

PRAYER EXERCISE

“Ephatha !” “OPEN UP!”

*Taken from the book “You Can Pray” of P. Ribes, s.j
published by the Gujarat Sahitya Prakash.*

Intrductory Notes:

- ✓ *This Prayer method may help you to open yourself to God, to others and to yourself.*
- ✓ *It is inspired in the Gospel Passage of Mark (7/31-36) - where Jesus healed a deaf and mute by touching his tongue and saying “Ephphatha” which means **Open Up!***
- ✓ *In this prayer method you will imagine that Jesus commands you to **open up, not only your Ears and Mouth, but also your Eyes, your Hands ,your House, your Mind, and much more your Heart to Him and to your brothers and sisters.***
- ✓ *You may go through this prayer exercise alone by yourself.*
- ✓ *It may help you also to moderate prayer sessions for various groups of people.*
- ✓ *The subject matter suggested for this prayer session is rather large; it cannot easily be exhausted in one sitting. Before you start this exercise determine the length of time you want to spend in prayer*
- ✓ *Once the fixed time for prayer is over, stop wherever you are, and go directly to the last step, namely, “**Closure**”*
- ✓ *Next time you wish to use this prayer method, start at the point where you finished on the previous occasion.*

Preparation:

- Quiet down. Relaxation and/or breathing exercises may help.
- Close your eyes. Place yourself in the presence of God.
- Invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit..

Scripture Exercise:

1st. Read slowly and attentively (*Mk 7/31-37*) The Healing of the Deaf and Mute.

2nd. Meditate for a while on this passage. **Realize that in many areas of your life, you are also deaf and mute; Yes, deaf and mute to God, to others and to yourself You also have to open up:**

- To God’s inspirations.
- To the beautiful works of God’s creation.
- To the word of God spoken to you through the Scriptures.
- To the good advice of your priests, parents, teachers and friends.
- To your conscience. Be aware of your sins, vices and bad habits.
- To the needs and wants of your brothers and sisters. .
- To the good that is in you and in others.
- To human suffering and exploitation.
- To the problems and anxieties of your dear ones.
- To your real needs, physical, psychological, moral and spiritual

3rd. Pray in earnest to God that you may be realize how much you are in need of healing Only Jesus can touch you and heal your eyes, your tongue, your heart and mind and make you whole.

Fantasy: Jesus tells you “Ephphatha” Open up.

- Vividly imagine that you are in the presence of Jesus. He tells you to open up.
- Listen to him attentively. He speaks to you, nay He commands you to upon up.
- What will your answer be?

1. Jesus Tells You: Open up Your EYES, my friend,

See the good that is in others:

- At home: in your parents, your partner, your children, your servants, subordinates, etc. **Will you? Reflect and pray.**
- At your place of work or study: in your bosses, your supervisors, your menial staff, your teachers, your colleagues, etc. **Will you? Reflect and pray**
- People all over and everywhere: your neighbors, people on the road, people you meet in the bazaar, in the bus stop, in the shop, etc. **Will you? Reflect and pray**
- See the good that is, even, in people you dislike: people you avoid or even you criticize. **Will you? Reflect and pray**

See the good that is in you; yes, in your mind, in your hear, in your body. **Will you? Reflect and pray**

See the beauty of God’s creation: The trees, the skies, the flowers, the seas, the clouds, the little pets, etc. **Will you? Reflect and pray**

Jesus keeps telling you: Open up your EYES, my friend, look and see!
You have been already blind for too long!

2. Jesus Tells You: Open up your EARS, my friend, and:

- Hear and listen to what people want say, not what they actually say.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Listen to their longings, anxieties, joys, pains, expectations and hopes.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Hear and listen to what creation tells you about God its creator.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Listen to what God is saying to you, night and day, in the depth of your heart.
Will you? Reflect and pray

Listen also to what God tells you through the events of your daily life.

Will you? Reflect and pray

Jesus keeps telling you: Open your EARS wide, my friend, and listen to one and all! You have been deaf for too long!

3. Jesus Tells You: Open up your MOUTH, my friend!

- And speak to all words of praise and recognition.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mouth and speak the truth.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mouth and pray and sing God's praises
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mouth and speak words of comfort and consolation.
Will you? Reflect and Pray

**Jesus keeps telling you: Open your MOUTH, my friend, and speak
You have been dumb for too long!**

4. Jesus Tells You: Open up your HANDS, my friend!

- Reach out to others in need.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Shake hands with others in sign of friendship.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Give a pat and friendly hug to those unwanted.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Caress your children and loved ones.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your hands and share your goods with the poor, the jobless,
the sick and the hungry.
Will you? Reflect and pray

**Jesus keeps telling you: Open your HANDS right now, my friend,
reach out to others! You have been crippled for too long !**

5. Jesus Tells You: Open up your HOUSE my friend!

- To the homeless, the refugees those without a roof over their heads.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your door to friend and foe.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your home and welcome Christ in your guests.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open the home to the lonely and the unwanted
Will you? Reflect and pray

**Jesus keeps telling you: Open your HOUSE and HOME in love.
my friend. You have lived in confinement for too long!**

6. Jesus Tells You: Open up your MIND, my friend!

- And think of others.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mind to understand others' ways of thinking.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mind to God and to his word.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mind to me and to my Gospel.
Will you? Reflect and pray.
- Open you mind to those who give you right advice and counsel.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mind to understand rather than to criticize.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mind and sympathize with others' worries and anxieties.
Will you? Reflect and pray
- Open your mind to think of others more than self.
Will you? Reflect and pray

**Jesus keeps telling you; Open your MIND to others,my friend,
You lived too long locked in your thoughts.**

7. Finally, Jesus Tells You: Open up your HEART, my friend, Make room within it for God and others! **Will you? Reflect and pray**

***It is only the heart that holds the key that opens your entire self,
to God and others.***

**Jesus reminds you, my friend, that only when your Heart opens, your
eyes, your ears, your mouth, your hands, your house, your mind,
your entire self will open to God and all!**
Reflect and pray.

Closure:.

- Keep praying spontaneously to God for openness of heart and limb.
- Recite or sing the hymn:

Love it was that made us,
And it was love that saved us.
Love was God's plan
When He made man
God's divine nature is love.

Born of God' love we must love him
That's why he made us to love him.
But only when we love all men
Can we partake of God's love! (Twice)

Love is wonderful thing
Joy, to our hearts, will it bring.
Where there is true love there's God
And where there is God, there is love.