



Cultivate Mission

Stephanie Lutz Allen



Marinating in Scripture During Our Consultation Process

What is it?

Marinating in Scripture is a method of saturating our hearts and minds with certain Bible passages. The method is a variation of [Lectio Divina](#).¹ The leader invites people clear their minds of distractions in preparation to hear God's word. Someone reads the passage two or three times aloud, with space given for silent reflection between the readings. You may have two or three different people read the passage. Encourage people to let a phrase, or word bubble up. Some people may want to close their eyes; others may want paper available to journal.

A common flow is the following:

First Reading: For the purpose of hearing a word or phrase that touches the heart.

Before reading the first reader (or facilitator) says—

"As I read, listen for a word or a phrase that bubbles up for you. Take it in and reflect on it during the silence."

Second Reading: For the purpose of seeing Christ in the text.

Before reading the second reader (or facilitator) says—

"How does this word/phrase touch your life this day?"

Third Reading: For the purpose of experiencing Christ's calling forth into doing or being.

Before reading the third reader (or facilitator) says—

"What is Christ calling you to do or become this day or this week?" OR

"What is Christ calling us to do or become?"

After reading the passage, give time to debrief in the following format. Break the group up into pairs after the reading and before the group feedback. This takes more time, but gives people a chance to participate more fully. It also builds listening skills for group members. Instruct the pairs that they will be asked to report back in a certain way. They are not asked to give a summary of what they both said, nor what they told their partner, but *what they heard their partner say*. So they need to listen carefully to their partner, to hear what their partner gleaned from the passage.

¹ Many informative websites exist. Google "lectio divina."

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stephanie@cultivatemission.org

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818 Dartshire Way, Sunnyvale, CA 94087, (408) 391-2055

After this sharing in pairs, people first report back what they heard their partner say. The leader resists temptation to teach on passage, but let the Spirit guide. There won't always be time to do this sharing in pairs, and that's fine. But as a regular discipline time needs to be made for this extra step.

Throughout the meeting, the facilitator can recall the passage for the group. How does the passage we read at the beginning of the meeting inform this decision or work before us?

A few variations on this would be to provide paper to journal on during the reflection time. This helps those who struggle with the mind wandering syndrome (which I confess is me). Another variation is to provide the text copied on paper, along with colored pencils/markers. Ask the group to spend time silently using the colored pencils to circle repeated words, underline key phrases, look for themes and make any other color coded notes that tickle their fancy. But in any variation, resist the temptation to turn the time in to a "Bible study" with formal process, or didactic teaching by a leader.

Why do this as a regular practice through a consulting process?

The goal of this process is to increase the congregation's ability to communicate with God and with each other. God's primary vehicle of communication with us is through the Word written. Listening to each other's thoughts about Scripture increases our communication abilities. Talking about Scripture helps us learn to talk about those things that matter to us the most. As the congregation rethinks its identity and purpose, we are rooting that rethinking in the call of God provided for us in Scripture, made fresh to us today through God's Spirit.

What is being asked of us?

We are asking that the board and committees of the church covenant together throughout this process to practice *Marinating in Scripture* with the following passages at the beginning of all meetings. We are asking that you rotate these five passages regularly, and only use these. Each passage was chosen because it points to the nature of being the church, or to the people of God called and sent on a journey.

- Genesis 12:1-9
- Luke 10:1-16
- Acts 1:1-11
- II Corinthians 5:11-6:2
- Philippians 2:1-11

Our goal is for these five passages to become part of the church's shared language and meaning in the change process. It may feel confining to limit the group to these passages, but it is actually a counter intuitive move. When these passages become familiar and comfortable, then the group is able to draw on these themes in their work. The hope is that these four passages impact the shape of the church, much like teriyaki would change the flavor of a whole piece of meat or chicken. (Yes, that means we're the chicken!) May we be flavored with an identity from God that becomes a purpose lived out in our world.

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