

Prayer of Examen

The prayer of Examen (also known as “examination of consciousness”) has been a regular daily practice for centuries amongst many Christians. It is a practice that allows us to reflect and remember. This practice gives us the space to remember the moments we saw God during the day, where we experienced love and grace and where we extended that love and grace to others. This practice also gives us the opportunity to reflect on moments that we responded out of brokenness and highlights our need for God’s grace and forgiveness.

Examen can be done alone or in a group setting. To engage this practice, find a comfortable setting that is quiet. Acknowledge that you are in God’s presence, perhaps through a brief prayer or reflecting on a short text like, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Allow for some silence then begin reflecting on the following questions one at a time allowing for silence and reflection after each question. The silence between each question can be as short as a couple minutes and as long as several minutes.

Here are some of the questions to consider. It is not necessary to ask all of them each time.

- For what moment today am I most grateful?
- For what moment today am I least grateful?

- When did I give the most love today?
- When did I give the least love today?

- When did I receive the most love today?
- When did I receive the least love today?

- What was the most life-giving part of my day?
- What was the most life-thwarting part of my day?

- When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others, myself and creation?
- When did I have the least sense of connection?

- Where was I aware of living out of the fruit of the Spirit?
- Where was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit?¹

Your time can come to a conclusion with a simple prayer of thanksgiving to God. If you are doing Examen with a group, your time could be wrapped up with a prayer by the facilitator and then you could open it up for conversation around each person’s experience and in what ways God led them to reflect on different moments of their day.

¹ Most of these questions were taken from *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us* by Adele Calhoun