

Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is a Latin phrase that simply translates to “divine reading.” It’s reading or listening to the Bible with an acknowledgment of God’s presence with you. This kind of devotional reading aims at growing intimacy with the Lord, more than gathering information about him. This isn’t Bible *study*, it’s divine reading.

Lectio divina is traditionally made up of five movements. Try to incorporate these five movements in daily devotional time with the Lord. It usually takes about 30 minutes each morning.

1. *Silencio* — Quietly prepare your heart

Begin by spending five minutes in silent prayer, simply asking God to meet with you, slow down, relaxing your breathing, and intentionally acknowledging God’s presence with you. St. Ignatius of Loyola suggests beginning this time of prayer by standing in front of the chair you’re about to sit in and imagining God has already been waiting to meet you there.

2. *Lectio* — Read the word

Read Scripture slowly, perhaps even out loud, lingering over words as the Holy Spirit leads. As you are encouraged or convicted, or something catches your attention, don’t rush past it. Stop. Consider what God might want to say to you in that moment.

3. *Meditatio* — Meditate

Consider reading through the selected text a second time, savoring the words. Think about Christian meditation as *ruminating* and *gnawing*. Ruminant like a cow chewing its cud, turning it over again and again for the purpose of fully digesting it. Gnaw on the Scriptures like a dog gnaws on a bone to get as much meat and flavor as possible. Write down certain words or verses that God brings to mind, and then prayerfully meditate on them.

4. *Oratio* — Respond in prayer

Allow the Scriptures you’ve just read to guide your prayers in response. *Who did God bring to mind as you read these verses in the Bible?* Use that as a prompt to intercede for them in prayer. *Where were you personally convicted or challenged?* Use that as a catalyst to commit to following Jesus in a different way or to confess sin. Author Basil Pennington suggests choosing a “word of life” (a simple phrase from your daily reading) and allowing that to guide not only your responsive prayer, but a sense of unceasing prayer throughout the day.

5. *Contemplatio* — Contemplate, rest, and wait in the presence of God

What if instead of closing our Bible and quickly rushing off to our next agenda item, we instead committed to rest in God’s presence for a few minutes after we read his word? Resist the urge to pull out your phone. Resist the urge to fill the silence with your words to God. What if you committed to two-to-three minutes of silence with the Lord and allowed him to speak to you as you concluded your time of *lectio divina*.