

BEVERAGES AND BIBLES

“Go where your best prayers take you.”

— Frederick Buechner

Introduction Question - What's your favorite fall activity?

Question: What is prayer?

- “If the only prayer you said was thank you, that would be enough.” - Meister Eckhart
- "Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden." - Corrie Ten Boom
- “Prayer is an act of love; words are not needed. Even if sickness distracts from thoughts, all that is needed is the will to love.” - St. Teresa of Avila
- "God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer." - Mother Teresa

Question: Do you pray for specific things to happen? What things are ok to pray for? When could prayer be inappropriate?

- “Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one” - Bruce Lee
- "The reality is, my prayers don't change God. But, I am convinced prayer changes me. Praying boldly boots me out of that stale place of religious habit into authentic connection with God....” - Lysa TerKeurst
- “The man who prays is the one who thinks that god has arranged matters all wrong, but who also thinks that he can instruct god how to put them right.” - Christopher Hitchens
- “Never pray for justice, because you might get some.” - Margaret Atwood

Question: Lyliah Skinner, a Parkland school shooting survivor, said in an interview, "I feel like as our legislators and leaders, they shouldn't be offering prayers and words, we need action." How should prayer relate to action?

- "The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays." - Soren Kierkegaard
- "I prayed for freedom for twenty years, but received no answer until I prayed with my legs." - Frederick Douglass
- "Pray, and let God worry." - Martin Luther
- "If you want your prayers answered, get up off your knees and do something about them." - Wally Lamb

Question: In 2016, a grandmother in Brazil learned that the statute she thought was of St. Antony was actually Elrond, a character from the Lord of the Rings¹. In the Catholic church, St. Anthony is the patron saint of the poor and described by st.anthony.org as, "what every Christian's life is meant to be; a steady courage to face the ups and downs of life, the call to love and forgive, to be concerned for the needs of others, to deal with crisis great and small, and to have our feet solidly on the ground of total trusting love and dependence on God". Elrod was described by JRR Tolkien as, "noble and fair as an elf-lord, as strong as a warrior, as wise as a wizard, as venerable as a king of dwarves, and as kind as summer." Does it matter than the grandmother was praying to a Lord of The Rings action figure?

Does it matter who we pray to?

- "The world is my church. My actions are my prayer. My behavior is my creed." - Steve Maraboli
- "That's the beautiful mystery: we have a God who chooses to need us. We have a God who doesn't want to change the world without us. We have a God who longs to cooperate with us, to allow us to fail and flounder and who promises to make up for our shortcomings, but nonetheless wants us." - Shane Claiborne

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/38531888/grandma-accidentally-prays-to-elrond-from-lord-of-the-rings>

- “I pray for all of us, oppressor and friend, that together we may succeed in building a better world through human understanding and love, and that in doing so we may reduce the pain and suffering of all sentient beings.” - The Dalai Lama

Question: What role does prayer play in making a decision? When do you know you’ve prayed about/for something enough?

- “Proceed with much prayer, and your way will be made plain.” - John Wesley
- “Under certain circumstances, profanity provides a relief denied even to prayer.” - Mark Twain
- “I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no where else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.” - Abraham Lincoln
- “I don't pray because it makes sense to pray. I pray because my life doesn't make sense without prayer.” - Noah Benshea

Question: How would you, or would you, teach someone to pray?

- Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”
Jesus told them, “When you pray, say:
‘Father, uphold the holiness of your name.
Bring in your kingdom.
Give us the bread we need for today.
Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who has wronged us.
And don’t lead us into temptation.’”
- Luke 11:1-4
- “When I pray for another person, I am praying for God to open my eyes so that I can see that person as God does, and then enter into the stream of love that God already directs toward that person.” - Philip Yancey

- “The most powerful thought is a prayerful thought. When I'm praying for you, I am praying for my own peace of mind. I can only have for myself what I am willing to wish for you.” - Marianne Williamson
- “The most powerful movement of feeling with a liturgy is the prayer which seeks for nothing special, but is a yearning to escape from the limitations of our own weakness and an invocation of all Good to enter and abide with us.” - George Eliot
- “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”
- St. Francis of Assisi



the EXAMEN

The *Examen* is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1** Ask God for light.
I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.
- 2** Give thanks.
The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.
- 3** Review the day.
I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.
- 4** Face your shortcomings.
I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.
- 5** Look toward the day to come.
I ask where I need God in the day to come.

Version of the Examen from *A Simple Life-Changing Prayer* by Jim Manney © Loyola Press