

Ponder

CONTEMPLATIVE BIBLE STUDY

Tips for praying *lectio divina* on Zoom

If your Bible study group is using *Ponder* for online gatherings, you may be wondering how best to practice *lectio divina* together. While “online lectio” can be challenging, there are things you can do to improve your online prayer experience.

Here are a few ideas and tips:

- ◆ **Pray individually before online gatherings.** Because *lectio divina* can be prayed individually or in a group, one simple option is to encourage group members to practice the *lectio divina* portion of your Bible study on their own before your online gathering. Using the information in *Ponder: Contemplative Bible Study* (see p. 13-14 or the inside back cover for a quick “how to”), individuals can pray alone, and then come together online to share about their prayer experiences together. If your group chooses this option, you will want to notify your group in advance which reading they should pray with each week so you can all discuss your experiences with the same reading.
- ◆ **Pray in smaller groups in breakout rooms.** Using Zoom’s breakout rooms will allow you to keep your online prayer groups to a maximum of four people. Smaller groups will find it easier to navigate the spontaneous nature of *lectio divina*. With fewer people “chiming in,” there will be less overlapping of voices and a more natural prayer experience. After smaller groups pray together in their breakout rooms, you can all gather back together as a large group to share your prayer experiences and to continue on with your exploration of the lectionary texts.
- ◆ **Pray in a large group using prompts.** If your group would like to stay together in a larger group, the facilitator can refer to a list of group members and can call on individuals to share the word that has come to them in prayer. Individuals can say “pass” if they do not wish to share a word with the group. This way of praying *lectio divina* is less spontaneous, but it may be helpful in an online setting where group members can’t see clear visual cues and when online lags make speaking at the same time a common prayer challenge.
- ◆ **Remember to use the mute button.** When praying together as a group, it is helpful for group members who are not speaking to keep their microphones muted. That way if a phone rings, a dog barks, or any other background sounds emerge, they don’t interrupt the quiet atmosphere and the natural rhythm of prayer.
- ◆ **Be flexible.** Each group is unique. Feel free to experiment as a group to see what works best for your circumstances. Try different things and discuss the experiences together. What is working and what isn’t? What adjustments can be made? What method may simply need more time and practice?
- ◆ **Embrace the awkwardness.** Any new prayer experience will feel awkward at first. This is completely natural. Your group is braving a new prayer frontier, and you’re doing it together. Enjoy the foibles and the challenges—they will lead to authentic spiritual growth and a deeper group bond!

We are here for you if you have any additional questions or just need some encouragement! Reach out to Amy Ekeh at Little Rock Scripture Study at aekeh001@litpress.org or 320-363-2081.