

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is a new ministry offering Christian Meditation Courses to those outside the church.

(**Lectio Divina** is supported by the EMBA and Home Mission.)



Since the beginning of January 2008 the Revd. Gert Glasius (formerly minister of Ashby Baptist church) has been working as a detached evangelist in the EMBA area organising Stress & Christian Meditation courses in hotels, leisure centres and adult education colleges. The vision behind this new form of mission is to offer the benefits of Christian meditation to those well beyond the fringe of the Church.

How people respond...



Those attending the courses are mostly from non-church backgrounds and often, during the course, engage with the bible for the first time. Psalm 23 is one of the passages used; the imagery in the psalm still has the power to speak to people in very different situations. Some have never heard of the words of the psalm before and yet imagery like 'the valley of the shadow of death' evokes a response in people often experiencing excessive levels of stress. A number have not experimented with any form of meditation before and are learning to appreciate taking time out to be more reflective. The Ignatian style of meditation is especially appreciated with people expressing surprise about how powerful an experience it is to place yourself into an imagined situation. Most want more!



Managers of adult education colleges or leisure centres approached have been really helpful in helping to organise the courses. They have been pro-active in offering to publicise courses to their membership, offering space on websites or issuing press releases. Gert is currently employed by two adult education colleges on a sessional basis. Shopkeepers have also responded very positively to requests to display posters etc. The same reaction was received from managers of health centres, dental or solicitors' practices. On numerous occasions conversations took place with people expressing surprise that there is such a thing as Christian meditation. On a few occasions, conversation led to prayer.

The 'New' Spirituality



Institutional religion is struggling to draw the attention of today's generation. Yet many people still express an interest in spirituality. Most however reject the more establish forms of religion and turn to a wide range of spiritualities many of which are informed by the major religions originating in the Far East.

In the area of meditation Yoga is seen as the main 'provider' with classes being offered by adult education colleges, a number of leisure centres and not forgetting the yoga sessions run in church halls. It is often forgotten (by Christians as much as by others) that Christianity too has a long tradition of meditation. The Lectio Divina Trust has been set up to bring the particular emphasis of Christian meditation to as wide an audience as possible.

Christian Meditation

Lectio Divina focuses on two ancient Christian traditions:



Ignatian styles of meditation were developed by Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, this form of meditation is part of the 30 days set of

exercises – a silent and led retreat which is still offered today by many Jesuit retreat houses. Ignatian meditation is also known by its modern designation of ‘visualization’. You are encouraged to imagine yourself in a chosen passage from the scriptures experiencing the story ‘as if you are there and so allow the scriptures to speak afresh.



Lectio Divina or ‘Sacred Reading’ starts with choosing a text from the bible. The passage is first read through to understand the general meaning. The next step is to ‘slow read’ the passage paying attention to every single word allowing that word to speak by making connection with where you are in your life. By doing this you create space for God to speak. Having done this for some time you put aside the text and spend time reflecting or praying about that whatever stood out.

The reason for choosing these two forms of meditation is that both emphasise the use of the bible in the meditation exercises.

About Gert Glasius



Gert has practiced meditation for many years and since becoming a minister has included meditation in services and in evening meetings. The power of the scriptures to transform lives is part of his story hence his desire to see Lectio Divina and Ignatian forms of meditation used outside the church

To contact Gert for further information:

E-mail: gert.glasius@lectiodivina.co.uk

Mobile: 0796 942 4095

Website: www.lectiodivina.co.uk

Address: The Lectio Divina Trust
Chapel Street
Ibstock
Leicestershire
LE67 6HG