

# Gratitude and faith: Performing prayer is a cornerstone of Islam

Performing prayers is a cornerstone of Islam. The name for prayer in Arabic is Salah, derived from the word silah, which means “connection.” Prayer is an act of worship that Muslims must perform regardless of their circumstances. Whether healthy, sick, tired, or facing other challenges, a Muslim is expected to maintain this practice unless their life is in immediate danger.

Salah embodies gratitude, devotion, and submission to Allah (the Arabic and Aramaic name for God). Muslims worldwide perform Salah five times daily, following a structured form of worship that includes physical movements, recitations, and moments of reflection. Through Salah, Muslims establish a direct connection with God, fostering humility, discipline, and mindfulness.

The Quran emphasizes the importance of prayer, stating: “And seek help in patience and As-Salat (the prayer). Truly, it is extremely heavy and hard except for the true believers – those who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord and that unto Him they are going to return.” (Quran, 2:45-46)

In English prayer often refers to reciting specific passages, sentences, or words. In Islam, formal prayer, known as Salah, begins with standing while facing Makkah and reciting verses from the Noble Qur’an. This is followed by bowing, standing upright again, prostrating twice (placing one’s forehead on the ground), and then

standing again. This sequence of actions is called a Raka’a.

Muslims perform prayers five times a day, each at a specific time and consisting of a designated number of Raka’at (the plural of Raka’a). The Dawn prayer (Fajr) has two Raka’at, the Noon prayer (Dhuhr) has four Raka’at, the Afternoon prayer (Asr) has four Raka’at, the Sunset prayer (Maghrib) has three Raka’at, and the Night prayer (Isha) has four Raka’at.

It is important to clarify that Muslims do not worship the moon, the sun, or the cubic structure in Makkah known as the Ka’bah.

In each Raka’a, Muslims recite Al-Fatiha (The Opener), which begins with the verse, “All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds” (Quran 1:2). This means that Muslims express their gratitude and praise to God at least seventeen times a day. As mentioned last week, feeling grateful to God for His blessings, including the tests and trials one faces, is fundamental in the Islamic faith.

In total, a Muslim performs seventeen Raka’at daily, expressing gratitude to Allah through this structured act of worship. These moments of prayer provide opportunities to pause, reflect, and thank Allah for His countless blessings.

Before performing any prayer, Muslims must perform ablution, known as “Wudu”. This involves washing the face, hands up to the elbows, and feet. Wudu serves as an act of pu-



Guest Column

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rification, preparing Muslims physically and spiritually to stand before God. It symbolizes shedding worldly distractions to focus entirely on the Creator. Additionally, Wudu helps refresh both the body and mind, fostering mindfulness and readiness for prayer.

Interestingly, the way Muslims perform Salah closely resembles the prayers of earlier prophets, including Jesus (peace be upon him), as mentioned in biblical texts. Several passages from the Bible highlight acts of worship that align with Islamic Salah.

For instance, in Exodus 40:31-32, it is stated: “Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and feet with water. They washed whenever they entered the tent of meeting or approached the altar, as the Lord commanded Moses.” This is strikingly similar to how Muslims perform ablution (Wudu) before prayer.

In Mark 11:25, it says: “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” Standing during prayer while seeking forgiveness mirrors the act of standing in Salah in Islam.

In Luke 22:41, it is mentioned: “He with-

drew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed.” Jesus’s act of kneeling resembles the Islamic act of bowing (Ruku) during Salah.

Lastly, Matthew 26:39, says: “Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’” The act of prostration in Salah is nearly identical to Jesus falling on his face in prayer.

These examples clearly illustrate that the way Muslims pray in Salah closely aligns with the worship practices of earlier prophets, demonstrating continuity in devotion to God across different faiths and eras.

These parallels highlight the shared heritage of worship between Islam and earlier monotheistic traditions, showcasing the timeless essence of connecting with the Creator.

A cornerstone of Salah is the recitation of Surah Al-Fatiha (The Opener), the first chapter of the Qur’an, in every Raka’a. This chapter beautifully encapsulates gratitude and supplication. In it, Muslims express thanks to Allah for His mercy, guidance, and sustenance, acknowledging Him as the Lord of all worlds. They also seek Allah’s assistance to remain on the straight path and avoid misguidance.

Surah Al-Fatiha not only sets the spiritual tone for the prayer but also reinforces a Muslim’s reliance on Allah and recognition of His countless favors.

In addition to the formal Salah, Muslims are encouraged to engage in Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) throughout the day. This involves reciting prayers taught by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Dhikr includes praising Allah, seeking forgiveness, and expressing gratitude through phrases such as “SubhanAllah” (Glory be to Allah), “Alhamdulillah” (All praise is due to Allah), and “Allahu Akbar” (Allah is Greater!).

The phrase “Allahu Akbar” holds a profound and beautiful meaning, one that has sadly been misrepresented by mainstream media. Its true significance might be explored in detail at another time.

Remembering Allah serves as a constant reminder of His presence and rewards believers with peace of mind, spiritual growth, and closeness to their Creator. The Qur’an emphasizes this practice, stating: “Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured.” (Qur’an 13:28)

Beyond the daily prayers, Muslims dedicate themselves to additional acts of worship during the holy month of Ramadan. This month holds immense spiritual significance as it commemorates the revelation of the Qur’an. Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food, drink, sex, and sinful behaviors as an act of obedience and gratitude to Allah.

