

Life Group Topic #13
Lectio Divina: A Contrite Spirit

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Today our topic will focus on a **contrite spirit**. But our approach will be to go directly to Scripture instead of considering preliminary sermon commentary. Rather we encourage a practice similar to the ancient practice of **Lectio Divina**.

Lectio Divina is Latin for *divine reading*, spiritual reading, or "holy reading," and represents a traditional Christian practice of prayer and scriptural reading intended to engender communion with the Triune God and to increase in the knowledge of God's Word. It is a way of praying with Scripture that calls one to study, ponder, listen and, finally, pray and rejoice from God's Word. Lectio Divina has been likened to "Feasting on the Word." It begins with taking a bite (Lectio), then chewing on it (Meditatio).

We encourage you to begin the time in expectant prayer. Then follow the following:

Lectio: Take a few moments to have someone slowly read through each of the Scripture passages outloud. After the Scripture is read, have the whole group again slowly read through the passage silently.

Meditatio: The Life Group, gravitating around the passage or one of its words, takes it and ruminates on it, thinking in God's presence about the text. He or she benefits from the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination, i.e. the work of the Holy Spirit that imparts spiritual understanding of the sacred text. It is not a special revelation from God, but the inward working of the Holy Spirit, which enables the Christian to grasp the revelation contained in the Scripture.

Mutual Ministry: In keeping with our Life Group philosophy, begin to discuss together the things the Lord impresses on your minds. As the facilitator, guide the discussion towards life application, and the mutual building up of one another. **I will still provide some optional questions that may be helpful in guiding your discussion of each passage.**

Isaiah 30:15-17: *This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says:*
"In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength,
but you would have none of it... (NIV)

1. Consider carefully the four outcomes that the Lord calls us to in times of trouble: **repentance, rest, quietness and trust**. Which of these resonate with the need of your heart today?
2. Note Israel's response: *but you would have none of it!* How teachable are we when God wants to lead us to a place of repentance?
3. Israel had her own solutions to times of trouble that looked far more appealing. Where did they lead? (vs 16,17) What are the applications to our lives?

Isaiah 57: 15 *For this is what the high and lofty One says—
he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
"I live in a high and holy place,
but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly
and to revive the heart of the contrite. (NIV)*

1. Where is it that the Almighty God longs to dwell?
2. If our lives were characterized by a spirit of humility and contriteness, what would be the impact on our Life Groups? On our church family?

Psalm 139: 23, 24

²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*
²⁴ *Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (NLT)*

1. How often have you felt impressed to point out weakness, sin or blind spots in fellow believers but were afraid to approach them? What are the results?
2. How might our lives be transformed if this prayer was our daily heart's cry?
3. To what extent has living in a culture where nothing offends and everything is tolerated impacted our understanding of sin in our lives?
4. What is the place of Life Groups (fellow believers) in exposing those things in our lives that are offensive to God? (James 5:16)
5. What would it take to bring revival to South Abbotsford Church?

I John 1:8-9 Close with this promise of God- this celebration of His grace!

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.