

## Lectio Divina

*Lectio divina* is a method of praying the Scriptures. What better way to get to know God than by spending time with God's spoken word?

The practice of *lectio divina* traces its roots back to the early centuries in the Church. By the sixth century, [St. Benedict](#) had made it a regular practice in most monasteries. And while in its beginnings this prayer method was set aside for monks and religious leaders, today *lectio divina* is a widely held practice by many laymen and laywomen.

*Lectio divina* is a slow, rhythmic reading and praying of a Scripture passage. You pick a passage and read it. Notice what arises within you as you read it. Then you read it again, and then again, noticing what words and phrases grab your heart and noticing the feelings that arise. You respond to God about whatever is stirring within as you read and pray with the passage. Finally, you rest and let God respond and speak to you.

Let's consider the formal steps. To begin, you might open with a short prayer, asking God to guide your prayer time. Then do the following:

### **Read.**

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the Scripture passage the first time. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart? Linger with it whenever this happens.

### **Reflect.**

Slowly and prayerfully, read the passage again. What is God saying to you in this passage? offering you? asking you? What feelings are arising within you?

### **Respond.**

Slowly and prayerfully, read the passage again. Respond to God from your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer these to God.

### **Rest.**

Possibly read the passage another time. Sit quietly in God's presence, asking, "What are you saying to me?" Rest in God's love, and listen.

As you end your prayer period, you might close with an Our Father or another short prayer. It might be helpful to jot down in a journal what arose during this time. What did you speak to God, and what did God offer you?