

# ~ Spirit-Liberated Word ~

Three practices for inviting the Spirit to breathe new *life* into Scripture

## Breath Prayer

All Scripture is God-Breathed

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John 14:4	<i>Abide in me . . . and I in you</i>
Psalm 51:13	<i>Sustain me . . . with your bountiful Spirit</i>
Psalm 23:1	<i>The Lord is my Shepherd . . . I shall not want</i>
Luke 18:13	<i>Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God . . . have mercy on me, a sinner</i>
Psalm 46:10	<i>Be still . . . and know that I am God</i>

## Lectio Divina

Letting Ourselves be Read by the Spirit

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**Read:** Slowly read a passage from a sacred text. Listen to the words with your heart.

**Reflect:** Re-read the passage. Allow a word or phrase to float into your awareness. Gently ponder its significance in your own life.

**Respond:** Move naturally into direct conversation with God. Express your heart's longings, share your anxieties, let flow expressions of gratitude and praise.

**Rest:** Simply "be." Rest in sacred awareness of God's presence.

## Ignatian Contemplation

Sacred Imagination Ignited by the Holy Spirit

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### 1. Prayerfully read a scene from the Gospels

- Mark 4: 35-41      *Jesus Calms the Storm*
- Mark 8: 22-25      *The Healing of the Blind Man*
- John 19: 25-27      *Jesus and Mary at the Cross*
- John 20: 11-18      *Mary Magdalene at the Empty Tomb*

### 2. Imagine the scene as vividly as possible

- Bring the setting to life by engaging all the senses.
- Bring characters to life by observing, listening, and perceiving.

### 3. Place yourself in the scene

### 4. Be present as Jesus is revealed in this scene

- Allow the Holy Spirit to touch your sacred imagination.
- Adore, Praise, Serve, Be Healed, Be Empowered.
- Pray face-to-face and heart-to-heart with Jesus as he makes himself known to you in this scene, through the Holy Spirit.

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**Collect for Proper 28** *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 236

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**Eugene Peterson** *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*

There is only one way of reading that is congruent with our Holy Scriptures, writing that trusts in the power of words to penetrate our lives and create truth and beauty and goodness, writing that requires a reader who, in the words of Rainer Maria Rilke, “does not always remain bent over his pages; he often leans back and closes his eyes over a line he has been reading again, and its meaning spreads through his blood.” This is the kind of reading named by our ancestors as *lectio divina*, often translated “spiritual reading,” reading that enters our souls as food enters our stomachs, spreads through our blood, and becomes holiness and love and wisdom.

**John 6:48-59** (NRSV)

I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

**Ezekiel 37: 7b-9** (NRSV)

...suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. . . . Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these . . . that they may live.

**Nancy Roth** *The Breath of God*

Prayer is letting the Spirit of God breathe within us.