

Time Apart

By Chip Borgstadt



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Sometimes we need time apart to focus on what we have together. Invite the Spirit to guide your thoughts and soften your heart.

For

Adult, Couple

Season

Winter

Needed

Bible; quiet place for individual prayer and reflection; information sheet: [The Prayer of Examen](#)

Prepare in Advance

Make a copy of [The Prayer of Examen](#).

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer to begin.

Spirit of gentleness, guide my thoughts and meditations. May they be acceptable to you. Amen.

2. Challenges happen in any relationship. Sometimes people need to agree to take a time away from each other to sort out their thoughts and feelings. During a time of individual reflection, you can intentionally invite the Holy Spirit to be part of your time by using the prayer practice known as "Conscience Examen." This practice is thought to come from the tradition of Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). It is practiced by Christians in many traditions. You can practice this form of prayer anytime during the day. Consider praying at lunch time or in the evening.
3. Read through the information about Conscience Examen at [The Prayer of Examen](#). As you practice the Examen, make the following adaptations to invite the Spirit to clarify your relationship with another person:
 - *Presence.* Reflect on how you have experienced the presence of God with the other person.
 - *Gratitude.* For what can you thank God about the other person?
 - *Review.* In what parts of your relationship are you able to cooperate with God? In which parts are you most resistant to follow God?
 - *Response.* As you journal, focus on things you want to do differently in your relationship with the other person and the things you do now that you want to keep doing (and perhaps enhance).
4. Find a time to get together with the other person and gently share your insights. Start with the things for which you are grateful, and then add the things you will commit to do to improve the relationship. Be gracious as you ask the other person to invest in the relationship, too.