

More Americans pray in their car than in a place of worship, survey finds

by [Adelle M. Banks](#)

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Despite reports of [declining worship attendance](#) and [religious affiliation](#), 6 in 10 US adults say that they pray, a new survey reports.

A higher percentage—85 percent—say they engage in a spiritual practice to connect with a higher power, whether prayer, meditation, mindfulness, reciting affirmations, or spiritually based yoga. Prayer is the most common of the five practices, with 39 percent of US adults saying they practiced meditation and 38 percent practicing mindfulness.

Findings of the survey of more than 1,700 Americans were released by the Radiant Foundation on May 4), which was the National Day of Prayer.

It showed that US adults who pray often do so at dawn or when they awaken (50 percent) or at bedtime (55 percent). More people report that they pray in their car (61 percent) than in a place of worship (46 percent).

“These results make it clear that there is more praying taking place than people expect. People are praying in a variety of ways and in unexpected places throughout the day,” said John Dye, executive director of [Skylight](#), a Radiant Foundation website that offers spiritual content, such as prayer, affirmations, and yoga aimed at young adults.

“They are frequently exploring their spiritual side and using prayer to work through adversity, find meaning, and create connection with a Higher Power.”

A distinct majority of those who pray (87 percent) said they believed they’d received an answer to their prayers in the last 12 months.

The top reasons cited for prayer were for a loved one in crisis (76 percent) or when someone else was sick (71 percent).

Other findings looked at how and with whom people prayed.

Eight in 10 reported regularly praying by themselves. Younger respondents—in particular millennials and Gen Zs—were more likely than younger boomers and Gen Xers to report that they prayed regularly with members of their spiritual group or family. Nearly a quarter said they pray routinely around their pets.

More than three-quarters of those who pray use at least one spiritually related object when they do. The most popular objects, based on a provided list of 20, were books and other texts, used by a quarter of respondents at least a few times a week. Others included burning objects such as candles (19 percent), a journal (18 percent), a pillow or kneeling pad (18 percent), a rosary or prayer beads (18 percent), or iconography (18 percent).

The survey was commissioned by Skylight and conducted by the Boston-area research firm City Square Associates. Skylight was launched in 2020 by the Radiant Foundation, a nonprofit organization associated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and partially funded by the Deseret Management Corp., which manages LDS church-affiliated entities.

A total of 1,783 US adults ages 18 to 64 participated in the online survey, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points. Many of the questions on prayer were asked only of the 1,090 US adults who indicated that they pray.

—Religion News Service