



An Embodied Invitation to Listen

Lectio Divina means sacred reading. It is an ancient way of entering Scripture with openness, trust, and relational attentiveness. Rather than trying to master a text, we allow the text to meet us as we are... body, mind, and spirit... believing the Spirit is already at work in our depths (Heb 4:12).

This practice leans into the biblical understanding that humans are holistic beings created for communion: thinking, feeling, sensing, and responding within the presence of God. Scripture becomes less of a task to analyze and more of a place of shared life where transformation unfolds in relationship.

Many discover that this practice is not just reflective; it is embodied. We notice what rises in the space between instinct and response. We honor what comes, trusting that awareness held with compassion becomes a doorway into deeper formation.

Lectio Divina is experienced as five movements. Movements invite flow rather than performance... more like being guided through a gentle dance. In the beginning it may feel unfamiliar, but with time it becomes a rhythm of communion where presence leads rather than pressure.

Preparing the Body (Silencio)

Before reading, pause. Allow your body to settle in a way that feels supportive... feet grounded, shoulders softening, jaw loosening, or hands resting in a comfortable place.

Let your attention sink into your breath.

Breath Practice:

- Without forcing anything, notice your inhale and exhale.
- Allow a slow breath in, and as you release the breath, imagine spaciousness opening within you.
- A simple whisper of welcome...
- *"Here I am"* or *"I'm open to what meets me in this moment"*... can help set your intention without striving.

Give yourself permission to move, shift, or stretch as needed.

Nothing in this space requires stillness or silence you cannot sustain.

This moment is for safety, kindness, and authenticity.

The Five Movements

Before beginning the movements, choose a passage of Scripture that feels approachable for this moment. It may be just a few verses—something you can linger with. You'll read the passage several times, each reading opening a different movement of the practice: Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest, and Resolve. After each reading, allow a pause for silence or stillness in whatever way is accessible to you, creating room for awareness to rise and settle.

1. Read (Lectio)

Read the passage slowly. You may read aloud or listen to someone else read. Let the words move at a pace your body can follow.

As you hear or read, notice if a word, phrase, or image catches your attention... or perhaps your breath, your pulse, or a sensation shifts. No need to force meaning. Simply notice.

Possible spiritual direction invitations:

- What might be calling for your attention as the words move through you?
- What begins to stir or awaken within you as the passage meets you?

Pause for a bit of silence, long or short... whatever feels steady for you.

2. Reflect (Meditatio)

Read the passage again. Let the word, phrase, or image sit with you. Consider how it intersects with your life in this season.

This reflection can be cognitive, emotional, sensory, or intuitive. You might imagine yourself within the story. You might repeat the phrase quietly. You might notice textures, images, or memories that surface.

Possible spiritual direction invitations:

- What part of your life or story seems to lean toward this passage right now?
- What begins to take shape in your inner world as you linger with this word or image?

There is no pressure to “figure it out.” Reflection is simply attending to what rises.

Pause again, letting the silence hold you.

3. Respond (Prayer-Oratio)

Read the passage once more. Notice what emerges in you in response... longing, resistance, relief, grief, hope, questions, weariness, curiosity. All responses are welcome.

Let your response become a conversation with God. Speak, whisper, write, or rest quietly. Allow your honesty to create room for deeper connection.

Possible spiritual direction invitations:

- What begins to move within your heart as you offer your response?
- What desires, questions, or truths are surfacing as you engage this moment?

Let this response unfold without needing to resolve anything.

4. Rest (Contemplatio)

Set the passage down. Release effort. Simply rest in the presence of God.

This is not about achieving stillness, it is about allowing yourself to be held in the quiet. Resting can mean sitting, breathing, gazing out a window, swaying, or grounding your feet.

This movement honors that we are formed not only through our words but through being known and accompanied.

Possible spiritual direction invitations:

- What begins to settle or open as you rest in this presence?
- What experience of being held or supported becomes noticeable in this moment?

Let yourself stay here for as long as you need.

5. Resolve (Incarnatio)

A final reading may help anchor the moment, or you may remain in quiet. Consider how this encounter might move with you into the rest of your day—not as a task to accomplish but as a gentle companionship.

This movement is about allowing what you received to take form in your living—your choices, relationships, and rhythms.

You may find a symbolic reminder—an image, a word on a card, a gesture, or even a posture... to reconnect with what emerged.

Possible spiritual direction invitations:

- What seems to be taking root within you for the hours or days ahead?
- What gentle movement or intention feels like it wants to be carried forward?

Let this resolve be grounded in freedom rather than pressure.

Closing

Hold gratitude for whatever surfaced... even if it felt small, confusing, unfinished, or unexpectedly tender. Trust that the Spirit works in the slow, the subtle, and the unspectacular moments of honest presence.

Footnote: This adapted framework draws from the biblical theology of Christian formation and theological anthropology, with conceptual influence from the teachings of Tim Mackie (BibleProject), Barbara Holmes, Howard Thurman, Lisa Sharon Harper, Sheila Wise Rowe and Adele Calhoun.