



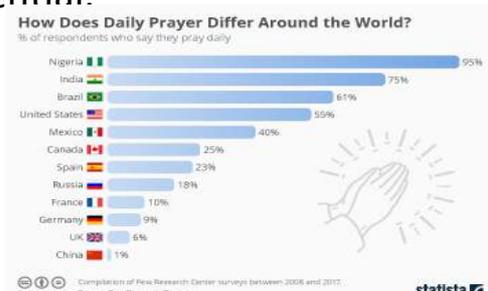
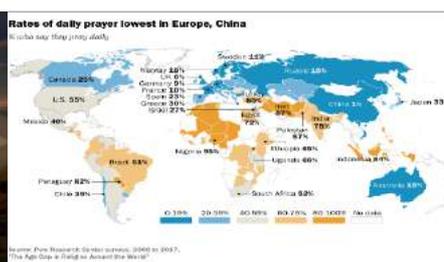
The Power of Prayer



PRAYER

Facts about prayer

- The first notable prayer in Judaism whose text is recorded in the Torah and Hebrew Bible occurs when Abraham pleads with God not to destroy the people of Sodom, where his nephew Lot resides.
- Jews are supposed to pray three times a day; morning, afternoon, and evening. The Jewish prayer book which is called a siddur has special services set down for this.
- There are 650 prayers listed in the Bible and there are approximately 450 recorded answers to prayer in the Bible.
- Most Christians believe prayer deepens a person's faith. Praying can help the believer come to a greater understanding of God's purpose for their lives.
- Jesus commands us to pray and instructed his disciples how to pray to God in what is now known as the “Lord’s Prayer”.
- Christians interpret the response they might get to their prayers in the following ways: God answers prayers, but not always in the way the person wants.
- Jesus says that his followers cannot expect God to answer their prayers unless they forgive others (Mark 11:25) and are humble (Luke 18:10-14). In his teachings Jesus repeatedly emphasized that forgiveness and humble service were essential.





- There are 1.5 billion Muslims in the world and they all face the city of Mecca when they perform the prayer. This is meant to instil a sense of unity among Muslims. It also helps orient the heart toward the Kaba, the holiest site in Islam.
- Salat is the obligatory Muslim prayers, performed five times each day by Muslims. It is the second Pillar of Islam.
- Before praying, Muslims must perform a washing of their hands, face, head, and feet. This washing is called ablution. The purpose behind it is to ensure physical purity before standing in front of God.

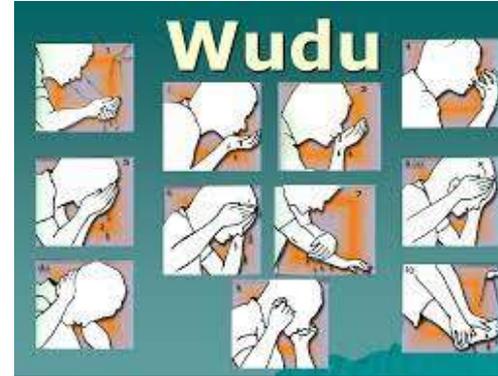
Muslim prayers

- Salat al-fajr: dawn, before sunrise.
- Salat al-zuhr: midday, after the sun passes its highest.
- Salat al-'asr: the late part of the afternoon.
- Salat al-maghrib: just after sunset.
- Salat al-'isha: between sun set and midnight.
- Prayer or worship is considered to be an integral part of the Hindu religion. The chanting of mantras is the most popular form of worship in Hinduism.
- Practicing Hindus set aside time to pray a minimum of twice per day. The ritualistic prayers are held at dawn and at dusk. Especially devout Hindus pray more often.
- Orthodox Hindus recite a Sanskrit prayer known as the Rig Veda of the Gayatri.





Prayer in Islam



- Muslims pray five times each day
- Muslims have been instructed to pray five times a day by the prophet Mohammed. Muslims believe that praying five times a day gives worshippers the chance to continually maintain their connection to God.
- I do not believe this is a good idea because Muslims are only praying on these occasions due to being instructed by the Prophet. They are only following orders in the belief that this will provide them with God's grace. I believe that an individual should have a desire to pray to God and it should be natural and not manufactured.
- Muslims must be clean before they pray. They make sure of this by performing ritual washing, called wudhu.
- Muslims use a prayer mat to ensure cleanliness and to offer prayer in a clear space. While this isn't a requirement in the Islamic religion, Islam calls on its followers to worship in a clean area.
- In Islam the sacred direction is towards Mecca, or more precisely, towards the sacred Kaaba in Mecca. Muslims face this direction in prayer and during various other ritual acts.
- Imams are religious leaders in the religion of Islam. They lead daily prayers, teach people about the Quran and the life of the Prophet Mohammed.
- It is well accepted by most scholars that while praying, women must cover everything except the hands and face.
- It is forbidden to cover the face while praying.
- Men must cover from the navel to the knee when praying.
- The Muezzin is the official who calls the Muslim people to daily prayer and also on a Friday for public worship.



