

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina means “divine reading” and comes from Paul’s counsel to “let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you” (Colossians 3:16). It is a simple method to be used while reading the Scriptures to help not just read with our eyes and understand with our mind, but hear Scripture with our ears and understand with our hearts.

In practicing Lectio Divina we slowly and rhythmically read Scripture a few times. Pay attention to what stands out to you and what feelings arise in you as you read. Then, respond to God with whatever is going on in your heart and listen for what he may be saying to you.

1. Lectio (Reading)

This involves reading a brief text slowly, and rereading it again until there is a word or phrase that draws your attention - either through attraction or resistance.

2. Meditatio (Reflect)

Focus further on the parts that stood out to you. Allow the text to go from your mind to your heart. You can use your imagination and put yourself in the text if you so desire.

3. Oratio (Respond)

Be open to the Spirit’s moving within and speak freely to God about what is coming up. Honestly express your feelings, thoughts, and desires to the Lord and pray about them with the Lord.

4. Contemplatio (Rest)

Sit open to the presence of the Spirit (this may be peaceful, agitating, boring). Gently let go of your thoughts and feelings as you give them to God, resting in him. Remember, the Holy Spirit is there with you in the deepest places. Be open to what he is trying to show you about himself or yourself.

LECTIO DIVINA
CAN BE USED WITH
ANY PASSAGE OF
SCRIPTURE. HERE ARE
A FEW SUGGESTIONS
TO START WITH:

Psalm 23

Psalm 62:1-8

Matthew 11:28-30

John 15:1-17

Romans 12:9-21

Silence + Solitude

Silence and solitude is a moment of intentional time to be alone with God in the quiet.

Examples of Jesus engaging in silence & solitude:

- Mark 1:35: "Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray."
- Luke 5:16: "Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer."

One of the foundational goals of silence and solitude is to get to the place where we know who we are in God. When we slow down long enough to get alone with ourselves and God, we may begin to see what is actually going on in our hearts and have space to hear from God.

Practically: getting alone with God to be in a quiet place for some time.

- Walking on a trail
- A chair in your house
- A place in your backyard
- The park

The point is not to try and make something happen, but to stop, slow down, and be attentive to God. Consider, "where can I go for some time to be in quiet with the Lord?" Make a plan to do this in the next month.

“ Solitude and silence can never be separated from the call to unceasing prayer. If solitude were primarily an escape from a busy joy, and silence primarily an escape from a noisy milieu, they could easily become very self-centered forms of asceticism. But solitude and silence are for prayer. The Desert Fathers did not think of solitude as being alone, but as being alone with God. They did not think of silence as not speaking but as listening to God. Solitude and silence are the context within which prayer is practiced. ”

- Henri Nouwen

Sabbath

Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word, “shabbat” which literally means “to stop.” Sabbath is a time to stop working, stop being productive, stop worrying, and so on. It is not the same as a “day off,” where you typically run errands, shop, do laundry, play on your phone, watch TV, etc. Rather, sabbath is a day set aside for resting, worshiping, and delighting in God.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Which day works best for me to Sabbath?
- What can this look like for me as someone who is single, married, has a family, etc?
- In what ways do I feel connected to God?
- What is life-giving for me and reminds me of God’s love?
- Who are some people I would like to spend my sabbath with?
- Who do I feel safe with?
- Who do I feel seen and known by?
- Who can I laugh with?

WHAT TO DO ON SABBATH

- Read a Psalm to kick off your Sabbath rest
- Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea as you read Scripture in the morning
- Journal thoughts and prayers
- Go to and engage in the church worship service, enjoy church community (if you Sabbath on Sunday)
- Eat a good meal, enjoy your favorite drinks, and dessert
- Take a nap
- Pray
- Practice slowing down (i.e. walking slowly and enjoy God’s creation)
- Turn off your social media and email
- Read a book
- Spend intentional time with your spouse
- Spend intentional time with your community
- Be creative (paint, draw, ceramics, cook or bake a new recipe)
- Play (play an instrument, play a sport, garden, play with your kids, have a family or friend game night)
- Reflecting on the week, write a list of things you are grateful to God for

Remember, Sabbath is supposed to be a day of JOY & DELIGHT. Enjoy it. Delight in God.

Prayer of Examen

The Prayer of Examen traces back to Psalm 139:23-24 and is a way of reviewing your day in the presence of God. The goal of the examen is to gradually develop an openness and sensitivity to the promptings and invitations of God throughout the course of your day. It's a helpful way to find God in all things and become aware of those things that hinder you from saying yes to God.

1. GRATITUDE

Give thanks to God; be grateful. What has happened in your day that you are grateful for?

2. SIN

Ask God to reveal your sin to you. The focus here is not necessarily on the external sin, but on the roots from which the sin came from. It is a prayer of, "God, what do you want to show me?"

3. EXAMINE HOW YOU LIVED THIS DAY

Consider your thoughts, words, & deeds. This will help you see more where you may have missed God so that tomorrow you will have a better chance of connecting with God and what he is doing in your life.

4. ASK FORGIVENESS

Express sorrow for your sin while recalling God's love and grace. This provides space to soak in God's grace, forgiveness, and love.

5. GRACE

Ask God for the grace to amend your ways and more fully live out of a sense of connection with God. Here you are affirming your need and dependence on God (John 15:5).

The key to the examen is being totally open and honest with both God and yourself.

You can do a mid-day examen and an examen before going to sleep each night.



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