

The Examen

Introduction:

The daily examen is a prayer practice that has been used by Christians for hundreds of years. It dates back to a man known as Ignatius of Loyola — who after a critical injury was profoundly impacted by encountering Jesus in prayer. He went on to develop a series of “spiritual exercises” which are still practiced to this day. The Examen is one of these practices. The Examen is a way for you to review your day in the presence of God and to grow in awareness on where God is in your everyday life. This practice is particularly helpful for transition moments in our days — as we move from one task to another. As a result many people will practice the Examen in the evenings, as the final prayer the day. Others will practice it at several moments throughout the day.

Dan Wilt serves with the Vineyard Movement of churches in the US as the Director of Communications & Resource Development. **He has written a really good blog post on the daily Examen and the impact it has had on his life. It also includes lots of useful links:** <https://www.danwilt.com/the-daily-examen/>

1.Video clips you could use in your Small group:

1. **In this Video Dan Wilt explains the heart behind the Daily Examen exercise and talks a little about how it has impacted his life:** <https://youtu.be/hK5NY7WtzqU>
2. **Here Dan Wilt leads us through the five steps of the Daily Examen exercise:** <https://youtu.be/bHnSSmF0HQc>

2.An Examen you could use as part of a Small Group evening:

This particular version is inspired by the writer Ian Adams; its key distinctive is the use of body postures. This approach is helpful in a number of ways: It fits with descriptions of the Examen as not being a prayer of commentary but rather a prayer of experience, noticing and relationship. The use of postures helps us remember and navigate our way through the prayer; even when we feel over-whelmed or tired. It incorporates our physicality and therefore helps ground us in our lived experience. The use of postures helps us pray with our whole being: physically, spiritually and mentally.



Overview:

There will be five postures:

1. We will open our hands as an expression of our openness to the presence of God, and desire to engage in this prayer being led by the Spirit.
2. We will hold our hands to our heart as we look back over the day and allow things to be thankful for to come to our awareness.
3. We will hold our hands to our stomach as we allow strong emotions from the day to come to our attention.
4. We will hold our hands to our lips as we consciously present one element of the day to God.
5. Finally we will return to opening our hands, as we loosen our grasp on the day and look forward to receive from God the graces that are to come.

The Prayer

Let me lead you through this prayer now:

1. Open your hands

Allow yourself to be open and attentive to the presence of God.
Slow your breathing and settle yourself, become still and centred.

2. Hold your hands to your heart

Ask the Spirit to help you remember the day with thanks.
Let events from the day play back to you and allow one moment particularly be bought to your attention.
Treasure it with God.

3. Hands held to stomach

Let the emotions that you have experienced today play back to you.
Allow the Spirit to highlight one particular moment to you.
Stay with that emotion and be curious about where it came from.

4. Hands to lips

Let one element or moment from the day become a prayer. Perhaps a shortcoming you've noticed, or a desire to see change in your life.

5. Open your hands

As a gesture of letting go and taking on a posture of relieving.
Look toward to tomorrow with hope. Let's pray for the coming night and new day.

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and Ian Adams ('Running Over Rocks' Canterbury Press)

