

Review of: *Opening To God, Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer* by David Benner, 2010

It has been a real privilege for me to review David's latest book. This is an absolutely beautiful book from the cover to the content within. The cover has a series of embossed flowers gradually opening – matching the flavor of the book. David writes about prayer as a way of living life, as an invitation to do so, rather than a discipline.

He writes that prayer is the natural language of the soul – as play is to a child – not something the child has to be told to do. He broadens prayer from being something we do like a conversation with God to communion with God. This brings prayer into the core of relating and being with God in many ways.

He invites us to see prayer as our act of consenting to God meeting us in who we really are in a place of honesty and vulnerability. From this place transformation can occur – by allowing God's love to have access to our very depths.

David describes the practice of lectio divina – describing its origins and how to use the four classic paths of prayer in response not only to scripture but all of life. He unpacks each of the paths of attending, pondering, responding and being – and shows how each can be part of how we live life. I was struck by the thought of how in my work as a psychotherapist – this is essentially describes how I am with me clients – attending, pondering, responding and being with them as I open my heart to them and God as we sit in session.

Throughout the book there is an invitation to take up what fits for the individual rather than authoritative direction. This invitation is made practical with suggestions for how we might apply what is written at the finish of each chapter.

David balances prayer as a holistic activity involving words and silence using our minds, heart, soul and spirit.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book as a very beautiful, practical and inspiring way of deepening our relationship with God through prayer and being more open to the transformation of His love.

Charlotte Bell