

Prayer of Examen

(from the book *with*, by Skye Jethani)

For centuries Christians have set aside time to reflect on the events, encounters, and feelings that have filled their day. With intention they would replay the previous hours and ask themselves questions to uncover the hidden movements of God that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Tips and Suggestions

- The practice of examen often makes the most sense at the close of the day. One suggestion is to begin by reviewing your calendar to bring to mind the events and activities of the day.
- The goal of the examen is not to reflect on what could, should, or ought to have happened, but rather to be honest with yourself, with the Holy Spirit's help, about what *did* happen and how you *actually* felt. At times this will prompt confession of sin, but it is also an opportunity for self-examination and for God to reveal truth about you.
- One filter to use in examining your day involves looking for moments of what Ignatius Loyola called "consolation" – times of moving toward God. The opposite is "desolation" – times of moving away from God.

Here are a few questions to get you started with the practice of examen:

Desolation – the sense of God's absence

When, today, did I sense being drawn away from God?

When did I feel most dissatisfied and restricted today?

Was there any time today when I felt discouraged?

What was the most draining part of my day?

Was there a time today when I felt guilty, ashamed, or lonely?

Consolation – the sense of God's presence

When, today, did I feel the most touched by the presence of God?

What events, relationships, or thoughts of the day drew me closer to God?

When did I feel the most free today?

What was the most life-giving part of my day?

What was most joyful about my day?