

A PATTERN FOR GROUP SCRIPTURE REFLECTION
USING *THE UPPER ROOM*

The practice of listening for God's personal word to us within the words of the Bible is an ancient Christian tradition. The pattern below adapts the ancient pattern called *lectio divina* ("sacred reading") for use in a group, basing the reading and reflection on the day's meditation in *The Upper Room* magazine.

Step 1: Ask hearers to prepare themselves, to get comfortable and quiet. If the group is large, before reading begins, invite people to form groups of three or four.

Step 2: Invite hearers to listen for the word or phrase from the scripture reading that attracts them, stops them, gets their attention. Read the scripture passage suggested for the day. Read the passage again, more slowly the second time. Direct hearers to reflect in silence on their word or phrase. Then invite them (within their smaller groups if the group is large) to speak aloud their word or phrase, without further comment.

Step 3: Read the suggested passage again, asking hearers to consider how the passage links to their life. Following the reading, allow two minutes of silence for reflection.

Step 4: Read the verse of scripture quoted above the day's meditation and the "story" or body of the meditation. (You may ask a volunteer to do this.) Then ask listeners, "How do you connect with this writer's words or experience?" Allow a minute or two for silent reflection. Invite persons to say a sentence or two about the connection they make.

Step 5: Ask, "Where do you sense in all this an invitation from God for your life in the next few days?" After a minute of silence, invite persons in their small groups to mention the invitation they hear. (Or anyone may "pass" at any time.)

Step 6: Invite persons within their small groups to pray for one another in turn, each person praying for the person to her/his right, that they may be empowered to respond to God's invitation. They may pray silently or aloud.

Close your time together by reading the "thought for the day" from the magazine, followed by the prayer for the day. You may also invite prayer requests from the group and pray for these in addition to the printed prayer. Invite those present to continue in prayer during the day for the person or situation mentioned in the "prayer focus" that day.

To learn more about spiritual formation, visit our website, www.upperroom.org.