

PRAYER FOR MISSION IN THE BENEDICTINE WAY (LECTIO)

This method of prayer can be used by individuals or in a group setting. For group prayer the leader will need to choose the passage of scripture from the list of Suggested Readings and become familiar with it. The leader will lead the group through the prayer process and guide the group process which involves participants sharing aloud some of their prayer and responses. It is possible to use this method silently or individually but the time allocations will vary according to your choice as will the instructions you give to the group. The leader should be prayerful about these matters ahead of time too.

Centring (5 minutes)

Invite the members of the group to place themselves in a comfortable position and to become silent. They may focus on their breathing for a few minutes, or perhaps repeat a favourite “prayer word” or “prayer phrase” such as Maranatha if this is familiar to them. Otherwise you might use this relaxation exercise.

If you are reading it for a group, read slowly allowing pauses for people to relax and settle into their prayer

Make yourself as comfortable as you can. Become still with your eyes closed. Focus on your breathing. Allow it to become deeper and slower. Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing in and through your body, relaxing each part that it touches - beginning at the top of your head..... your face....your neck....your shoulders.....your arms and hands.... your chest....your abdomen....your thighs....your calves.....your ankles...your feet..... Allow any tension to flow out through your toes till your whole body is relaxed.

Offer this prayer time to God, surrendering to however the Holy Spirit will use it

Lectio

Explain that the text will be read four times with longer pauses after the second, third and fourth readings. The first reading is for them to gain a sense of the whole passage. The second reading will be done very slowly as they listen with their hearts for the words/phrase that speak to them or to the church. The third reading will also be very slow so that they can ponder how the words they noticed speak into their lives and the church's life. And the fourth reading will call them to some kind of action (1 minute)

Read the text (1 minute)

Pause (1 minute)

Before reading the text a second time remind the group to savour the words and to be attentive for the word or phrase which speaks most powerfully to their hearts. They are listening for the still small voice of God's words to them or the church for today. Tell them not to expect lightning flashes or ecstasies but instead to let God's word take them into God's presence. When they have their word or phrase invite them to turn it over in their hearts and ponder it in the prayer pause that follows. They will be invited to share so explain that they will speak out loud the word/s they received **with NO elaboration**. The group receives the words respectfully **without** comment. The sharing should go around the circle and those who do not wish to speak may say pass. (1 minute)

Read the text again VERY slowly. (2 minutes)

Pause (3 minutes)

Invite them to speak their word/phrase. (Time will vary according to numbers –*approx 2 mins?*)

When everyone has shared the leader introduces the third reading. In this reading and following prayer pause, the group is invited to see and hear Christ in the text. That is, how does the word or phrase that has touched the heart, now touch the person or the church's life? The pause that follows is for them to pray and listen to Christ. What is Christ saying through these words? (*1 minute*)

Read the text again slowly (*2 minutes*)

Pause (3 minutes)

Invite them to briefly to share what they have “heard” or “seen”. Again there is no elaboration or comment from the group. (*5 mins*)

When everyone has shared the leader introduces the fourth reading of the text. Now the word is calling individuals or the church to some kind of action. What particular action is being called forth - today, this week, or this year?

Read the text again slowly (*2 minutes*)

Pause (4 minutes)

Invite them to share what has been revealed. What do they believe God wants them or the church to be or to do today/ this week/ this year? Again the group receives without comment (*10 mins*).

Prayer (*5 mins*)

The group prays for one another praying for the person on their right. (If they choose to pray silently they should state this aloud and conclude their silent prayer with Amen)

The group then either silently – resting in Gods presence. (*5 mins*)

The leader then calls the group back into community where sharing of the experience may happen if time allows.

PRAYER FOR MISSION IN THE CONTEMPLATIVE WAY

Contemplative prayer is the prayer of Quiet. There is no conversation with God, no expectation of getting any answers or revelations. It is simply sitting in the presence of God, being attentive to the presence and activity of God and being open to God's love, knowing that whatever concerns, intercessions, desires for mission that you have are already known by God and do not need to be articulated. In this prayer you are emptying yourself and attending to God on behalf of the mission of the Diocese.

This prayer will need a very quiet setting

There may be a word or phrase with which the participants are familiar such as Maranatha and this word is used as a mantra to come back to attentiveness if their thoughts wander. Or they may just focus on the rise and fall of their breath.

Remind them not to judge their prayer or any distractions that come, just let the distractions go and return to their prayer word or their breathing.

Begin with a time of Centring

You might invite them to sing some verses from a Taize chant or similar, or play similar music to help them surrender to the process.

Invite the group make themselves comfortable and as relaxed as they can be, preferably sitting with arms and legs uncrossed, with their hands resting in their laps, and with their eyes closed. Before they begin their contemplation suggest that you will draw the time to a close either with some quiet music or with a prayer

Invite them to be attentive to their breathing, allowing it to become slower and deeper. You may use the relaxation method mentioned in the Ignatian/Benedictine prayer methods.

Read to them either a passage of scripture (see the list of suggestions from scripture, or choose your own) or use one of the suggested prayers on the helpful prayer list, after which they move into their contemplative prayer using their mantra or focusing on their breathing.

Contemplation for 30/40 minutes

Signal when it is time to return either by playing some quiet music or reading a prayer.

The group may spend some time sharing about the experience if appropriate.