

# Spiritual Practices

Ways to encounter God who is always present to us as a refuge

## Lectio Divina

An ancient (6<sup>th</sup> C) slow, prayerful, meditative reading of a short passage of Scripture.

Its four-part rhythm:

1. **Lectio:** read aloud slowly, don't analyse, just savour the words and let them sink in.
2. **Meditatio:** re-read aloud, this time linger on any word or phrase that the Spirit catches your attention with.
3. **Oratio:** re-read aloud and pray, talk to God about what stood out, what might he be saying to you?
4. **Contemplatio:** re-read aloud and be still, and rest in the awareness of God's presence.

Daily Lectio Divina podcasts are made by Abiding Way Ministries. Just search 'Lectio Divina' on Spotify or follow this link to their website:

<https://www.abidingway.life/lectio-podcast>

## Praying the Examen

Developed by Ignatius (16<sup>th</sup> C), the Examen is a way of sitting with Jesus & talking through the details of your day. The Examen slows us down to notice the data of our lives. Its three-part rhythm:

1. **Notice:** At the end of a day/ or an event, in prayer, play out its details like a short movie in your mind. Notice emotions, thoughts, actions & motivations that are normally overlooked. These help perceive the movement of the Spirit.
2. **Ask:**
  - What gave life? When were you aware of God's presence? When did you respond to God with love, faith and obedience? Talk to Jesus.
  - What drained or troubled or agitated you? When did you feel God's absence? When did you resist or avoid God? Talk to Jesus.
3. **Reflect:** How will you be attentive to God's love tomorrow? Talk to Jesus.

## Praying Scripture with Imagination

Our minds are full of stories, experiences and pictures that the Spirit can use to draw us into greater intimacy with Jesus. Praying Scripture with imagination lets the Spirit give insight about God and ourselves. Read a scene from a Gospel and invite the Spirit to direct your imagination as you enter the scene and encounter Jesus. What do you smell, see, hear, feel? Who is with you? Watch the characters and what they say and do. What is the mood of the scene? What do you say and do? What does Jesus say to you? Engage in conversation. Don't worry about making things up – trust the Spirit to speak. Afterwards, prayerfully reflect on your experience. What does God want you to know?

## Breath prayers

These are prayers that can be used to remind us of God's presence with us throughout the day.

Here are a few:

### **Breathe in:**

"I can't"

"Be still"

Inhale the love of God

### **Breathe out:**

"you can God"

"and know that I am God"

Exhale any resistance

## Posture prayers

Physical gestures help us focus on letting go and receiving. Place palms down and release your cares to God. What worries, troubles & distracts you? When ready, turn palms up and receive God's love and grace.

*Many of these practices have been taken from Sharon Garlough Brown, a spiritual director and co-founder of Abiding Way Ministries and author of the book, Sensible Shoes.*