



CONTEMPLATIVE READING

LECTIO DIVINA, or contemplative reading, is an ancient practice common to most religions. It begins with reading a short passage of scripture or other inspirational writing, and then quietly reflecting upon it — not analyzing or trying to figure out the meaning — but rather allowing it to quietly work on you, as leaven in the bread, as water on a stone. The key is to read slowly, chew over the words, and allow them to quietly nourish and heal you.

Choose a short piece of scripture for reflection. During Sabbath time I often choose the Twenty-third Psalm. I read it a few times silently, and then choose a word or phrase that speaks to me — “The Lord is my shepherd” is one that Henri Nouwen used as his mantra for two years. Others might be “I dwell in the House of the Lord forever” or “My cup runneth over.” Then sit quietly or take a Sabbath walk, and allow the scripture to accompany you. Without grasping for meaning or answers, let the phrase live in the breath, using it to bring awareness back to this moment whenever the mind wanders. What do you notice about the words? How do they change? How do your feelings about each nuance shift over time?

— Wayne Muller in Sabbath

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