

Reading the Bible is one of the most important practices of the Christian life. And yet it's easy for this practice over time to become hollow and void of spiritual reflection. As a pastor, I've struggled with various forms of this over the years. A practice that has helped me tremendously is *Lectio Divina*.

Lectio Divina means "divine reading." It's an ancient Christian practice that invites us to read Scripture not for information, but for relationship—with God, with ourselves, and with the world. It began in the early centuries of the Church and was formalized by monks like Benedict of Nursia in the 6th century. For generations, believers have used this prayerful, meditative approach to listen for the voice of God in the living Word.

FOUR MOVEMENTS OF LISTENING

Lectio Divina has four steps or movements that guide you through reading scripture in a prayerful and reflective manner. Select a passage and try these steps.

Step 1: Read (Lectio)

- *Read the passage. Notice what word, phrase, or image stands out to you.*
- *Don't rush. Read it like a friend is telling you something important that you don't want to miss.*
- *What stood out to you?*

Step 2: Reflect (Meditatio)

- *Read the passage a second time. This time notice a reflection or thought that is emerging in your mind.*
- *Let God speak through your thoughts, emotions, or memories.*
- *What is stirring in you?*

Step 3: Respond (Oratio)

- *Read the passage a third time. Speak to God about what is stirring in you. Share your thoughts, your questions, your thanks, your needs.*
- *This doesn't need to be polished. Just be honest.*
- *What do you want to say to God?*



Step 4: Rest (Contemplatio)

- *Let go of your thoughts. Rest in silence with God. Allow God to speak to you.*
- *You don't need to do anything now. Just be still and present.*
- *How did that feel? What do you sense God inviting you to today?*

You can use this practice with any passage of Scripture. Some verses on spiritual listening that you might try are 1 Samuel 3:7-11, Romans 10:17, Luke 8:18, Nehemiah 2, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 10:38-42, and 1 Kings 3:9. Try setting aside 10–15 minutes. You might find writing down your thoughts helps or you might just do inner reflection.

ALONE OR TOGETHER

Lectio Divina can be practiced alone in quiet reflection or with others in a small group, reading and listening together. In community, you may be surprised by what others notice—and how God speaks through their listening, too.

However you choose to practice, the invitation is the same: slow down, open your heart, and listen to God.

**I've also created a Lectio practice for community listening that you can [download here](#).*