

Contemplative Prayer

It is recommended that officers refresh their prayer life often. This can be done by following a devotional (the pastor has plenty of recommendations therein), by praying together with a friend or partner, and/or by engaging in contemplative prayer. When doing so, a private “prayer closet” is recommended, as is setting a timer for no less than 20 minutes. If you do not have time for 20 minutes of prayer because your life is too hectic, you should probably set a timer for 40 minutes! Below are four popular contemplative prayer methods.

1. **St. Ignatius’ Examen (An Evening Ritual)** - an invitation to find the movement of God in all the people and events of our day. The Examen is simply a set of introspective prompts for prayer. Begin with a pause and a slow, deep breath or two; become aware that you are in the presence of God. Then work through the following prayerfully:
 - a. Thanksgiving - Recognize God’s work this past day, what you are grateful for, the love you have received, the grace that has been present, the work of the Spirit in you, etc.
 - b. Petition - Ask for the light to know God and yourself from God’s viewpoint
 - c. Review - Walk through your day, noticing where you felt closer and further to God. Where did you find joy? Trouble and challenge? When did you pause and turn to God?
 - d. Response - Respond to a prompting of the Spirit over the past day and pray over it in depth. Ask for conviction of sin, appreciation of God’s glory, reconciliation, etc.
 - e. A Look Ahead - Pray over the day to come, ask God to be with you through it. Walk through it and reflect how God may be at work in it.
 - f. Close with the Lord’s Prayer
2. **Centering Prayer**
 - a. Choose a word, phrase, or image from Scripture that can represent your consent to God's presence and action. Or simply find the stillness within yourself.
 - b. Sit comfortably with your back straight, close your eyes and settle yourself.
 - c. Introduce the sacred word or stillness.
 - d. When engaged with your thoughts, gently return to the sacred word.
 - e. Continue to sit quietly, resting in God's presence.
3. **Lectio Divina**
 - a. Read (Lectio) - Choose a passage from the Bible and read it out loud, slowly, and without hurry
 - b. Meditate (Meditatio) - Focus on a word or phrase that stands out to you
 - c. Pray (Oratio) - Respond to the text and to God
4. **Take deep breaths longer than you'd think** - if all else fails, sit back and breathe deeply and repeatedly until your mind is cleared. This may feel like forced hyperventilation until you find your flow. Feel free to press yourself but don't go overboard.