



ATTENTIVENESS: SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Practice Lab Week #2 Prayer of Examen Guide

“Oh Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me!” (Psalm 139:1)

Overview:

“Examen” is a Latin word that “refers to the tongue, or weight indicator, on a balance scale, hence conveying the idea of an accurate assessment of the true situation” (R. Foster, Prayer.) In the prayer of examen, we find rest for our weary souls and bodies by pausing from our daily activities to bring ourselves before the Lord. We invite Him, through prayer, to help us notice what is true about us (the state of our body, mind, and soul) and to remind us of where we’re experiencing His presence, perhaps in the midst of gratitude or grief.

Prayer Guide - The Examen:

There are many ways to enjoy the prayer of examen, but we will focus on three steps: **pause**, **notice**, and **remember**.

1. Pause

We can find rest for our weary souls and bodies by first simply pausing and stopping our strivings to hear Jesus’s beautiful invitation to us: **“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”** (Matthew 11:28)

Take a few slow, deep breaths as you welcome Jesus into this space and time. He is already here. Perhaps you can say your breath prayer here that you chose in Week 1.

(Example) *Inhale: **Shepherd** Exhale: **Lead me to still waters.***

Or consider choosing a short verse from scripture as your refrain for the day, such as: **“Return to your rest my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.”** (Psalm 116:7), or **“My soul finds rest in God alone.”** (Psalm 62:1)

2. Notice

“In times of solitude, the soul rests in God by simply being with God with what is” (R. Barton). Just as God first cared for Elijah’s physical needs, we allow Him to reveal to us where we might need physical or mental rest.

Take some time now to reflect back on the past 24 hours. As you do so, what do you notice about yourself? Consider the following questions with the Lord, as you take note of what is true about yourself at the moment:

***Oh Lord, could I be holding tension in my body from the strains of this day?
Am I drifting towards being dangerously tired?
Am I carrying trouble and stress in my mind?***

Notice without judgment or criticism; bring it to the Lord. You are safe in His arms.
Lord, this is what's true about me. What are we going to do about it?

Listen to anything He might be saying about the state of your body and mind. Perhaps you sense that you need: a nap; a slow walk around the block to enjoy His creation; time to just keep sitting and relishing His presence.

Repeat your breath prayer or chosen verse again, or perhaps this:
***Breathing in slowly, I receive Your rest, Oh Prince of Peace.
Breathing out slowly, I surrender my worries to You, Oh Father.***

Feel free to simply enjoy the presence of God, focusing on Steps One & Two for as long as you feel led.

3. Remember

We can experience soul rest with God by reflecting and remembering where we have seen Him at work in our lives.

***Lord Jesus, would you remind me now of the ways I have seen Your goodness lately?
Where am I experiencing authentic connection with You and others?
For what moment today am I most grateful?***

Feel free to linger in this time of remembering; spend time thanking Him, the giver of all good gifts.

Next, invite Jesus to show you where you might have missed His presence today, or something that is grieving you that you need to bring before Him.

***Father God, where might I have missed your presence lately?
For what moment today am I least grateful? Help me to find You in that difficult moment, Oh Lord.***

If noticing grief or pain, let yourself experience this, but do so with the awareness that you are not alone. You are in the presence of your Father God who loves you and bears your grief with you. Notice what your soul might need - to read a comforting Psalm, to take a walk, to listen to a worship song, to shed a few tears, and allow that to happen.

Close with your breath prayer or your chosen scripture, thanking God for being with you in every moment.

In Jesus' Mighty Name I pray, Amen.