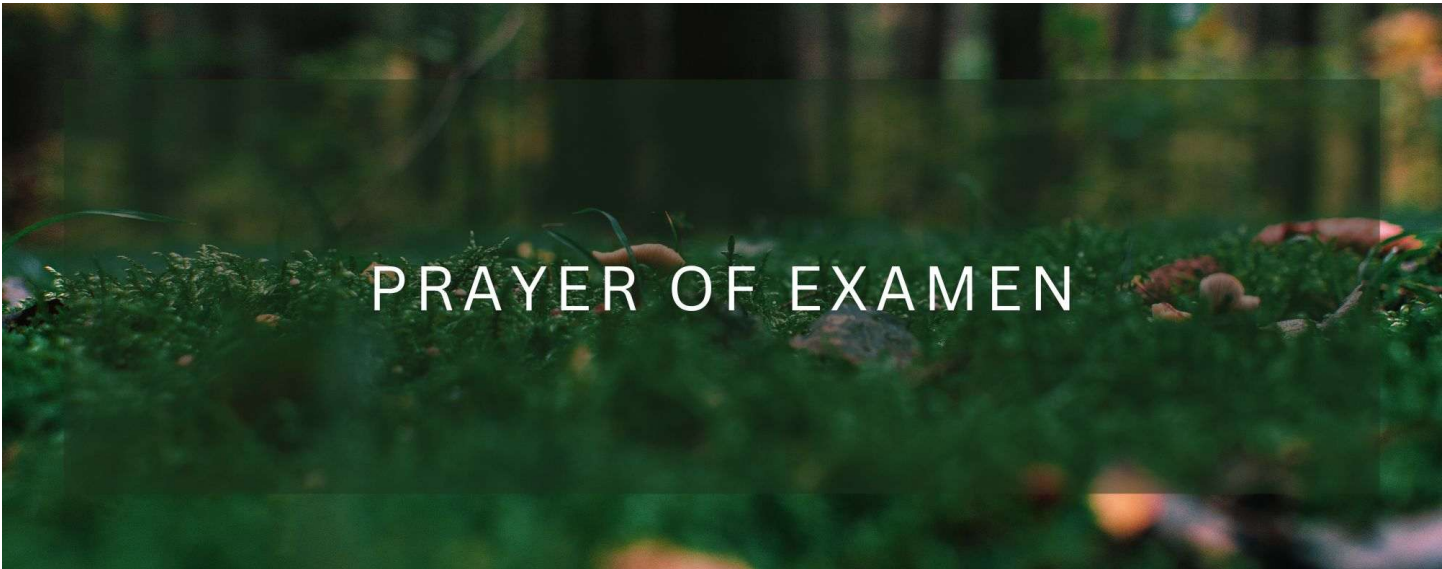




PRAYER OF EXAMEN

A Practice of Noticing, Belonging, & Communion

For centuries, followers of Christ have turned to the Examen as a way of paying attention to how God's presence weaves through ordinary life (Colossians 1:9; Philippians 1:9–10). Rather than a rigid reflection, the Examen invites us into spacious awareness... where instinct, sensation, emotion, and response can be honored with compassion.

This practice creates a tender space for what stirs within us and how we move outward, allowing us to notice the subtle traces of grace that might otherwise be overlooked. It encourages attunement to the interior landscape: the body's cues, emotional textures, and the quiet shifts of the soul. Awareness becomes not a task but a place of meeting, where nothing needs to be fixed before it is seen, and nothing is rushed.

The Examen especially honors those carrying stress, trauma, or emotional fatigue. Instead of pushing for positivity or change, this practice welcomes honesty. It offers choice at every step, making room for both the tender and the resilient parts of ourselves.

At its heart, the Examen gently reveals how the Spirit shapes our becoming... through moments of connection, longing, restlessness, joy, or disruption. Each moment becomes a doorway into communion with God and deeper compassion for ourselves and others.

A Breath to Begin

If it feels supportive, pause and notice your body. You might let your shoulders drop a little or place a hand on your chest or abdomen.

- Let one slow breath arrive.
- Pause at the top, not holding, just noticing.
- Then let the exhale flow in whatever way your body chooses.

Let this breath remind you that you are already held in God's presence. Nothing needs to be earned or achieved here.

The Practice

1. Arrive

If it helps, settle into a position that allows your body to feel as grounded or as open as it wants to be. A candle or light can serve as a small sign of God's nearness.

Prayer of Intention

God, I offer my attention to You.

Let this time open my senses to Your presence in ways that support my growth, healing, and belonging. Illuminate what You desire to show me... not for striving, but for communion.

Pause.

2. Notice What Was Life-Giving

Let the past day come into view at your own pace. You might sense images, emotions, or moments rising. Trust whatever comes and whatever doesn't.

You may explore one of these questions:

- What moment from today seems to shine with warmth, steadiness, or connection?
- What experience felt aligned with who I am becoming?
- What memory from today carries a sense of rootedness or breath?
- What might be stirring in me as I recall a moment where I sensed God's nearness?

Pause.

3. Notice What Was Difficult or Draining

Allow moments of tension, fatigue, confusion, or disconnect to surface without forcing anything. If it helps, keep a simple list of emotional words nearby to support expression.

You may explore:

- What moment rises as heavy, tiring, or unsettling?
- What interaction or thought pulled me away from a sense of connection or grounding?
- What memory feels sharp, unfinished, or tender?
- What might be coming into focus as I acknowledge where I felt distant from myself, others, or God?

Pause.

4. Listen for Meaning and Communion

Bring both the life-giving and the difficult moments before God. Not to explain or fix them, but to let them be held in Divine compassion.

You may reflect with questions like:

- What might God be revealing through what surfaced?
- What desire or longing comes forward as I sit with these moments?
- What support might help me stay connected with God in seasons of comfort, strain, hope, waiting, or uncertainty?
- What movement of care or solidarity might be forming in me toward my community as I reflect on today?

Pause.

5. Rest in Belovedness

Let your body and spirit rest in the awareness that you belong to God. You are formed not through pressure but through participation in Divine love.

You may rest with this prayer:

“God, thank You for being present in every part of this day... seen and unseen.

Stay with me as I walk forward.

Let my steps emerge from Your compassion working within me.”

Fruit of the Examen

These are not goals to accomplish but natural outcomes that often unfold over time:

- Noticing companionship with Jesus through the full range of experience.
- Recognizing the presence of God in ordinary moments.
- Growing in discernment and responsiveness to the Spirit’s compassionate movement.
- Releasing the impulse to guide others from personal certainty and instead strengthen shared listening.
- Cultivating gratitude in ways that feel authentic.
- Becoming aware of tender edges where growth is forming.
- Honoring God-given desires that arise within the heart.
- Recognizing invitations to prayer and communion woven throughout daily life.

May this Examen create space for you to discover the ways God is shaping, healing, and freeing you—moment by moment... in unforced love.

Footnote: This adapted framework draws from the biblical theology of Christian formation and theological anthropology, with conceptual influence from the teachings of Tim Mackie (BibleProject), Barbara Holmes, Howard Thurman, Lisa Sharon Harper, Sheila Wise Rowe and Adele Calhoun.