Understanding Prayer: A Quiet Reflection

Learning objective: To understand the purpose and practice of prayer within different religious traditions.

Read the passage carefully about how people use prayer in their daily lives, then answer the questions below using full sentences.

Prayer is a practice found in many religions, acting as a way for individuals to connect with the divine or reflect on their inner thoughts. For Ellie, our wise elephant friend, watching her community pray is a lesson in peace. Some people pray using set words, like written passages from holy books, while others speak from the heart, sharing their deepest hopes or worries. In some traditions, prayer involves physical movement, such as kneeling or bowing, to show humility and respect. Others might use prayer beads to help them focus their thoughts during quiet meditation.

It is not just about asking for things; many people use prayer to express gratitude for the world around them or to seek guidance during difficult times. Whether it happens in a grand building, a small room, or out in the fresh air, prayer is a personal experience. It provides a moment of stillness in a busy day, allowing people to centre themselves and find comfort. Even when the words are different, the feeling of connection and the search for meaning remain a common thread shared by millions of people across the globe.

Word bank: devotion · reflection · gratitude · meditation · community · tradition

1. Identify two different methods people use to help them focus during prayer, as mentioned in the text. (2 marks)

2. According to the passage, why might someone choose to pray other than to ask for something? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author suggest that prayer can be helpful for people living a 'busy' life? (2 marks)

4. What does the phrase 'the search for meaning' imply about the nature of human life? (2 marks)

5. Do you think it is important for people to have a quiet time for reflection in their daily lives? Give a reason for your opinion. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of a peaceful, quiet place where someone might go to reflect or pray, including elements of nature like trees or a calm sky.

Extension challenge: Research one world religion and write a short paragraph explaining how they pray. Do they use a special object, a specific language, or a particular time of day?