

Exploring the Nature and Purpose of Prayer

Learning objective: To understand the significance of prayer across different religious traditions and how it serves as a form of communication or reflection.

Read each flashcard carefully. Use the front of the card to test your knowledge of key religious terminology, then check your understanding against the provided answer.

Define 'Adoration' in the context of prayer.

Adoration is a type of prayer that focuses on praising and honouring the greatness, power, and love of the Divine.

What is 'Supplication'?

Supplication is a prayer where a person humbly asks for help, guidance, or a specific favour for themselves.

Explain the meaning of 'Intercession'.

Intercession is the act of praying on behalf of other people or the world, rather than focusing on one's own needs.

Define 'Confession' in a religious context.

Confession is a prayer where a person admits their mistakes or wrongdoings and expresses a desire for forgiveness and change.

What is 'Thanksgiving' prayer?

This is an expression of gratitude, where a person acknowledges and appreciates the blessings or beauty they have experienced.

Compare and contrast 'Liturgical' and 'Spontaneous' prayer.

Liturgical prayer follows a set structure or written text used by a community, whereas spontaneous prayer is personal, informal, and uses one's own words in the moment.

What is the purpose of 'Meditation' in prayer?

Meditation is a reflective practice involving silence and deep focus to connect with the Divine or to find inner peace and clarity.

Explain why many people choose to pray in a group setting.

Group prayer can foster a sense of community, shared values, and mutual support among believers.

Justify why someone might use a 'prayer aid', such as a rosary or prayer beads.

These physical objects can act as a focal point to help maintain concentration, count repetitions, or provide a sensory connection during long periods of reflection.

What might happen if a person believes their prayer has not been answered?

A person might feel disappointed, but many religious traditions suggest that prayer changes the person praying, providing them with patience, perspective, or the strength to face a challenge.

Compare how a private prayer in a quiet space might differ from a public prayer in a large building.

Private prayer allows for total intimacy and honesty without social pressure, whereas public prayer builds collective identity and allows for shared rituals and ceremonies.

Explain why prayer is often considered a 'universal' human experience.

Throughout history and across diverse cultures, humans have sought to connect with something greater than themselves to find meaning, comfort, and hope.