

## Spiritual Reading or Lectio Devina

Spiritual reading is the practice of reading the Bible in such a way that we are more listening to and immersing ourselves into scripture so that God's Word reaches the core of us. The practice slows us down and keeps us from thinking we are in charge or that we rule the text. The slow quiet reflection opens us up to hearing God actually addressing us, relationally, his people.

### *How it works.*

**First**, we pause in quietness, and ask God to open our eyes and ears, mind and heart to him. (This can take from 10 seconds to a minute or more.)

- *Ex. Jesus, I am here. Calm me so I can sense your Words and work in this text and in me.*

**Second**, we read the text reflectively or meditatively. (Start with 3-5 minutes. As you get comfortable, take more time)

- Read it out loud slowly, listening with attentive ears for things that catch your attention.
- Now, read it again. Depending on the text, you may engage it in various ways.
  - A gospel story? Envision yourself as a character and replay the scene noticing details, emotions, responses, etc.
  - A psalm or poem? Adjust the pace of reading. Emphasize certain words. Sketch it. etc.
  - A letter? Picture yourself writing it - who is on the other end? What do you want them to receive?
  - Be creative and prayerfully play within the text.

**Third**, we respond in prayer. (This can take as little as 30 seconds to as long as you need)

What did you notice? What did you sense? What caught you? Talk honestly with God about these things. Ask for guidance. Give thanks. Express your question. Did nothing stand out? Express your openness to hear from God while expressing your belief that He loves you and is faithful. The invitation of prayer is to respond honestly to God with what you sensed.

**Fourth**, we take a moment to enjoy God's favour. (Start with a minute. We may need to learn to be still in this phase. Relax and grow into this)

Be still and rest in the fact that God has spoken through his Word to you. Contemplate God's goodness. Take comfort in knowing that the Holy Spirit will draw you closer to Jesus and his words. Like sitting in the warmth of the sun, bask in the rays of God's care for you - and whatever He brought to mind for you.

Over the next week, strive to practice this 2 or 3 times. We recommend these texts for you:

- Matthew 8:1-4. *Does Jesus lift up those bowed down? Is Jesus hospitable?*
- Matthew 9:18-26. *Does Jesus care for the oppressed? Is he hospitable?*
- Luke 9:10-17. *Does Jesus care for the hungry? Is he hospitable?*
- Psalm 63:1-4, Colossians 2:6-7, Matthew 11:18-19, Romans 12:12-14

Remember. Anything we practice takes time. Regular practices help us to grow amidst assorted emotions, fatigue, busyness and contentment.

*Reading seeks for the sweetness of a blessed life, meditation perceives it, prayer asks for it, contemplation tastes it. Reading, as it were, puts food whole into the mouth, meditation chews it and breaks it up, prayer extracts its flavor, contemplation is the sweetness itself which gladdens and refreshes.* **Guigo the Second - 12th Century Monk**