It is important to clarify that fasting in Ramadan is not akin to military exercises, as sometimes depicted in mainstream media. Rather, it is a form of worship in Islam that purifies both the mind and the body. Many faiths and traditions require fasting, and Islam is no exception.

Prayers are highly encouraged to be performed in groups (congregations), as the reward for praying in a group is greater. During Ramadan, Muslims intensify their prayers and supplications. Special nightly prayers are performed, often in congregations at mosques, allowing the community to come together in worship. Families also gather at the breaking of the fast and the pre-dawn meal, strengthening bonds of love and unity.

Fasting during Ramadan enables Muslims to develop empathy for the less fortunate, appreciate Allah’s blessings, and purify their hearts and minds. This collective observance not only strengthens faith but also deepens community ties and fosters personal discipline.


Prayer, fasting and remembrance are not merely rituals but a way of life that brings Muslims closer to God while instilling values of discipline, compassion, and unity. Through these acts of worship, Muslims follow in the footsteps of earlier prophets, continuing the timeless tradition of monotheistic devotion.

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For more information: [icstillwater.org/islam](http://icstillwater.org/islam)

## Worship at the church of your choice this week

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



Colossians 3:17

**Stillwater Bible**  
Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers  
JB Bond, Senior Pastor

**Sundays**  
Worship Service .....8:30 a.m.  
C.R.O.W. Groups .....9:45 a.m.  
Worship Service .....11:00 a.m.  
Kids' Church .....11:20 a.m.

**Tuesdays**  
Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297).....7:30 p.m.

**Wednesdays**  
Stillwater Bible Institute .....6:30 p.m.  
Impact Youth .....6:30 p.m.  
Bible Kids .....6:30 p.m.

7617 W. 6th Ave.  
Stillwaterbible.org (405) 564-5794

**Crosspointe**  
CHURCH

Sunday School - 9:30  
Sunday AM Worship - 10:30  
Sunday PM Family Service - 6:00  
Wed PM Bible Study - 7:00

**1807 N. Jardot**  
**[gocrosspointe.com](http://gocrosspointe.com)**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
701 S. DUNCAN • 405-372-5212

**SUNDAY**  
Bible Study • 9:30am  
Worship Service • 11:00am  
**WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES**  
Begin at 6:00pm  
Watch our worship service on Facebook  
[www.fbcstillwater.org](http://www.fbcstillwater.org)

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
[www.fumcstw.org](http://www.fumcstw.org)  
400 W. 7th • 372-5854

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**  
Worship .....8:30am & 11:10am  
Sunday School .....10:00am  
Closer Walk.....10 am Family Life Center

**UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH**  
4th & Knoblock • 372-2744

**Sunday School**  
9 am  
**Worship Service**  
8 am & 10:30 am

**GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Independent Baptist  
Expository Preaching

**CHURCH SERVICES**  
Sunday .....10:30am  
Thursday .....7:30pm

**723 E. 17th**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
524 S. Duncan • 405-372-5580  
[www.stillwaterfpc.org](http://www.stillwaterfpc.org)

**Sunday Worship**  
9:45 a.m. - Sunday School  
11:00 a.m. - in person, online  
On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3  
and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

**SUNNYBROOK**  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

421 E. Richmond Rd. | [sunnybrookcc.org](http://sunnybrookcc.org)

**SUNDAY SERVICES**  
8:15 AM | 9:45 AM | 11:15 AM

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**      **KIDS CHURCH**  
9:45 AM - Student, College & Adult      All Services

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHURCH**  
6:30 PM - Kids, Students & Adult Studies

**Stillwater Church of Christ**  
[stillwatercoc.org](http://stillwatercoc.org)

Your place for "Faith, Family and Friends"

**SUNDAY**  
Meeting Times  
Bible Study .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:30 AM  
Bible Study .....5:00 PM

**WEDNESDAY**  
Bible study .....7:00 PM

821 N. DUCK • 372-7439

**Southside Baptist Church of Stillwater**  
1223 S. Perkins Rd.  
Perfectly • Purposely • Placed

**SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM**  
**SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 AM + 6 PM**  
**WEDNESDAY YOUTH & ADULT BIBLE STUDY 6:30**

Paul Hutchison - Pastor  
Address - 1223 S. Perkins. Rd.  
Phone: 405-372-2411  
Email: [southsidestillwater@gmail.com](mailto:southsidestillwater@gmail.com)

**The Islamic Society of Stillwater**

616 N. Washington St.  
**Friday (Weekly) Prayers**  
1:40 PM - 2:10 PM  
**For Daily Prayer Times**  
[www.icstillwater.org](http://www.icstillwater.org)

**St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church**  
711 N. Country Club Rd.

**Sunday Mass**  
8:30 | 11:15 a.m.  
1 p.m. (en español)  
**Tue & Thu Mass**  
12:10 p.m.  
**Wednesday Mass**  
12:10 p.m.  
6 p.m. (en español)

**Friday Mass**  
12:10 p.m.  
**Saturday Mass**  
9 a.m. | 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)  
**Confessions**  
Tues-Fri | 11:30-12 p.m.  
Wednesday | 5 p.m.  
Saturday | 9:45-11 a.m.

**405-372-6886** [www.sfxstillwater.org](http://www.sfxstillwater.org)

**Zion Lutheran Church - LCMS**

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

[www.zionlutheranstw.org](http://www.zionlutheranstw.org)

**John E. Wackler, Pastor**  
**504 S. Knoblock • 372-3703**