

PART II: Contemplative Prayer and Prayer of Examen



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BEGIN IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP.

Pray asking the Holy Spirit to direct and guide your time together.

TALK ABOUT LAST WEEK'S PRACTICE.

- Did you pray the Our Father this week? Was it helpful?
- What do you feel that God did in you through the practice of daily prayer?
- What do you think will be your greatest challenge in this practice of prayer?

READ THIS SUMMARY.

More than anything else, prayer is about being in active relationship with a Person. If one understands this, one will quickly recognize how being in an active relationship with a person includes practicing all kinds of communication habits through which the relationship is experienced, grown, deepened, and challenged.

Sometimes this means talking; sometimes it means not saying a word, but sharing moments of silence together; sometimes one shares a walk with a friend; sometimes music is shared; sometimes it means to act for the other, to be of help; sometimes it means listening to the friend, letting the other give or show or teach or lead as the friend wishes.

In short, prayer is not so much about “saying prayers” or learning new prayer “techniques,” but about doing whatever it takes to deepen our friendship with God and safely setting aside time each day to do it. However, being able to learn from others about how to grow in a relationship of friendship -and, in particular, friendship with God- and learn "ways" or "habits" that have helped over the years, is of great importance.

Likewise, something that we want to be very intentional about at Casa Evidencias is that we must also learn to make our relationship with God a regular practice and at least once a week where we can pray together, encouraging each other, relating everyone's spiritual path to our own. In doing so, we are encouraged by the faith of others, we gain knowledge and experience through what others share of their own relationship with God, and we benefit from trained facilitators with a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures and the ways of God.

Questions:

- Is there anything that surprises you about this way of understanding “prayer”? Why?
- Do you experience the Father, Jesus or the Spirit more clearly in private prayer or when you pray in a group? Why?

READ THE BIBLE TOGETHER.

Luke 18:40-43

- Why do you think it is important that we ourselves verbally express to Jesus that **we want to see?**
- What is it that personally **does not let you see what God is doing in your life on a daily basis?**

DO THIS PRACTICE AS A COMMUNITY RIGHT NOW.

THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

- Our practice this week is called “the Examen”. But it is not an exam or test as we normally know it where there is a grade, it’s more of an Examine our experiences of the day, “seeking God”. This practice has four steps.
- Before beginning, turn off or remove everything you have that may be a distraction of the practice, for example cell phones or tv. Have great respect for the challenge of being **fully present** here, now, and in this prayer practice that you will all do together.

Step One: Review the day in your mind and find a moment of blessing.

- Notice where God has been active in the last days of his life. Take a few minutes to practice active recall of the last 24 to 72 hours.
 - Find a moment, however simple or brief it may have been, in which you felt a blessing from God in your life.
 - Thank God for allowing you to experience his blessing.
 - Then share with the group what happened and how that blessing felt when it happened. **Be brief when saying:** “I noticed God yesterday, when it was raining at night. I felt that it was a blessing because when it rains I sleep better and it makes me think that God is watching over me while I sleep.” **Something simple.**

Step Two: Name the strongest feeling you have experienced in the last day.

- This step of actively remembering is not towards to "what happened", but to recognize when in the last days you felt a strong emotion, or the strongest one.
- What particular emotion felt strong? **Give that particular feeling a name:** Joy, Depression, Anger, Delight, Satisfaction, Hope, Shame, Regret, Confusion, Disgust, Compassion, Doubt, Fear, Anxiety, Gratitude, etc.
- Share with the group the strong emotion you experienced. **Just share the emotion, and nothing else.**
- The main goal of Step Two is to notice your strongest reactions to particular things and to wonder with God about those reactions. **"Why did I feel that so strongly?"**
"Does this strong reaction reveal my faith in God, or lack of it?"

Step Three: Share that strong emotion with Jesus.

- **Be honest with Jesus** about what “caused” this strong emotion in your life, **and try to name precisely what particular feeling he felt.**
- **Ask Jesus** if He ever felt the same as you felt when he lived on earth like us.
- You can go to a passage in the Gospels (optional), in which you think He reacted as you did. Read that text to yourself and explore Jesus' response. (If you don't know any passages, look in the concordance or ask your facilitator.)

- **Think**, did Jesus react like I did or differently?

Step Four: Close with prayer and action.

- Close by praying based on the last point.
 - If your strongest emotion was that you yelled at your parent, friend, or teacher, Ask God for forgiveness and for him to give you the courage to ask that person for forgiveness the next day.
 - If your strongest emotion was joy. Thank God for being good.
 - If your strongest emotion was anxiety. Ask the Father to remind you that he is in control of everything.
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READ THE PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK.

THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

- Each day from now on, spend ten or fifteen minutes at the end of your day (**but before you get too sleepy**) to practice the Examen.
- The key to this practice is to **keep practicing it every day!**
- Follow the four steps above.
- Here's an easy way to remember it. **You can also download the file on the website to print and stick next to your bed.**

Review - God's blessings during the day and give thanks.

Name - The strongest emotion you felt during the day.

Share - With Jesus that emotion, and think about how Jesus would react.

Act - Based on that emotion. Towards God, and towards someone you have hurt or hurt (if that is the case)

TO END.

- Prayer is being in relationship with God. **So the goal is that we can create a daily rhythm of prayer**, in which we can enjoy the company of the father.
- This week try to create the following rhythm:
 - Pray based on The Lord's Prayer in the morning from Monday to Friday.
 - Pray the Exam at night.

BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS.

- Now we are going to divide into the same small groups as last week and we are going to ask:
 - How was your practice last week.
 - At what time from Monday to Friday are you going to pray The Lord's pRayer?
 - At what time are you going to do the prayer of Examen at night.

PRAY BASED ON THE PRACTICE TO END.