

## Prayer Factsheet

### 1: Requirement to Pray in the Qur'an

<i>When you have finished the prayers, remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying down, and when you feel secure, perform the [complete] prayers, for the prayer is indeed a timed prescription for the faithful. 4: 103</i>	
<i>So celebrate the praise of your Lord and be among those who prostrate, 15: 98</i>	
<i>Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and maintain the prayer. Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs, and the remembrance of Allah is surely greater. And Allah knows whatever [deeds] you do. 29: 45</i>	
<i>This is the Book there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the Godwary, who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; and who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain of the Hereafter. 2: 2-4</i>	

**What do these Qur'anic phrases mean? Connect one phrase to one of the meanings below:**

- A good Muslim is one who worships and gives themselves to God.
- Those who are aware of God will believe, pray and give zakat. They will be certain of heaven.
- The prayer time is prescribed, as well as constant remembrance of God.
- Prayer helps you be a better person by focussing on God.

### 2: The Night Journey

According to legend, Muhammad experienced a miraculous 'Night Journey' in 621 CE (described in surah 17 *Al-Isra* in the Qur'an as well as the Hadith). In one night, Muhammad, guided by Angel Jibril (Gabriel) travelled on a horse to Jerusalem, ascended through the 7 levels of heaven, meeting earlier prophets and finally encountering God. God desired that Muslims should pray 50 times a day. The prophet Musa (Moses) advised Muhammad that this was too much, sending Muhammad back to God to discuss. Legend has it that Muhammad moved between Musa and God 9 times, finally securing God's approval for 5 daily prayers. Musa thought this was still too onerous, but Muhammad was happy that 5 daily prayers was practical and would keep Muslims focused on God.

### 3: Sunni and Shi'a Differences

#### PRAYER TIMES

Both Sunni and Shi'a pray 5 times daily. Sunni make 5 separate prayers, while Shi'a combine the noon and afternoon prayer, and the sunset and evening prayer.

#### WUDU

Sunni and Shi'a have different methods of ritualistic washing before prayer. Both wash the nose, mouth, face, hands, arms and feet. Sunni wash whereas Shi'a wipe the feet. Both think about their deeds and forgiveness. For both, the process of *wudu* ('ablutions') is a step to attaining spiritual cleanliness, or *taharah* ('purity' in Arabic).

#### JUMMAH PRAYERS

Sunni Muslim men are required to attend Friday prayers at the mosque. These are called *Jumma* prayers which comes from an Arabic word meaning 'gathering together'. These prayers are not compulsory for Shi'a men, but they are increasingly popular. Praying together reminds Muslim men of their duties to the community, as well as the support and friendship the community can offer them.



#### 4: Prayer Actions (Rak'ahs)

'Rak'ah': set of movements and recitations during prayer

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	INTENTION
<b>Call to prayer</b> ( <i>'adhan'</i> = 'to listen' in Arabic)	5 daily prayers are required, so Muslims need to know when to pray. They are called at specific times. The call to prayer is known as the <i>adhan</i> .	
<b>Wudu</b> ( <i>'ablution'</i> in Arabic)	Muslims must be spiritually clean to pray, symbolised by physical cleanliness. While Muslims perform wudu, the ritualistic washing before prayer, they think about their sins.	
<b>Face Mecca</b> ( <i>'qibla'</i> = 'direction' in Arabic)	On Muhammad's Night Journey, God asked Muslims to face the Ka'aba in Mecca when they pray. Every mosque has a <i>qibla</i> to show this direction. Found in Qur'an 2: 144.	
<b>Niyyah</b> ( <i>'intention'</i> in Arabic; the intention to act for God)	Muslims must enter prayer with the intention to do so. The <i>niyyah</i> in prayer is denoted by stating how many <i>rak'ahs</i> will be completed. Muslims must also have <i>niyyah</i> when embarking on hajj.	
<b>'Allahu Akbar'</b> ( <i>'God is great'</i> in Arabic)	This will be spoken several times in a typical <i>rak'ah</i> with the arms raised to the ears, when bowing down or when prostrate. Passages from the Qur'an are also spoken.	
<b>Prostration</b>	Every prayer sequence will involve a moment of prostration. This is lying full length on the floor, as if laying oneself out before God. Prostration denotes complete obedience to God.	
<b>Friday prayers</b> ( <i>'Jummah'</i> = 'gathering together' in Arabic)	Males should attend Friday prayers, known as <i>jummah</i> , or communal prayers. Being together in prayer knits the community together; in good and bad times.	

#### 5: Private Prayer (*Du'a*)

From the Arabic to 'call out' or 'summon'. Muslims might perform private acts of prayer, as Muhammad did, as well as communal prayer. *Du'as* can be spoken in any language whereas communal prayer, or *salat*, is in Arabic. They can be spoken or silent. They can be spontaneous or added for oneself after communal prayer in the mosque. They can be made up of prayers and passages from the Qur'an or one's own words.

#### 6: Prayer in Mosque or home

Sunni Muslim men are required to attend Friday prayers at the mosque, Shi'a men are encouraged.

Women have a duty to ensure prayers are organized in the home (apart from *Jummah* prayers for men of the family). It is their duty to teach the children to pray correctly.

