

*When Women Speak...*

*When we pray...*



*Webzine*



## Webzine

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[whenwomenspeak.net](http://whenwomenspeak.net)

## Editorial

Some years ago I took a group of youthful passionate British Christians on a pre-arranged visit to a large UK mosque. We'd had to sort out protocols around dress and headscarves beforehand, and deal with various apprehensions and high spirits. What is memorable from the visit was the awed surprise of the group to the reverential focus on prayer in the mosque. The thoughtful follow-up conversation saw them choosing to process questions about what they focus on when they arrive at church, and the place of prayer in their lives.

The theme of this webzine is prayer: it is about a practice at the heart of Muslim daily life and at the same time about a privileged aspect of lived Christian experience. It is a natural topic of conversation when Muslims and Christians get together and yet one that can often be at cross-purpose because of differing assumptions about the nature of prayer. The articles selected for this issue are intended to bring clarity to these encounters. Of course, they may also trigger reflection on your own prayer life.

The main articles are all written by Western Christians who have lived in Islamic contexts. They are interspersed by reflections on their journey in prayer from four women Believers from a Muslim Background (each used the questions shown here in the box, as stimulus to their reflections). Our journey with them begins with one of the reflections followed by Moyra Dale's comprehensive article that looks at 'Muslim Women In Prayer', lifting a veil on the daily and seasonal rhythms of prescribed prayer practiced by our friends and the part extemporary prayer has within that. The second article, which follows on, provides thorough, helpful detail about Salah, the five-times a day prayer at the heart of Muslim practice. Following a second reflection we have an article by Louise Simon which explores contemporary perspectives on du'a. She has brought together insights culled from conversations which women involved in the When Women Speak I-View course have had with their Muslim friends with discussion to be found on the internet, in order to identify the overlaps and distinctives between Muslim and Christian extemporary prayer. In this exploratory part of the webzine I provide a brief article on 'The Qur'an and Prayer' to supplement detail prior to Colin Edwards' musings on experiences and arising conversation with Sufi friends. His article 'In Touch with the Divine' considers the icon-like role of Sufi recitation of the Qur'an and other prayers, and the longing it represents.

### QUESTIONS TO HELP BMBS REFLECT:

1. Can you describe for us the place of prayer in your life as a follower of Jesus, and how you like to pray?
2. What was it like learning to pray to Jesus, after learning Muslim prayer? Was it the same/different, hard/easy?
3. How did you learn to pray? What were your models?
4. Is there anything you miss about Muslim prayer?

The final article sits between the last two reflections. In it Anna Shean powerfully reminds us of the access we have to the Throne of Grace as she sets out the gentle and important ways she shares this when 'Praying with My Muslim Friends'. The closing of the final reflection from a BMB sister bursts with the joy of discovering this access. It testifies to a hunger for communion with God which is only fulfilled through Jesus.

As it happens even as I was finalising the editing for this webzine my local church Home Group had chosen to start using the online 'Prayer Course' <<https://prayercourse.org/about/>>, and a Zoom Bible Study group I have been asked to teach will be looking at John 17 (Jesus' prayer for his disciples) this week. The course and the passage are two good avenues for moving on if reading this webzine stirs you to want to explore how to develop your own prayer life. Of course the articles and reflections of the webzine may well provide you with sufficient signposts for this stage of your journey. I commend them to you for the rich insights they offer.

*Carol Walker*



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