

### For every meeting

We give suggestions for each week's group meeting, but it is up to you to organise how you feel best. Feel free to move things around, omit or add things; you must feel comfortable with your meeting.

Begin with tea and biscuits while people gather and are welcomed.

You might like to set the scene with a centrepiece, maybe a candle and cloth of Lenten colours.

### Examen

1. Opening Prayer – Take a couple of minutes of quiet prayer to ask God, the Spirit and or Christ to be with you during the meeting and to speak to the heart of each person in the group.

#### 2. Sharing

Ask each individual to go over their prayer times this week and share what they are comfortable with.

- How did they find praying the Scripture or with art
- Did time seem to drag, or did it go quickly?
- Did anything surprise them?
- Did any of the Scripture passages or other meditations have any special meaning for them?
- How did you feel over the week?
- What is God saying to you?

#### 3. Examen

- Stilling: Begin with one of the stilling exercises you did at the beginning of the retreat.
- Awareness of God: Become aware you are in the presence of God. Dedicate this time to God.
- Light: Ask God to shine a light into your heart so that looking back over the week you may be able to see God at work.

(You may well like to use one audio examens on Pathways to God. Otherwise lead your own examen.)

- Review: Look over the week, starting from when we last met as a group.

Be aware of your thoughts, words and action, and the words and actions of those you came into contact with.

Look too at your times of prayer.

How do you feel? What are you aware of that is memorable. Memorable either as exciting or joyful or in sadness or dullness.

- Thanks: What might God thank you for this week? Give thanks for that.
- Regrets: Did you turn away from God or those in need during the week? Is there anything you feel unhappy about?

Ask pardon for any wrong you may have done or opportunities to love you have missed.

Looking Forward: Look forward to next week. How might you make the best of next week.

Pray that you will be aware of the presence of the Loving God.

*Take a Break:* As this is a particularly personal prayer, you may feel it best not to share after it.

However, it might seem fine to ask how people feel now, did they find it useful.

4. Looking Forward – Make sure the time and venue etc. of the next meeting is clear. Thank everyone for coming.

### **Leader's Notes: Examen**

'Examen' is merely the Spanish word for examine, but it is used for a daily review of life which was popularised by the Spaniard, Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises.

The presumption behind the examen is that God wants us to live life to the full. He desires that we choose those things that bring us life and joy.

Of course, as St Francis of Assisi reminds us, it is in giving that we receive. We are most joyful when we are serving God and others.

We are most at peace when we have a good conscience.

This prayer encourages us to become aware of the link between our feelings and our actions.

We look over the actions of the day and see which brought us joy and consolation, which left us empty and desolate.

We can then seek to repeat the good and reject the bad - we seek to move to joy and consolation.

The Pathways to God website contains several different type of examen. The shorter of these have been included in this retreat, but you might like to use some of the longer styles of examen too. There are also several audio versions of the examen if you would prefer to use these in your meeting, and a video version.

See <https://www.pathwaystogod.org/my-prayer-life/examen>

