

# First Steps in Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is a traditional practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer. It can be done alone or in a small group.

The goal of lectio divina is to allow God to speak to us through the scriptures. During lectio divina we do not ignore the original meaning of the scriptures, but we come to hear something new through the original stories. In lectio divina we come to the Bible expecting to hear God's voice for us today.

## Instructions for Beginning

1. Find a comfortable and quiet place to sit, free of distractions. Try to set aside all your worries for a time, and focus on being with God. Try to sit down the expectation that you will hear from God in the scriptures.
2. Open your time of prayer by calling upon the Holy Spirit to guide your reading.
3. Choose a passage of scripture to read. Read that passage slowly. On the first reading, you are just listening for the content of the passage and noticing what the scripture says.
4. Take a moment to be silent, and let the scripture sit with you.
5. Read the same passage of scripture for a second time. Read it slowly, and on the second reading pay attention for a word or phrase that particularly catches your attention. If you'd like, you can say out loud or write down the word/phrase that has caught your attention.
6. Take a moment to be silent, and let the scripture sit with you.
7. Read the same passage of scripture for a third time. Read it slowly, and on the third reading ask yourself what that word or phrase means for you today. What the word or phrase means for you may not be exactly the same as what it originally meant when the scriptures were written, and that is OK. If you'd like, you can say out loud or write down what this word or phrase means for you today.
8. Close with prayer, and ask God to help you put into practice what God has told you.

## An Example of How Your Reading Might Go

1. You sit in your favorite chair in the living room and silence your cell phone.
2. You pray, "*Holy Spirit, thank you for guiding me today. Help me to hear your voice in the Bible. Amen.*"
3. You select Matthew 14:13-21. You read this story slowly, and hear how Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000 people.
4. You sit in silence, letting the words of the story sink into your heart.
5. You read Matthew 14:13-21 again. As you read slowly, the phrase "*twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over*" catches your attention.
6. You sit in silence, letting the phrase "*twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over*" roll around in your mind.

7. You read Matthew 14:13-21 again. As you read slowly, and as you think about the baskets of food that were left over from Jesus' miracle, you hear God telling you that there is an abundance in your life. God has worked in your life in the past, and you have an abundance of blessings.
8. You pray, *"God, thank you for all the good that you have given me. Thank you that even after all the good that you have done in my life, there are still baskets full of leftovers. I am blessed beyond measure. When I face challenges today, help me to remember the basketfuls of goodness in my life. Your goodness is greater than whatever problems I will face today. Amen."*



# HAMPTON

BAPTIST CHURCH

FOUNDED ON FAITH, COMMITTED TO SERVICE