

Aural Bible Study Method

LISTEN to the Word. **RESPOND** from your heart. **DISCERN** your response.

Aural Bible study is a form of African-style Bible study or *lectio divina*. In aural Bible study, the appointed scripture is read three times, each time by a different voice. Only one Bible in the setting is open. A different question for reflection is posed prior to each reading. Sitting in silence for even a full minute may be uncomfortable for some. Encourage people to relax into the silence and assure the group that the mentor will be mindful of time and the length of silence so others need not have that as a concern.

The Method

1. Before the first reading, allow a minute or so of silence to allow people to quiet their minds and prepare to hear the Word. Remind them to listen for the word or phrase that catches their attention.
2. Read the scripture slowly and carefully. After the reading participants take a minute in silence to recall the word or phrase that caught their attention.
3. Beginning with the mentor, each person says the word or phrase. (No more than that—the word or phrase—no commentary or explanation.)
4. The mentor poses the second question for reflection: Where does this passage touch your life today? (The reading will be followed by a longer period of silence (2 to 3 minutes)).
5. The scripture is read by another voice from the group. Following the time of reflection, each person shares their response to the question beginning, “For me...”
6. The mentor poses the third question for reflection: From what I have heard and shared, what is God calling me to *be* or *do* this week?
7. The scripture is read again by yet a different voice and following a time of silent reflection, each person responds by saying, “For me...” The mentor reminds the group that each person will pray for the person on their left, naming what the person shares in this step, so they should listen carefully and prayerfully to that person’s response.
8. Begin a time of prayer by inviting each person to prayer specifically for the person on their left, naming what was shared in the previous response and to pray that prayer daily until the group meets again. (The leader may offer a general prayer form for those who are new to this type of prayer, such as, “God, may your blessing go with _____. Fill him/her with our love and grace.”)
9. The session may conclude with the saying of the Lord’s Prayer together.

Remember these guidelines:

- Confidentiality is strictly observed. What is said in the group, stays in the group.
- Participants are free to pass at any time.
- Cross talk and advice giving are not part of this process. The group listens to one another with no response. This honors the work of the Holy Spirit in each person as he or she opens their lives to the transformative power of the Word of God.
- When the aural Bible study is complete, the mentor may engage in further conversation in response to questions or comments that arise from the group.

These are some alternate questions that may be use in the aural Bible study method.

After the first reading:

What does this reading say to you about God?

After the second reading:

What does this reading say to you about who you are?

After the third reading:

What do you hear God asking you to do or be this week?

Another set of questions to consider:

Close your eyes and listen to the story. What do you hear? See? Feel? (in one or two words)

As you imagine the scene, where are you in the story?

What does this passage say to your head?

What does this passage say to your heart?

What does this passage say to your hands?

Used and modified with permission from the Rev. Bev Piro.