

Lectio Divina is Latin for *divine reading*, spiritual reading, or "holy reading," and represents a traditional Christian practice of prayer and scriptural reading intended to promote communion with God and to increase our knowledge of God's Word. It is a way of praying with Scripture that calls one to study, ponder, listen and, finally, pray and even sing and rejoice from God's Word, within the soul.

Method

Lectio is typically practiced daily for one continuous hour. A selection from the Holy Scriptures is chosen ahead of time, often as a daily progression through a particular book of the Bible.

Time

Selecting a time for lectio divina is important. Typical methods are to pray for one hour in the morning, or to divide it into two half-hour periods, one in the morning and one in the evening. The key is to pre-select the time that will be devoted to the prayer and to keep it. Using the same time every day leads to a daily habit of prayer that becomes highly effective.

Place

The place for prayer is to be free from distractions. This means it should be isolated from other people, telephones, visual distractions, etc. Some find an icon to be helpful. The same place should be used for lectio if possible, especially as one first begins to practice it. Familiarity with a location reduces the possibility of distraction away from the prayer. Or, one may wish to pray in an unaccustomed place, for the express purpose of finding a place that will be dedicated to prayer alone and not other daily activities. Some practitioners conduct other devotions, such as praying before the Blessed Sacrament as a preparation for Lectio Divina.

Preparation

Prior to reading, it is important to engage in a transitional activity that takes one from the normal state of mind to a more contemplative and prayerful state. A few moments of deep, regular breathing and a short prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide the prayer time helps to set the tone and improve the effectiveness of the lectio.

Once the stage is set it is time to begin the prayer. There are four phases of the prayer, which do not necessarily progress in an ordered fashion. One may move between different phases of the prayer very freely as the Holy Spirit guides.

The Four Moments

Lectio Divina has been likened to "Feasting on the Word." The four parts are first taking a bite (Lectio), then chewing on it (Meditatio). Next is the opportunity to savor the essence of it (Oratio). Finally, the Word is digested and made a part of the body (Contemplatio).

Lectio

This first moment consists in reading the scriptural passage slowly, attentively several times. Many write down words in the scripture that stick out to them or grasp their attention during this moment.

Meditatio

The Christian, gravitating around the passage or one of its words, takes it and ruminates on it, thinking in God's presence about the text. He or she benefits from the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination, i.e. the work of the Holy Spirit that imparts spiritual understanding of the sacred text. It is not a special revelation from God, but the inward working of the Holy Spirit, which enables the Christian to grasp the revelation contained in the Scripture.

Oratio

This is prayer: prayer understood both as dialogue with God, that is, as loving conversation with the One who has invited us into His embrace; and as consecration, prayer as the priestly offering to God of parts of ourselves that we have not previously believed God wants. In this consecration-prayer we allow the word that we have taken in and on which we are pondering to touch and change our deepest selves. ...God invites us in lectio divina to hold up our most difficult and pain-filled experiences to Him, and to gently recite over them the healing word or phrase He has given us in our lectio and meditatio. In this oratio, this consecration-prayer, we allow our real selves to be touched and changed by the word of God.

Contemplatio

This moment is characterized by a simple, loving focus on God. In other words, it is a beautiful, wordless contemplation of God, a joyful rest in His presence.

Source for the above is [Wikipedia](#)