

A HEALTH CARE CHAPLAINS' EXAMEN

Called to minister to the sick, the dying, and those who care for them, chaplains create and hold space for the mysteries of suffering. Such presence – silent as it often is, outstretched with courage and attunement – requires great fortitude nurtured by prayer and one's relationship with God and community. An ancient spiritual practice that can aid chaplains in deepening this vital connection with the Divine, others, and themselves is the examen. Often prayed in the evening, this practice nourishes the spirit and develops one's attentiveness to the presence and invitation of God throughout the moments of the day.

We invite you to discover how God is speaking to you, sustaining you as you carry on the healing ministry of Christ. Be attentive to what stands out for you as you reflect on your day. How does the work of the Spirit in your ministry inform your personal life?

1 Prepare

Sit in a comfortable, relaxed yet alert posture. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing for a moment or two. Cultivate stillness. Let your breathing deepen your awareness that you are in the presence of God, who rejoices in this opportunity to connect with you. Ask God to illuminate your understanding as you reflect on your day.

2 Review

Recall the events of the day, beginning with the moment you came through the doors of your workplace. Who did you encounter? Consider each patient, each colleague you shared time with today. What feelings and thoughts came up in these interactions? Did you experience fears, joys, stress, misunderstandings, energy, or tiredness? Whatever thoughts, feelings, or states you experienced, notice and name them without judgment. Where did you sense God's presence in these varied experiences?

3 Gratitude

Whatever came up for you today, be it negative, positive, or somewhere in between, what are you thankful for? Perhaps a moment of affirmation from a patient or family member. Perhaps a nest of birds outside an office window. Perhaps a cup of tea with a colleague. Whatever it is, sit in this gratitude for a moment and give thanks to God.

4 Forgiveness & Healing

Next, consider where you might need forgiveness and healing. Where in your work did you neglect to see God? Did you neglect simple self-care, such as taking time to eat, or allow your stress levels to escalate and impact your relationships with others? Did you honor your limits, asking for help and support when you needed it? Perhaps you responded to a situation in exasperation. Whatever might have gone wrong, express to God your desire for forgiveness and healing

5 Look to the Future

What learnings from the day would you like to bring with you into tomorrow? What are you hopeful about? What gives you pause? Name a few of these for yourself and express any other intentions on your heart before closing in prayer.

6 Close in Prayer

God of all Wisdom,

We wholly offer our experience of this day to you: the painful and the joyful, the exhausting and the hopeful. Continue to open our hearts that we may be more attentive to your countless invitations to love as you love. Where we need healing, offer us your strength. Where we need forgiveness, offer us your courage. Walk with us, always, O Tender One, that we might offer your tenderness to those we encounter on our path.

Through Christ our Lord, we pray: Amen.