

Prayer of Examen



Overview

The Daily Examen, a Prayer Tool developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), 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.

Getting Started

Find a place where you are able to reflect on your day with God in prayer. Try to set aside 15 minutes for the prayer each day. Many people choose to pray the Examen at the end of the day. 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 yourself to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit.

These are the five major components of the Examen Prayer:

1. Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—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, the people you interacted with.

- What did you receive from these people?
 - What did you give them?
 - Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, the seemingly small pleasures in your day. God is in the details.
3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions.
- Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion?
 - What is God saying through these feelings?
 - God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you to consider a new direction in some area of your work?
 - Are you concerned about 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 pleasure 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 delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask Him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

Other Options



Reimagining the Examen app is based on Mark E. Thibodeaux's book, *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen*, which offers 34 adaptable versions of the Examen. It provides step-by-step guidance, and gives users the ability to choose from one of the themed Examen that best fits their current need, situation, or state of being.