

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina: Method for biblical prayer

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of praying scripture, which is done with the purpose, not primarily to read the bible, but of meeting the Lord, in and through the scriptures. Consequently, the goal is not to intellectualize the text. The purpose is to be attentive to the inner workings of my heart, as I read the passage. What touches my spirit. What is drawing me closer to Christ? What do I feel deep within me? Am I meeting the Lord in the gentleness of His touch?

Step 1: Have one person read the passage, slowly.

Do NOT discuss the text this first time. Just listen. Ponder what you heard.

Step 2: After reading the passage, take 3 minutes of silence. Do NOT discuss the text. Just listen, and ponder what you heard. Let your eyes be drawn to a word, or a phrase which touches your heart.

Step 3: After three minutes, REREAD the text slowly, preferably by another person.

Step 4: Having read the text a second time, we continue in silence. No discussion. Instead, people take turns saying out loud, one word, or a few words which touched their hearts. Only say the words, or the word which touches us. No discussion about why it touched me. Just say the words. When those who wanted to, have had a chance to speak their word, the animator then stops this part of the exercise.

Step 5. Now, it is time for discussion. BUT we discuss ONLY the PASSAGE. What does it SAY. What question does it raise for me? What did I NOTICE. What are the FACTS. The purpose of step 5, is to actually understand what the text says.

Taking turns, we discuss what we noticed about the passage. What did we observe. What are the facts? What questions does this raise for me. What surprises me, or touches me? This is NOT time for debates, or discussion about theoretical concerns. Let's discuss THE PASSAGE. Simply tell people what you observe IN THE PASSAGE. What does the passage actually say. Observe the details, and mention them.

Step 6. Now is the time to discuss HOW this passage applies TO ME. It is time to share with the others of my group how this passage touches me personally, and touches my life. How can I see myself in this passage. What does it tell me about life itself?

Step 7: In silence, and not sharing with anyone, each person for a few minutes thinks about "What I plan to do in response to the passage this week? How am I to change or serve in ONE specific way? Write this down for yourself, so that you do not forget.

Step 8: Finish with the Our Father