

**Lectio Divina**  
*Psalm 139*

**Introduction:** This week we are taking a break from our study of the Sermon on the Mount to experience the ancient practice of lectio divina (pronounced lex-ee-oh di-vee-nuh). It literally means, "divine reading. During our Sunday morning services, instead of a sermon being preached, Psalm 139 was simply read three times. We were invited to meditate on it and to listen for the voice of God speaking to us through His Word. If you were not there, here is a simple explanation of the practice from David Benner:

Literally meaning "divine reading," this ancient Christian practice involves a prayerful listening to Scripture, or as it is usually described, praying the Scriptures. Lectio divina is grounded in a balance of silence and the Word. Listening always involves silence. The listening to Scripture that is at the core of the lectio divina is a listening in silence and stillness that seeks to encounter God as he speaks directly and personally to you.

Lectio divina involves listening to the reading of a short passage or a few isolated verses of Scripture. Those who listen are encouraged to set aside analysis, and even understanding, seeking instead to open themselves to God's Word and receive it expectantly and passively. They then attend to what they receive from God. God's Word is received personally, as an individualized gift to each person.

After hearing the passage read, the classic form of the lectio involves asking participants to sit in silence before God, noticing whatever captures their attention in the passage or in their inner experience. The passage is then reread and the process repeated. This time, after a silence, participants are asked if they wish to share a single word or phrase that particularly strikes them as they listen. No further discussion occurs. After another moment of silent prayer the passage is then read again. This time people are given an opportunity to speak briefly of how the passage seems to touch their lives. Finally, after a fourth reading they are asked to share what the passage might be inviting them to do.

*Sacred Companions*, David Benner, 169-70.

**Discuss**

1. What was your experience like during the lectio divina exercise on Sunday?
2. How did you sense God speaking to you as Psalm 139 was read?
3. How did you sense God speaking to you through what other people shared?
4. Did you have a sense from Psalm 139 of something you believe God wants you to do, or to believe, or to pray, etc.?