

The Prayer of Examen is an exercise in remembering and paying attention to God. You are invited, through four portions (presence, gratitude, review, response) to concentrate on experiences and relationships from the past 24 hours. The beauty of the practice is the simplicity; it is more a guide than a prescription. If some part feels especially important on a given day, feel free to spend all or most of your time in that portion. The purpose is to increase awareness and sensitivity, not to finish or accomplish a task.

Begin by finding a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Relax, close your eyes.

1. RECALL YOU ARE THE PRESENCE OF GOD

As you sit in silence, focus on God's deep and abiding love for you. We are always in the presence of God. Try to become aware of God's presence in an attentive way. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recall your day with love - to help you look at your actions and attitudes and motives with honesty and patience. "When the Spirit of truth comes He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

2. RECALL YOUR DAY WITH GRATITUDE

Give thanks to God for the gifts of today . . . special pleasures like a good night's sleep, the smell of the morning coffee, a hug from a friend, a good meal, or lesson learned. As you move in gratitude through the details of your day, give thanks to God for His presence in the big and the small things of your life.

3. REVIEW YOUR DAY

Go back to the start of your day and allow it to play like a short movie in your mind. Pay attention to the details. What were your feelings? What motivated you to respond to certain situations in the way that you did? The purpose of this is to draw out the positive and the negative aspects of your day.

As you are reviewing your day, ask:

- When did I sense the activity of God in my life? What were the most life-giving moments?
- When did I live out the love of Jesus?
- Were there times when I felt my heart was out of alignment with God's?
- Were there moments when I lived out of fear, anger, or bitterness?
- Were there things I avoided?

4. RECONCILE AND RESOLVE

Talk with Jesus about your day. Share your thoughts on your actions, attitudes, feelings, and interactions. You may feel led to seek forgiveness, ask for direction, share a concern, or express gratitude. There may be an area where you've felt challenged on or some action you feel you need to take out of this time. Resolve with Jesus to move forward in action where appropriate.