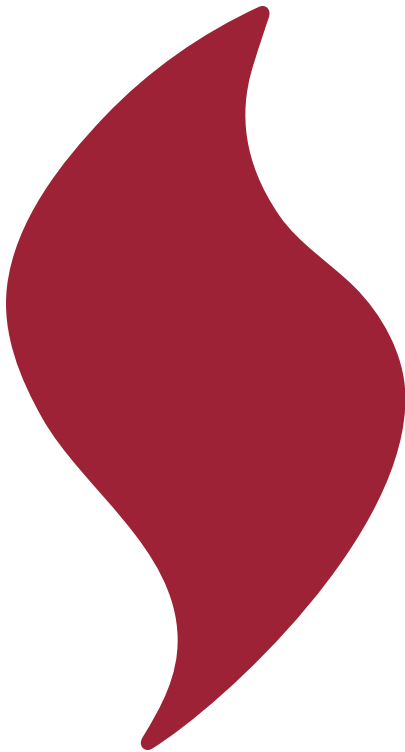


Dwelling in the Word

When we seek to find out where God might be active in our local communities and in our daily lives, and as we consider where to join in with that work, one of the core practices to engage in is Dwelling in the Word. When we Dwell in the Word together, we listen to Scripture together, and we allow God to speak to us through it. Dwelling in the Word is an ancient way of reading the Scripture. It is a way of spiritually submitting to the text as one way God speaks to us, with a willingness to be shaped by what God might want to say through the Scripture. In this way, we are being interpreted by the text together as we listen to it.



An Ancient Practice

Dwelling in the Word is an ancient way of reading Scripture. It involves spiritually submitting to the text as one way God speaks to us, with a willingness to be shaped by what God might want to say through the Scripture. In this way, we are being interpreted by the text together as we listen to it.¹

Three questions guide our listening:

1. What caught your attention?
2. What questions does this passage create for you?
3. What do you think God might be saying to you or to us through this passage?

The Dwelling Process

Listen to the Word together:

- Pray that God would speak to us
- Read the text, slowly
- Allow for silence
- Read again
- Allow for silence

Listen to someone else:

In-person version

- Find one person you can share your thoughts about the text with—a “reasonably friendly looking stranger,” someone you maybe don’t know well.
- Spend 4-5 minutes each sharing about what caught your imagination, or a question you have, or what you think the Spirit might be saying.

¹This is a variation on a practice developed by Church Innovations Institute, www.churchinnovations.org/dwelling-in-the-word.

Online version

- In virtual breakout rooms, pair up with another person that you can share your thoughts about the text with.
- Spend 4-5 minutes each sharing about what caught your imagination, or a question you have, or what you think the Spirit might be saying.

Share in a group:

- In a group of 6-8 people, share what you heard your conversation partner say.
- Consider what God might be saying to you as a group—what are you hearing?

Choosing a Text

Selecting a text for Dwelling in the Word is often as important as the practice itself. You and your Guiding Team may choose to follow your denomination's liturgical calendar, like the ELCA Revised Common Lectionary, by drawing your material from the assigned weekly texts. Or you may want to select texts that are thematically relevant to the issues or challenges your team is presently facing. The suggested texts below include themes of provision, comfort, trust, fruitfulness, growth, and hope. There are many options beyond these; this list represents verses that have been used repeatedly by the Faith+Lead team.

Suggested texts::

- Exodus 3:1-10 (Moses and the burning bush)
 - Exodus 16:1-5,11-20,31 (manna and quail in the desert)
 - 1 Kings 19:4-13 (God and Elijah in the wilderness)
 - Isaiah 40:1-11 (comfort for God's people)
 - Jeremiah 29:1,4-7 (exiled Israelites in Babylon)
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- Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 (parable of the weeds)
- Mark 4:1-9 (parable of the sower)
- Luke 10:1-12 (mission of the seventy disciples)
- John 15:1-11 (Jesus as the true vine)
- Acts 8:26-40 (Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch)
- Acts 16:6-15 (Paul's journey to Macedonia)
- Romans 8:12-25 (heirs with Christ and future glory)

Dwelling in a Single Text

Many ministry leaders report having rich experiences by staying with a single text over a season, which could be several weeks to several months in length. By repeatedly exposing ourselves to the same passage, we open space for God to reveal how the text is transforming us over time. Words and phrases that once seemed familiar can take on new and deeper meaning as we discover the living power of God's Word.

Invite the Spirit's Leading

No matter how you choose to select your text or how long you read the same passage, invite the Spirit to lead you and your Guiding Team toward finding the text that God will use to speak to you. The entire purpose of the Dwelling practice is to enter into fellowship with God and to listen for God's voice. Be ready to discern the Spirit's movement through what you hear!
