

Prayer of Examen: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice

Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.

Purpose: to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and reflecting on your life as it unfolds each day. To receive Christ we must know him! This practice is inspired and adapted from the spiritual practice "Prayer of Examen" developed by Ignatius of Loyola.*

Steps:

1. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to become calm and centered.
2. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer, seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
3. Spend a few moments recalling your day with gratitude and reverence. Let the details, events and conversations drift through your memory. Identify feelings, emotions, insights or times that touched your heart—either enlivening or disheartening.
 - Gratitude reveals what we value and what brings us joy or meaning.
 - Reverence allows us to see the ordinary parts of our day as sacred opportunities.
4. Choose a feeling, emotion, insight or time in your day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how this may draw you closer to the Living Christ and his invitation.
5. Look forward to the remainder of the day or toward tomorrow. Talk with Jesus like a friend. Be honest and open. Use everyday language. Leave times for silence to listen. Share your feelings. Ask for his help and wisdom about the questions you have, the desires of your heart and the problems you face.

Tips for the Process:

- Request the Holy Spirit to draw you closer to the Living Christ by remembering his promise to always be with you and his invitation to share life with you.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay with only one or two steps. There is no particular length—less or longer than 10 – 20 minutes is fine.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.
- Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- Consider beginning your day with the Mission Prayer then with a Prayer of Examen at noon and before you go to bed.

*See more at Ignatian Spirituality at <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/#sthash.u7RB0O6Q.dpuf> and Pastors and Leaders Field Guide at <http://www.cofchrist.org/leaders/CL-spiritualpractices.asp#2>