

Rhythm of Life Followup

If your group hasn't had a chance to fill out and share their Rhythm of Life, make sure you do that this week.

Also make sure that everyone submits a version online. That way, we can provide you with each person's content so you can better support the group in their rhythm of life. (<http://bit.ly/voxrhythmoflife>)

Each week also spend some time reviewing areas of your rhythm of life. Here are some sample questions that can help people reflect and share how they're doing. It might help for you to answer a couple to give them direction on how to share.

1. What's one area of growth you saw this past week?
2. What's one area of improvement you need or need to focus on?
3. What's something that you learned this week?
4. Did you do anything different or changed the way you lived this week?

Prayer of Examen Background

The Prayer of Examen is a daily spiritual exercise developed by St. Ignatius Loyola. This practice seeks to grow followers of Jesus in their capacity to discern God's will, find God in all things, and enhance their understanding of God's good creation. The prayer may take between ten and twenty minutes. The majority of that time will be spent reviewing your day. Try not to dwell too long on thoughts. Instead, allow yourself to become aware and move on.

Prayer of Examen (10-15 minutes)

Begin by finding a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Then sit comfortably, with good posture and both feet on the floor. Allow yourself to relax and close your eyes if you like.

1. Recall you are in the presence of God

As you sit in silence, focus on God's deep and abiding love for you. We are always in the presence of God. Try to become aware of God's presence in an attentive way. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recall your day with love and to let you look on all you see with love. (-- pause --)

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (-- pause --)

2. Recall your day with gratitude

Now remember the small pleasures of the last day; things like a good night's sleep, a good conversation, the smell of morning coffee, the laugh of a child. These are all gifts from God. As you remember these small gifts from God, take a moment to reflect on the gifts that you gave today, whether to God or to others. How did you bring your strengths, your sense of humor, your abilities, your encouragement, your patience to others today? When you have finished, pause briefly and thank God for these things. (-- pause --)

3. Ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit

In a moment you will begin to retrace the steps of your day. Before you do, ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your mind. The Spirit will lead and guide you into the truth and mystery of your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit for the capacity to recall your day with clarity and an understanding of your limitations. (-- pause --)

4. Review your day

[This is the central and longest step of the prayer.] Now go back to the start of your day yesterday and allow it to play like a short movie in your mind. Pay attention to the details. What were your feelings? What motivated you to respond to certain situations in the way that you did? The purpose of this is to draw out the positive and the negative aspects of your day.

-- pause --

As you are reviewing your day, ask the question, "Where did I fail today?" Was there a moment when you lived out of anger or bitterness? Were there things that you avoided? Don't allow yourself to dwell on these things or seek to resolve them. Simply allow yourself to identify them and move on.

-- pause --

Next, ask the question, "When did I love?" Was there a moment, or several moments, in which you made the choice to live out of love. Perhaps it was a kind act like holding the door or spending intentional time with your family. Remember the ways that you chose to love this day.

-- pause --

Next, search for any patterns or habits during the course of the day. Do you make coffee at the same time? Do you chat for a few minutes with a certain neighbor [co-worker]? Are you always watching TV at a certain time [staying late at work]? As you detect these patterns, what emotions do you sense coming to the surface for each habit? Do these habits help you face your day with love? Do they hinder you from facing your day with love?

(-- pause --)

5. Reconcile and Resolve

Finally, picture yourself seated next to Jesus, talking as you would with a friend. Maybe there was something in your day that you don't feel good about. Tell Jesus about this and express your disappointment and ask him to be with you when you face that moment again. Allow yourself to feel the sorrow in your heart as you share this, but also remember and give thanks for Christ's continual restoration of your heart. Remember all of the good moments of your day and thank Jesus for His presence with you in those moments. (-- pause --)

6. End with the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins, As we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Lectio Background

[Only if you need to give some context for Lectio if those in your group are unfamiliar with it or haven't done it before.]

Lectio Divina ("Divine Reading") has been likened to "Feasting on the Word." It's a contemplative approach to engaging Scripture. Hearing it multiple times and reflecting on it allows the text to speak to our current environment and context. The goal is to listen to the Scriptures and have it shape how we live currently. (This approach allows people with different backgrounds or who are at different places in their faith to be able to engage the text together collectively).

There are four movements to this practice. The four parts are first taking a bite (Lectio), then chewing on it (Meditatio). Next is the opportunity to savor the essence of it (Oratio). Finally, the Word is digested and made a part of the body (Contemplatio).

Lectio Passages

We are using the Lectionary calendar to determine the passage of Scripture we reflect on (<http://www.textweek.com>). Feel free to select any of the four passages for the current week.

Lectio Divina

Select one of the passages to reflect on and follow the directions below. Make sure you allow time to reflect in between each reading – don't rush! Allow time for silence and reflection, even if it seems awkward.

- 1. Lectio** – This first movement consists of reading the scriptural passage slowly and attentively. Identify words or phrases in the passage that grab your attention. (*Read the entire passage once*)
- 2. Meditatio** – Next, spend some time contemplating the passage and the words or phrases that stood out upon first reading. Try 'praying the passage', opening your mind to God's understanding of this passage. (*Read the passage again*)
- 3. Oratio** – After another reading, share with each other the words that you focused on and perhaps the result of your meditation on them. (*Read the passage and then have an extended time of sharing – see below*)

After the 3rd reading, use the following questions to draw some discussion from the passage and what people were reflecting on.

- a. What words or phrases stood out to you from this passage? Why?**
- b. How does this text speak to you in your current situation and environment?**
- c. What is the text calling you to do or become this week? (How do I need to live in light of this scripture?)**

- 4. Contemplatio** – Close by reading the passage a final time, try to 'savor' the words and thoughts shared earlier. (*Read the passage one last time*)

Prayer

Close your time in prayer for any application that came from Lectio or for anything specific to Rhythm of Life, and also allow space for any personal areas that require care and prayer.