

READING SCRIPTURE AS A FORM OF PRAYER

The ancient practice we are going to do is called “Lectio Divina,” translated literally from the Latin as a “divine reading” of scripture. The intent is to read so that God will speak to us through our reading, our listening, our reflecting and meditating, and our sharing together too. Prayer is speaking to God but also listening for God. The words of scripture may become a powerful means of God’s communication to us.

Preparation:

Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Take a few minutes to clear your mind of distractions. Turn off ringers and devices or put them in another room. Find a comfortable spot to sit and relax. Pay attention to your breath for a minute or two.

Close your eyes and ask God to be close to you, to speak to you what you need to hear at this time. Pay attention to your breathing. With each inhalation imagine God coming into you... With each exhalation imagine all that distracts and burdens you exiting your mind and consciousness for the next little while... You are clearing your spirit and making space for the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit to enter...

Take a few minutes doing this...

Now, open the chosen passage of scripture for what we call a spiritual reading...

1) **Read** the passage carefully. What is the passage saying in your own words? Don’t interpret at this point, only summarize and review carefully, making sure you have paid attention to what is being said and any particular images or specific details.

2) **Meditate** on what the passage means. What is the main point or points? Think of some key words or phrases. What word or phrase speaks to you?

3) **Pay attention** to your feelings. How does this passage make you feel - angry, sad, exhilarated, guilty, uplifted, nervous, assured, shaky? Why are you feeling the way you are? Are you feeling convicted in some way, challenged in some way? Are you thinking of someone else or yourself in this passage?

4) **Listen** within yourself in silence. Close your eyes and hear yourself breathe. Allow the distractions around you and the concerns in your mind to fall away one by one. Focus yourself on remaining open in a prayerful spirit. Do you hear God speaking to you through this passage? Are you able to let go where you need to let go and let God where you need to let God move within you, guide and empower you?