

# Time with God

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## Reflecting on Psalm 84

### Lectio Divina

We'll spend our time in Psalm 84 and I'd like to suggest that we read and meditate upon it by using an ancient practice called *Lectio Divina*, which simply means, *Spiritual Reading*. The following is an excerpt from Richard Foster's excellent book, *Life With God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*.

There is a place for reading large portions of the Bible in one sitting, such as an entire book, but this is not it. [In Lectio Divina] we are concerned with depth rather than breadth. ...Lectio is a way of allowing the mind to "descend" into the heart, so that both mind and heart might be drawn into the love and goodness of God. Our goal is immersion. In its classic form *Lectio* comprises [these] four elements: *Lectio* (reading with a listening spirit), *meditation* (reflecting on what we are *hearing*), *oratio* (praying in response to this hearing), and *contemplation* (contemplating what we will carry forward in our lives). For our purposes here, we will refer to these basic elements of *Lectio* as *listening, reflecting, praying and obeying*. When these elements are combined – regardless of sequence, for they overlap and intermingle in a circular rather than linear way – they lead the human spirit into a dynamic interaction with the Holy Spirit.

**Prepare:** Find a quiet place and ask God to help you quiet your heart so that you do not feel rushed. There is space here to record your thoughts and prayers through each part of this practice. You will read the passage through multiple times. Do not rush. Take a moment to write out a prayer of surrender, praise and thanksgiving before you dive into the passage.

## The Scripture: Psalm 84

### Listening

Read the passage all the way through without pausing – sometimes it is helpful to read out loud. Then read the passage again – this time pause, underline words, highlight a phrase. Take time to note what seems to be jumping off the page into your heart and mind. You can read from your Bible or find the passage on page 4 of this handout.

### Reflecting

Once you find a word or a phrase that strikes you, spend time reflecting upon it. Ponder it in your mind and heart. Foster says, *“Inwardly we are asking, ‘How are you revealing yourself to me, Lord? What am I to see and understand in this border territory where my life merges with yours?’”*

## **Praying**

Listening and reflecting naturally turns to conversation with God. Again we turn to Foster who notes, “We engage with what we are hearing by *praying* this text of Scripture, letting the reality of this holy moment with God give rise to our heart cry of gratitude, confession, lament, relief, or praise.” Record your prayer here.

## **Obeying**

Foster says, “The change that God is working deep into our souls will naturally flow outward into our lives, as surely as a river must follow its course to the open sea. [Here] we contemplate the meaning of this word from God for the choices we will make for this day, for the attitudes we will carry into our tasks, for the thoughts we will allow to dwell uppermost in our minds.” What is God calling you to as you pray through this passage?

## Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place,

LORD Almighty!

<sup>2</sup> My soul yearns, even faints,

for the courts of the LORD;

my heart and my flesh cry out

for the living God.

<sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow has found a home,

and the swallow a nest for herself,

where she may have her young—

a place near your altar,

LORD Almighty, my King and my God.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who dwell in your house;

they are ever praising you.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose strength is in you,

whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

<sup>6</sup> As they pass through the Valley of Baka,

they make it a place of springs;

the autumn rains also cover it with pools.

<sup>7</sup> They go from strength to strength,

till each appears before God in Zion.

<sup>8</sup> Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty;

listen to me, God of Jacob.

<sup>9</sup> Look on our shield, O God;

look with favor on your anointed one.

<sup>10</sup> Better is one day in your courts

than a thousand elsewhere;

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God

than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup> For the LORD God is a sun and shield;

the LORD bestows favor and honor;

no good thing does he withhold

from those whose walk is blameless.

<sup>12</sup> LORD Almighty,

blessed is the one who trusts in you.