

PRAYER 1 HANDOUT

“True, whole prayer is nothing but love.” –St. Augustine

Why pray?

1. Prayer is an intimate conversation with God
2. Prayer as God’s power flowing to his people

Excuses not to pray

1. God doesn’t care about me
2. God really isn’t able to answer prayers

Warnings

1. Legalism
2. Overly permissive

“The paradox of prayer is that it asks for a serious effort while it can only be received as a gift. We cannot plan, organize or manipulate God; but without a careful discipline, we cannot receive him either.” –Henri Nouwen

Three movements in prayer:

- Inward – transformation of our heart
- Upward – intimacy with God
- Outward – ministry for others

Inward prayer – prayer to transform our hearts

- Dealing with our true selves, the good, the bad and the ugly

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Inward prayer example: The Prayer of Examen

1. An honest assessment of our lives
2. Consciousness – becoming more aware of God’s presence
3. Conscience – an opportunity for healing
4. A prayer to remember and reflect

PRAYER 1 DISCUSSION GUIDE

Discussion starters:

1

What is your previous experience with prayer?

2

What excuses have you used to avoid praying?

3

What is your experience with formal, written prayers? Spontaneous prayers? Which do you prefer? Why?

4

How do you feel about being introspective? About being examined by people? By God?

5

Reread John 8:32. Do you believe truth can set you free? Why or why not?

End your discussion time with prayer. You may want to ask God for a clearer understanding of his loving examination.

PRAYER 1 DISCUSSION GUIDE

This Week

Consider ending your day with the Prayer of Examen. You may find this guided examen helpful.

Begin by asking for the light of the Holy Spirit to see through God's eyes ...

- Review the gifts you received during the day that you can be thankful for.
- Ask where you saw God working in your life during the day. Consider where you cooperated with God today. Consider where you cooperated with the sinful aspects within you and not with where God was working.
- Ask for forgiveness for the times when you were not attentive and responsive to God's presence and love in your life. Know God will certainly forgive you!
- Ask God's help to guide you through tomorrow and ask for the Spirit to be with you.