

# Lectio Vicinitas

(NEIGHBORHOOD READING)

Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe, Jr invites his students to read their community like a text. The following is an activity based on Lectio Divina and designed for church leaders who wish to listen deeply to their neighborhood. It can be used to discern God's call for your church to relate to your community in a new way. It is designed to be done while walking through a neighborhood or driving through a rural community. We encourage church teams to practice this individually and then to compare experiences.

## 1. PREPARE (SILENCIO)

- As you prepare to depart, quiet your inner voice.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your steps and your observations.
- Seek a mindset of openness, leaving preconceived assumptions behind.

## 2. READ (LECTIO)

- As you begin walking, take special notice of whatever and whomever you see.
- In this stage try to minimize interpreting what you see and maximize observation. You can make notes on paper or on your phone if it helps you to remember.
- Take note of places where people are gathering. Look for written words on signs, posters, or magazines. Observe the housing in the community, if a property is for sale or rent look up the cost.
- What stands out to you right away?

## 3. MEDITATE (MEDITATIO)

- Find a quiet place to sit in the neighborhood.
- Reflect upon what you saw.
- Replay the walk in your imagination, stopping for moments that stood out to you.
- Ruminant on these moments. What stood out to you about them?
- Slowly shift your focus from the mind to the heart. What feelings were stirred in you?
- What was happening under the surface?
- Where did you feel God's presence on your walk? Where could you see God already working?

## 4. PRAY (ORATIO)

- Shift into a conversation with God about what you saw on your walk.
- You can do this in a journal if it helps.
- Ask God some questions. Ask God for clarity in areas that are unclear.
- Ask where you might partner with God's redemptive work already happening in the community.

## 5. CONTEMPLATE (CONTEMPLATIO)

- As you begin to close, jot down your newly discovered insights about your neighborhood.
- Write down anything you feel like God was saying to you in this time.
- Rest in God's presence for a few moments before returning to your daily tasks.