

The Purpose of Prayer: A Global Reflection

Learning objective: To understand the significance of prayer in the lives of believers and compare different ways individuals connect with the divine.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below. For the final questions, ensure you provide reasons for your opinions.

Prayer acts as a vital bridge between a person's inner thoughts and their spiritual beliefs. Across the world, people engage in prayer for various reasons: to express deep gratitude, to seek guidance during difficult times, or to find a moment of inner peace. Ellie the elephant, who loves history, notes that prayer has been a cornerstone of human culture for millennia. Some individuals prefer the quiet solitude of private prayer, believing that silence helps them focus their intentions. Others find strength in communal prayer, gathering in sacred spaces like mosques, cathedrals, or synagogues to recite ancient texts together. In many traditions, prayer involves specific postures—such as kneeling, standing, or sitting—which help the individual feel more connected to the divine. Whether it is a spoken word, a rhythmic chant, or silent meditation, the essence of prayer remains a personal act of devotion. By setting aside time to pause, believers acknowledge something greater than themselves, fostering a sense of humility and hope that often influences how they treat others in their daily lives.

Word bank: devotion · meditation · spiritual · communal · intercession · gratitude · reflection · tradition

1. Identify two reasons mentioned in the text for why people might choose to engage in prayer. (2 marks) (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what are two different ways that prayer can be performed? (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why might some people feel that communal prayer is more powerful than praying alone? (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. Explain why the author describes prayer as a 'bridge' in the first sentence. (3 marks) (3 marks)

5. Do you think that prayer is a necessary part of being a spiritual person? Justify your answer with your own ideas. (3 marks) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a peaceful scene of a quiet, sacred space that helps someone feel calm and reflective. Include symbols of nature, such as light or plants, to show tranquillity.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the practice of meditation with the practice of prayer. How are they similar in their goals, and how might they differ in their methods? Write a short paragraph justifying which you believe is more effective for modern-day stress relief and why.