

Be Still...

Praying with the Senses – Open-handed Prayer

This exercise invites the students to experiment with using their hands in prayer.

It uses the image of the clenched and unclenched fist as a metaphor for openness to God.

Sit comfortably in a chair and close your eyes.

In your lap, clench your fists very tightly, feeling the pressure in your fingers. Hold this position – even if it is uncomfortable.

Focus your attention on the sensation of your tightly shut hands. Ask God to reveal to you:

- Ways in which you are closed to God and other people
- Grudges or negative thoughts that you might be holding on tightly to
- Parts of your life where you feel stress and strain

Now begin to relax your hands and slowly uncurl your fingers until your unclenched hands are resting in your lap, palms upwards.

Ask God to make you open to himself and his agendas in the same way that your hands are now open. Enjoy the sensation of your relaxed fingers. Spend some time thanking God for all that is good in your life.

Now open your eyes and look at your empty hands. What are the things you need? What are the qualities you lack? Where do you feel powerless or vulnerable? Where in the world are you aware of need and emptiness? Express these thoughts to God in prayer, either silently or out loud.

Finally, raise your hands to God in gratitude and worship.

