

Questions for Conversations

Below are two different paths. The first is somewhat standard fare for this exercise. At the bottom of this is a reworking of the pattern Ignatius of Loyola suggested to people he was discipling. It is called the prayer of examen and has been around in the church for about 500 years. It is one of the ways that we can work on being increasingly sensitive to the Holy Spirit (having our eyes open).

Where has God spoken to you in the last week?

Where is your greatest need for open eyes?

Is it to realize what time it is, that we are in the last days?

How does this reality change how you see the world, or how you feel?

Is it regarding the reality of the spiritual realm around us?

How might being aware of this dimension change your day?

Is it about the spiritual war that rages around us?

What is an appropriate response to the awareness of the war?

Is it about the real needs of people around you?

Who has God put in your life that you are to be a vessel that he can use to help open their eyes?

Rob said that in the last days we will all need Wisdom, Discernment, Faithfulness, Perseverance, and Trust. Which do you feel is your greatest need right now?

How can you (as an individual or as a group) address this need?

Spend some time asking God to open your eyes.

Pray for the other needs you have.

1. Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.