

Prayer of Examen

The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. The Examen is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole experience.

The method presented here is adapted from a technique described by Ignatius Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises. St. Ignatius thought that the Examen was a gift that came directly from God, and that God wanted it to be shared as widely as possible. One of the few rules of prayer that Ignatius made for the Jesuit order was the requirement that Jesuits practice the Examen twice daily—at noon and at the end of the day. It's a habit that Jesuits, and many other Christians, practice to this day.

Step 1: Relax and become aware of God's presence

Step 2: **Consolations**

Awareness – ask God to show you the moment today for which you are the most grateful, which gave you strength, in which you felt the most energized and alive, etc. Sometimes it is helpful to mentally walk through your day. If more than one comes to mind choose one to focus on.

Experience – step back into this experience and enjoy it again. Let God give you life through the remembrance. Thank God for this consolation.

Discernment – ask God to show what about this moment that made it life-giving to you. You may want to journal what he shows you. If he doesn't show you anything simply rest in his love.

Step 3: **Desolations**

Awareness – ask God to show you the moment today for which you are the least grateful, where you experienced sadness, shame, failure or anger, where you felt energy being drained from you, etc.

Experience – step back into the experience and relive it without trying to change it or fix it. Revisit the pain. Be honest with your emotions. This would be a good place to journal your emotions.

Discernment – ask God what it was about the moment that made me feel that way. If you journal you may want to write down what he shows you during this time. Then ask God to comfort you and fill you with his love and sit in silence for a while.

Step 4: **Thankfulness**

Thank God for whatever you have experienced throughout the day, realizing “that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
Romans 8:28

For further reading check out these books:

Prayer as a Place by Charles Bello

Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster