go for a walk or find a corner in a room to journal or sit quietly, enjoying just being with God. Choose a place and a posture that helps you be aware of God's presence and gives Him room to speak.
- At the end of your time, consider journaling what you have heard and one truth the Holy Spirit has revealed to you. Have you been encouraged? Assured? Challenged? What has God invited you to? Thank the Lord for speaking to you as your time draws to a close.

If you're doing this as a small group, spend some time individually going through the exercise then share with one another your experience.