

# Prayer of the Examen

*“O Lord, you have searched me and known me.”*

*Psalms 139:1*



The Prayer of Examen is a daily spiritual exercise developed by St. Ignatius Loyola. This practice seeks to grow followers of Jesus in their capacity to find God in all things and enhance their understanding of God’s good creation. The prayer may take between ten and twenty minutes.

Either individually or as a family, set aside some time at the end of your day to experience the presence of God.

Find a quiet place to sit comfortably where you won’t be disturbed.

You may want to light a candle as a reminder of the presence of God.

*SOLI DEO GLORIA*

## ***1. Recall you are in 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.

## ***2. Recall your day with gratitude***

After a few moments, remember the small pleasures of your day; things like a good night's sleep, a good conversation, or a beautiful sunset. *These are all gifts from God.* As you remember these small gifts, take a moment to reflect on the gifts that you gave today, whether to God or to others. How did you bring your strengths, your abilities, your encouragement, or your patience to others? When you have finished, pause briefly and thank God for His goodness.

## ***3. Ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit***

In a moment you will begin to retrace the steps of your day. Before you do, ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your mind. The Spirit will lead and guide you into the truth of your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit for the capacity to recall your day with clarity and an understanding of your limitations.

#### **4. Review your day**

This is the central and longest step of the prayer. 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, ask the question, “Where did I fail today?” Was there a moment when you lived out of anger or bitterness? Were there things you avoided? Don’t allow yourself to dwell on these things or seek to resolve them. Simply allow yourself to identify them and move on.

Next, ask the question, “When did I love?” Was there a moment, or several, in which you made the choice to live out of love? Perhaps it was a kind act like holding the door or spending intentional time with your family. Remember the ways that you chose to love this day.

Next, search for any patterns or habits during the course of the day. Do you make coffee at the same time? Do you chat for a few minutes with a co-worker? Are you always staying late? As you detect these patterns, what emotions do you sense? Do these habits help you or hinder you from facing your day with love?

## **5. Reconcile and Resolve**

Finally, picture yourself seated next to Jesus, talking as you would with a friend. Maybe there was something in your day that you don't feel good about. Allow yourself to feel the sorrow in your heart as you share this, but also remember and give thanks for Christ's continual restoration of your heart. Remember all of the good moments of your day and thank Jesus for his presence with you in those moments.

## **6. Pray the Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

## **7. Pray Luther's Prayer**

*I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.*