- Minarets are Islamic religious architecture, the tower from which the faithful are called to prayer five times each day by a muezzin.
- Wudhu is the ritual washing performed by Muslims before prayer. Muslims must be clean and wear good clothes before they present themselves before God.
- A Muslim is taught to handle the Qur'an with respect and care. Generally, it is expected that Muslims perform wudu.
- In the centre of the mosque in Mecca, is the cube-shaped building called the Kaaba. All Muslims face the direction of the Kaaba during ritual prayer called Salat. Muslims believe that the Kaaba is the holiest place on earth.
- Mohammed received revelations that he should be facing Mecca rather than Jerusalem during prayer. Mohammed adjusted to the new direction, and his companions praying with him followed his lead, beginning the tradition of facing Mecca during prayer.
- Also, Muslims pray towards Mecca because Mohammed, the founder of Islam, was born in Mecca, and it is toward this religious centre that Muslims turn five times daily in prayer.

Personal Opinion

I think it is right to pray to God in a very respectful way and this is something we can admire Muslims for. As already stated, I do not believe you should have to pray five times a day because it is an instruction. Prayer should be from the heart and should be personal between you and God. It is better to have quality rather than quantity.

Islam in Northern Ireland

- It is estimated that about 6000 Muslims live in Northern Ireland



- As of December 2019, there are a total of ten Islamic centres or prayer places in Northern Ireland. Almost half of these are located in or near Belfast.
- The bulk of Muslims in Northern Ireland today come from families who immigrated during the late 20th century.
- Muslims in Northern Ireland are treated well in most cases but some people treat Muslims unfairly and prejudice them. There has been some hate crimes in the last few years because of this.
- Belfast Islamic Centre is the largest institution representing the Muslim community in Northern Ireland and acts as both a place of worship and a community centre.
- The services in the Belfast Islamic Centre include provision for the main Friday prayers attended by around 400 worshippers, the 5 Daily Prayers attended by around 100 throughout the day and religious education and Quran classes for both adults and children
- There have been at least 320 hate crimes against people from a Muslim background in Belfast alone over the past five years.
- An example of this hate crime occurred a few years ago when a pig's head was left outside an Islamic centre in County Down. It caused some upset in the Muslim community because Islam prohibits the eating of pig meat, as it is viewed as impure and a sin to do so. The prohibition of pork in Islam is mentioned directly in four chapters of their holy book, the Qur'an.





A famous Muslim from the UK



Mo Farah is a British sports person who is a Muslim. He was raised in Somalia until eight years of age when he moved to London and spent the remainder of his childhood there. Farah is a devout Muslim and one of the most beloved and successful British athletes. He says his faith plays an essential role in his success as an athlete.

Mo Farah says you've got to believe in God. He says everything happens for a reason and he would say that in the Qur'an it states that you must work hard in whatever you do. This drives him to work hard in training and this has contributed to him being successful.

My views on the Islamic Faith

There are some similarities between Islam and my faith. These include; they believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah as prophesied in the Old Testament. They also believe that there is only one God as I do and they believe in all the main prophets of the Old Testament including Abraham and Moses. Although there are similarities there are differences between Islam and my faith. These differences include; they don't believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that he was crucified for our sins. In particular they believe in the Prophet Mohammed, who is the main prophet of their religion and who along with his successors conquered their religious opponents through the sword. This is something I believe fuels the belief in a violent Jihad which does a great disservice to most Muslims. I also find it difficult to accept that people who convert from Islam can be put to death in some Muslim countries. I believe, this demonstrates a lack of toleration for other faiths by a large body of Islamic opinion.

My Personal Opinion on Prayer and Islam

My own view on prayer

I believe prayer is very important as it allows you to connect and build a relationship with God. As a Christian believer I set aside time every day to reflect on my day and thank the Lord God that I have such a privileged life. I find prayer to be a positive thing because it provides encouragement, comfort and support in my life. Some people because they can not see or hear God, believe that prayer is pointless. However, I see God's actions in my life every day and I believe that God is spirit and is worshipped in spirit.

What have I learned about prayer in Islam?

It has been really interesting to learn about how different religions pray. In relation to Islam, I found out that Muslims pray five times a day. They pray at different set times and always on their knees. To do this they will normally make use of a prayer mat. Before Muslims enter their place of prayer, they will take off their shoes and leave them at the door. I found it very interesting that Muslims spend so much time in their day praying. I also found out about wudu and why Muslims have to wash before they pray. Additionally, I found out how important the city of Mecca was to Muslims. When they pray, they always face towards the city. They are also instructed to visit Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Although I knew that there was an Islamic centre in Belfast, I have learned that there are ten in total Northern Ireland. I did not know this before I conducted my research.

