

DRAW NEAR

Practical Prayer Practices

“Sacred Reading”

The Bible is the story of God and His people. We are invited to read its pages with every part of who we are. In the prayer practice of “Sacred Reading” we use our hearts and minds to notice what God is speaking to us. Take the time today to read scripture in relationship with God, trusting He has a word for you.

In the Bible:

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (The Message)

“Place these words on your hearts. Get them deep inside you. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder. Teach them to your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning until you fall into bed at night. Inscribe them on the doorposts and gates of your cities so that you’ll live a long time, and your children with you, on the soil that God promised to give your ancestors for as long as there is a sky over the Earth.”

Psalms 1:1-3 (NIV)

“Blessed is the one...whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.”

Here’s how you can encounter God through “Sacred Reading”:

1. Choose a passage of scripture between 6 to 8 verses. [Psalm 23](#) is a wonderful passage to start.
2. Set aside some time (could be as short as 10 minutes or up to 45 minutes or more) to go through the five movements of the practice. Each movement will provide space to read the passage, followed by silence.

Read- Read the passage once. As you read, *listen to a word or phrase that sticks out to you or catches your attention*. Allow a moment of silence to *ponder and savor the word*, as if it were from a loved one. Feel free to write it down.

Reflect- Read the passage a second time. As you read, *ask “how is my life touched by this word?”* Allow several moments of silence to *explore thoughts, feelings, and images that come to you*. Again, feel free to write or draw them.

Respond- Read the passage a third time. As you read, *let yourself honestly respond to God*. Enter into dialogue with God as you pray, sharing with God the feelings the passage has aroused in you. Pay attention to any sense that God is inviting you to act or respond in some way to the word you have heard.

Rest- Read the passage a final time. As you finish reading, *allow yourself to rest in the word of God and His presence*. Allow yourself to *spend time in this space*, trusting that God is the One who will enable you to respond faithfully to whatever invitation He has given you.

Resolve- As you finish this practice, *resolve to carry this word with you and to live it out in your daily life*. Continue to consider it throughout the day as you are led by God deeper and deeper into its meaning.

We will be drawing inspiration and some content from:
Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation, by Ruth Haley Barton
(InterVarsity Press, 2006)

More info + video: renewcarroll.com/draw-near