Lectio Vicinitas

(NEIGHBORHOOD READING)

*FOR RURAL CONTEXTS AND OTHER SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE DRIVING

OVERVIEW

Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe, Jr invites his students to read their community like a text. The following is an activity based on Lectio Divina and designed for church leaders who wish to listen deeply to their community. It can be used to discern God's call for your church to relate to your community in a new way. It is designed to be done while riding through a community. We strongly encourage leaders to practice this in pairs, allowing the driver to maintain focus on the road and driving safely. The driver and passenger can switch and repeat the process.

1. PREPARE (SILENCIO)

- As you prepare to depart, quiet your inner voice.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your drive and your observations.
- Seek a mindset of openness, leaving preconceived assumptions behind.

2. READ (LECTIO)

- As you begin driving, take special notice of whatever and whomever you see.
- In this stage try to minimize interpreting what you see and maximize observation. If you are the passenger you can make notes on paper or on your phone to help remember.
- Take note of places where people are gathering. Where are there multiple cars in parking lots? Look for written words on signs, posters, or flags.
- What stands out to you right away?
- Switch driver and passenger and repeat step one and two.

3. MEDITATE (MEDITATIO)

- Find a safe place to pull over in the community.
- Reflect individually and together upon what you saw.
- Replay the drive in your imagination, stopping for moments that stood out to you.
- Ruminate on these moments. What stood out to you about them?
- Slowly shift your focus from the mind to the heart. What feelings were stirred in you?
- What was happening under the surface?
- Where did you feel God's presence on your drive? Where could you see God already working?

4. PRAY (ORATIO)

- Shift into a conversation with God about what you saw on your drive.
- You can do this in a journal if it helps.
- Ask God some questions. Ask God for clarity in areas that are unclear.
- Ask where you might partner with God's redemptive work already happening in the community.

5. CONTEMPLATE (CONTEMPLATIO)

- As you begin to close, jot down your newly discovered insights about your community.
- Write down anything you feel like God was saying to you in this time.
- Rest in God's presence for a few moments before returning to your daily tasks.

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