

## Psalm 42 & 43.

*How do we respond to despair?*

This Week's Practice:

### Prayer of Examen

The Prayer of Examen is a powerful way of reflecting on the movement of the Spirit within the context of your daily life. Christians have practiced this form of reflective prayer for centuries.

Psalm 42 and 43 are the perfect psalms for this week because the Psalms themselves are an honest reflection on sadness, longing, and hope.

### How to practice the Prayer of Examen:

#### Stillness

Find a comfortable space and do what you can to ensure you can have 5 minutes of uninterrupted solitude. As soon as you find your comfy space, begin your prayer by simply focusing on your breathing.

#### Presence

Place yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for God's great love for you.

#### Humility

Pray for the grace to understand how God is moving in your life.

#### Consolation and Desolation

Review your day — recall specific moments (both joyful and sorrowful) and your feelings at the time.

#### Reflection

Reflect on what you did, said, or thought in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?

#### Hopefulness

Pray for tomorrow. Pray that God would guide you and continue the redeeming work He is doing in and around your life.

*As a Group: The Prayer of Examen is a wonderful group prayer practice, but it does require trust! To do this prayer as a group, just have someone walk the group through each of the different steps giving enough time between each step for a calm and slow prayer. The "hopefulness" step can easily be altered into a group prayer for each other's requests.*

## Psalm 42 & 43.

*How do we respond to despair?*

- Psalm 42 & 43 give theological language to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ in the midst of \_\_\_\_\_ is about bringing our \_\_\_\_\_ honestly before the Lord while continuing to place our \_\_\_\_\_ in Him.
- These Psalms give us permission to be honest about our \_\_\_\_\_ and to acknowledge our \_\_\_\_\_ from God, along with our desire to be closer to Him, without shame.
- It also invites us to consider the importance of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A hope that is strengthened by our faith. Anchored in the Gospel.
- **One Thing: God welcomes the \_\_\_\_\_ cries of \_\_\_\_\_ souls.**

## The Testimony of Cathy Smelser

- What scriptures does Cathy reference in her testimony?
- Where do you notice the delivering work or presence of God in Cathy's story?
- What response does Cathy's story invite or encourage in you?