

Content Analysis: Prayer and Meditation

Prayers can be categorized and differentiated in many ways. In addition to the many life-enhancing similarities, they can be distinguished in terms of their form, their intention and content, their location and the way they are practised. For example, there are ritual and individual prayers. There are forms of prayer and meditation that can, in principle, take place in any situation and anywhere, and others that - depending on religious and ideological beliefs - have a specific place or time. These can be the religious community or the family, the service in church, mosque or synagogue or certain festivals in the yearly cycle. Particularly well-known prayers sometimes have a unifying character for the respective community, such as the Lord's Prayer in Christianity, the daily prayers in Islam (Salat) or the Shema Israel in Judaism.

Prayers have different forms of expression. Different inner concerns and intentions are accompanied by different body postures. The gestures of the hands also give the person praying the opportunity to express their needs and intentions in a certain way. However, as these aspects are highly ritualized in many (not only) religious contexts, they must be decoded again for the learners. Even within one's own tradition, it is not always to be expected that their life-enhancing character will become clear. The aim is therefore to develop a reflective interpretative competence for the diverse aspects of prayer, such as its rituals, places and times, as well as for liturgical processes and prayer attitudes - and thus the ability to deal appropriately with prayer situations and to learn to understand and appreciate their potential not only within one's own tradition.

Key Words: Prayer, meditation, rituals, prayer postures, prayer rooms, places of prayer, prayer times



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