

OPEN

A neon sign with the word "OPEN" in red letters inside a blue rectangular border, hanging in a restaurant. The sign is illuminated and is the central focus of the image. The background shows a dimly lit restaurant interior with tables and chairs.

**Read: Matthew 26:6-13**

*Jesus is at home with a social outcast and receives a blessing from an unacceptable person.*

This is a place Jesus should have avoided. For a host of religious reasons it was unlawful for a 'rabbi' to be eating at the 'unclean' table of a leper. Equally scandalous, Jesus allows a woman to anoint him with oil defying, as he often did, the rituals and codes of restriction between men and women. The woman anticipates Christ's death in a way the disciples do not.

The startling truth of the Gospels is that Jesus sits at the table of the world with all its brokenness before he sits at the table of the Church. He is often in the 'wrong' place and in the company of 'dubious' people. His example in this story suggests that by living in the false safety of avoidance we might miss events that have 'eternal' significance.

**Suggestion:** Consider places and people you know about but don't know. Places and people you have never thought of engaging with. It could be the local betting shop, a pub you pass every day, a housing estate or a community organisation you wouldn't dream of going into. Go to a place you would normally avoid and prayerfully be present and see what happens.

**Pray:** What is your prayer in this place you have been avoiding?

**Reflect:** What has surprised you in this place?

**Act:** Will you change your attitude to the people and places you avoid?