

Lectio Divina is a contemplative way of reading the Bible. It dates back to the early centuries of the Christian Church and was established as a monastic practice by Benedict in the 6th century. It is a way of praying the scriptures that leads us deeper into God's word. We slow down. We read a short passage more than once. We chew it over slowly and carefully. We savour it. Scripture begins to speak to us in a new way. It speaks to us personally, and aids that union we have with God through Christ who is himself the Living Word.

Lectio is not Bible study or even an alternative to Bible study but something radically different. The practice understands Scripture as a meeting place for a personal encounter with the Living God. It is a practice we come to with the desire to be changed at all sorts of levels. It operates very much on the emotional rather than the purely cerebral level. It is perhaps hearty rather than heady. Through it we allow ourselves to be formed in the likeness of Christ; it is about formation rather than instruction. When undertaken in a group setting, Lectio is about listening to the experience of others and how that might inform our experience of the Bible and God within it. It is never about pushing a particular view and is certainly not competitive.

As we read the passage, we are allowing a word or sentence of the text to speak to us - not to rationalise it, but for the Lord to convey a message and speak to the heart.