

Lectio Divina

“Hear, O Israel...”

These are the words that start the commandment that Jesus called the “first and the greatest” commandment. It is found in Deuteronomy 6 and it continues:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

But how often do we, as God’s people, hear God? How often do we really listen?

We live in an age where we are bombarded daily, hourly, minute by minute with noise, demands, tasks.

iPods and cell phones seem permanently grafted to our ears.

We relax by watching “action programming” or competitive sports on television

As one old radio commercial said: “Minute Rice? Who has the time!”

But the Bible teaches that God doesn’t speak in all this activity.

Elijah, a great prophet who was zealous for the Lord, learned this when he was driven away from his home into the wilderness. He was hiding in a cave on a desert mountain:

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind.

After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire.

And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

It was more important to God for Elijah to listen than to be zealous.

Lectio is the chance, to set aside an hour a week, to sit down, shut up and listen for God.

Already I can imagine some of you thinking: What? You just sit and are silent for an hour? I couldn’t stand that.

No, it is not as radical as that.

So what do we do?

First someone reads the selected scripture, which is typically one of the Lectionary passages for the week. We each listen carefully for a word or a phrase that stands out from the rest for some reason. A short silence follows in which each of us individually ponders that word or phrase to determine how God may be speaking in it.

After this silence we share (or not) what we have heard, or perhaps questions that have arisen. It is remarkable how the same text will affect each of us in dramatically different ways.

Following the discussion, the text is read again – usually from a different translation to provide a somewhat different view.

Another time of silence follows wherein we continue to ponder the text and the additional insights from the first discussion. How is God speaking to me in this text in this room right now?

Another brief time of discussion follows.

The text is read yet again and we have now reached the place where it all comes together: A time of silence and contemplation in which we let go of our own words and let God’s Word soak in, in which we rest in God’s loving presence, in which we pray, in which we simply ARE.

Can you imagine it? Once a week for a brief time you too can stop and take a bath in God's love.

Join us on Tuesday morning at 10:00. Or if this time is not possible for you, let the church office know and if there are enough people interested we can start another group at a different time.