

When were you resisting?

What habits and life patterns do you notice from the past day?

Response

Having spent time remembering, it seems natural to want to respond in some way. Take time to journal or pray, expressing your thoughts on the actions, attitudes, feelings, and interactions you've remembered as a part of this exercise.

You might need to seek forgiveness, ask for direction, share a concern, express gratitude, or resolve to make changes and move forward. Allow your observations to guide your responses.

Beginning today, how do you want to live your life differently?

What patterns do you want to keep living tomorrow?

Possible closing prayer

Ever-present Father, help me to meet you in the Scriptures I read and the prayers I say; in the bread I break and the meals I share; in my investments at work and my enjoyments at play; and in the neighbours and family I welcome, love, and serve, for your sake and that your love and peace may reign now and forever. Amen.



The Examen

Christian meditation involves becoming detached from the controlling and wearying influences of the world and attached to the living God through Christ. Such a 'coming away' better enables us to live for God and with God each and every day. Indeed, there are some simple practices we can all practice daily, even when in the midst of stressful situations.

You might like to begin using one of the breathing prayers .

For example; Maranatha (Aramaic for 'Come Lord Jesus') or the ancient 'Jesus Prayer work as follows:

In Breath—Ma

Out breath—ra

In Breath—na

Out breath—tha

The Jesus Prayer

In Breath—Lord Jesus Christ

Out breath—Son of God

In Breath—have mercy on me

Out breath— a sinner

The Prayer of Examen

The Prayer of Examen is a daily spiritual exercise typically credited to St. Ignatius of Loyola [1491-1556], who encouraged fellow followers to engage in the practice for developing a deeper level of spiritual sensitivity and for recognizing and receiving the assistance of the Holy Spirit. At the heart of the practice is increasingly becoming aware of God's presence and the Holy Spirit's movement throughout your day.

Practicing the Prayer of Examen

This Prayer of Examen is primarily an exercise in remembering. One is invited, through four portions [presence, gratitude, review, and response], to concentrate on experiences and encounters from the past 24 hours. The beauty of the practice is its simplicity; it is more a guide than a prescription. If some portion feels especially important on a given day, feel the freedom 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.

For this practice

- A comfortable and relatively quiet location is likely most conducive for reflecting
 - The experience doesn't need to be a certain length—as little as ten minutes could be sufficient, and you could spend more time on certain portions compared to others
 - Some people find it helpful to journal your thoughts and recollections or to write out what you notice during your times of prayer
 - The Examen consists of 4 sections: Presence, Gratitude, Review, Response
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Presence

Begin this practice by recognizing the presence of God. Remind yourself of God's presence with you and His desire to be with you. *Use one of the breathing prayers to still yourself*

Gratitude

"If the only prayer you say in your entire life is 'Thank You,' wrote Meister Eckhart, "that would suffice."

As you think about the past 24 hours, what causes you to be thankful? Look back over the past day, the big and small aspects of life, and recognize what reasons you have to be grateful. Focus on these experiences and encounters, helping your mind and spirit centre on the goodness and generosity of God.

If you're using a journal, consider capturing your thanks in writing, expressing words of gratitude. Find encouragement and reminders of God's goodness, and be thankful.

Looking back over the past 24 hours, for what are you most grateful? What makes you feel thankful?

Review

Over-packed lives can rob us of the opportunity to learn from the past, to see how yesterday might inform today.

"Where did the time go?!" we ask ourselves, often struggling to remember what we did just a week ago. Here we can benefit again from taking time to look back over the past 24 hours. By intentionally reviewing our interactions, responses, feelings and intentions, we can avoid letting days speed by. We can pause to learn more about ourselves and about God's activity in our lives.

Try to look back objectively as you review. Rather than interpreting, justifying, or rationalizing, the intent is to observe and remember. Allow your mind to wander the situations you've been in and to notice details. The questions in this exercise should help you bring specific experiences to mind.

When or where in the past 24 hours were you cooperating most fully with God's action in your life?