

The Examen

The Examen is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

1

Ask God for light.

I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.

2

Give thanks.

The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.

3

Review the day.

I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.

4

Face your shortcomings.

I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.

5

Look toward the day to come.

I ask where I need God in the day to come

Centering Prayer

This is a way to be still in God. To tune out from the world's noise and the noise of our own busy thoughts, and instead fix our gaze on Jesus.

1

Positioning.

Settle physically into a peaceful, undistracted location and make yourself physically comfortable. Prayerfully choose a word or phrase that feels meaningful in this season of your spiritual walk. The word itself will not be the focus of your meditation but merely a tool for returning your attention to God. Then set a timer for the amount of time you wish.

2

Noticing.

As you enter into your time of prayer, you will soon become aware of a host of thoughts attempting to hijack your attention. This is not an enemy to be resisted as much as a habit to become aware of. We are habituated to constantly assess, brood, plan, and evaluate...so simply pay attention to your thoughts without being owned by our thoughts. Learn to notice your thought sequences with neither judgment nor attachment.

3

Returning.

Once you notice the thought that wants to dominate, your invitation is to release it and return your inner gaze to God's presence. This is where your word or phrase comes into play; the brief inner repetition of this word gently leads us back from wherever our minds were trying to take us, back into the present moment where we are with God.

4

Confirming.

Once your prayer time is up, take a brief moment to gently reawaken to the world. Invite a deeper breath, wiggle your fingers and toes, and softly give thanks for these minutes of being without doing. A good way to seal this practice and confirm God's activity is by saying the Lord's Prayer aloud. Then move on.