WEEK 1 · HOPE · A GUIDE FOR LEADING A GROUP

Lectio Divina on Mark 13:34-37

“God, let me stay awake to you while I wait, and let my longing be seen.”



PASSAGE
Mark 13:34-37

TIME
20 to 30 minutes

BEST FOR
3 to 12 people

YOU’LL NEED
The passage printed or on a screen, and four readers if you can, ideally different voices.

What this is about

Jesus tells a short story about a household waiting for its master to come home. He names the four watches of the night: evening, midnight, cockcrow, and dawn. In a few verses, “keep watch” becomes the word Jesus gives to the doorkeeper and then to everyone.

New to Lectio Divina?

Lectio Divina (say LEK-see-oh dih-VEE-nuh) is Latin for “divine reading.” It is an old Christian way of praying with Scripture. The group hears one short passage four times, and each time listens a little differently. The four readings follow four movements: listen, reflect, respond, and rest. You do not teach or explain the passage. You keep time and keep the silence.

Before you gather

Pray this passage yourself first, using the app, so the silences are familiar to you.

Choose four readers if you can, and give each one the passage ahead of time. A different voice for each reading helps people hear it fresh. Ask them to read slowly, in a plain voice, and to wait a breath before they begin and after they finish. Reading aloud is not a performance.

Have a bell or a phone timer ready, and a candle if you like. Print the passage in large type, one copy for each person. Sit in a circle if you can.

MARK 13:34–37 (BSB)

34 *It is like a man going on a journey who left his house, put each servant in charge of his own task, and instructed the doorkeeper to keep watch.*
35 *Therefore keep watch, because you do not know when the master of the house will return—whether in the evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows, or in the morning.*
36 *Otherwise, he may arrive without notice and find you sleeping.*
37 *And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Keep watch!”*

How to lead it

1 **2 MIN**
Gather. Light a candle if you have one. Sit in silence for a minute, then explain how this will go.
Say: “We will hear one passage of Scripture four times. Each time we will listen for something a little different. Nobody has to speak, and you can pass at any time. We will not discuss or correct what anyone says.”

2 **1 MIN**
Pray the grace for this week together.
Say: “God, let me stay awake to you while I wait, and let my longing be seen.”

3 **5 MIN**
First reading: listen. Keep one minute of silence. Then go around the circle. Each person says one word or phrase that stayed with them, with no explanation. After each person say “Thank you,” and go on to the next. Take your own turn last.
Say: “Listen for a word or phrase that stands out to you.”

4 **5 MIN**
Second reading, in a different voice: reflect. Keep two minutes of silence. Then ask who would like to share a sentence or two. You do not need to answer or comment.
Say: “What does ‘keep watch’ ask of you this week?”

5 **5 MIN**

Third reading, in another voice: respond. Keep two minutes of silence. Then invite people to share, or to pray silently for the person on their right.

Say: "What might God be inviting you to do, or to let go of, as you keep watch?"

6 **4 MIN**

Fourth reading: rest. Keep three minutes of silence together. Nothing needs to be said. Ring the bell when the time is up.

Say: "Rest here. We will sit in silence until I ring the bell."

7 **2 MIN**

Close. Read this line together: "And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Keep watch!" Then thank the group.

Say: "Thank you for praying together. The peace of Christ be with you."

About 24 minutes in all, plus the time it takes to read aloud.

These times fit a group of about six. With twelve people, add five minutes for the sharing. With three or four, the sharing goes faster. If you have only twenty minutes, use three readings and skip the sharing after the second.

If you get stuck

- The silence feels too long: stay with it. Breathe. Do not fill it. Most people find the second minute is where it settles.
- Someone cries: stay where you are, pass a tissue, and say, "Take your time. We are here." Check in with them after the prayer.
- Someone explains the passage or gives advice: thank them, then say, "Let's stay with the words themselves."
- No one speaks: count slowly to twenty. Then ask people to share with one other person. A group that stays silent has not failed.
- Someone seems overwhelmed: thank them, stay close, and afterward suggest a pastor, a spiritual director, or a counselor.

A note for leaders

Do not teach or explain the passage. A short explanation can end the listening. If someone shares something painful, thank them and let the silence that follows be long. “Keep watch” can sound like a warning, and some people will hear fear in it. If someone says so, thank them and stay with their word. Waiting can be tired and heavy as well as hopeful, and the group can say so.

Scripture quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), which has been dedicated to the public domain. Learn more at berean.bible.