

Prayer of Examen

OVERVIEW

The Daily Prayer of Examen is a tool developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). **It is a practice of prayerful reflection on the day's events in order to detect the movement of God in all the people and events of our day.** For the disciple maker, *The Prayer of Examen* has many helpful benefits: we become more aware of God and what he is stirring in us; we gain a better understanding of God's perspective and insight; we make better and wiser decisions; and experience more peace and joy.

PREPARE

- Find a place where you are able to reflect on your day with God in solitude and prayer.
- Set aside at least 15 min for the prayer.
- **Recommended to pray *The Examen* at the end of your day**, but you can reflect upon the previous day in the morning if that works best for you.
- You may find that on different days you are drawn to spend more time on certain parts of the prayer and less on others.
- Allow the Spirit to lead the time.

MEDITATE & PRAY

1. ***Become Aware of God's Presence***—Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. If the day seems confusing to you, like a blur, ask God to bring clarity and understanding.
2. ***Review the Day with Gratitude***—Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did and the people you interacted with:
 - What did you receive from these people?
 - What did you give them?
 - How was God in the smallest of details?

3. ***Pay Attention to Your Emotions***—One of St. Ignatius's great insights is that our emotions can be gateways into understanding how God wants to move and work in our lives.

- Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. *Joy? Resentment? Boredom? Compassion?*
- How do you think God wants you to respond to these emotions? If *joy*, perhaps gratitude; if *fear*, maybe trust; if *conviction*, probably repentance.
- God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Take note of these instances, but look deeply for other implications.
- Do you have concern for a friend? *That feeling may indicate that you should not only pray but also reach out to her in some way.*

4. ***Choose One Feature of the Day and Pray for It***—Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of joy or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. ***Look Toward Tomorrow***—Ask God to give you insight for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delight and anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask Him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

