

right and left are all going through the similar struggles that you are facing like school, health, social life, strengthening iman (faith), and pursuing a career. Through this, there is no sense of loneliness or competition. In that moment it's just Muslims completely focused on worshipping their lord and saying a friendly salam (peace) right after the prayer ends.

Another aspect of prayer that is often overlooked by people is the spoken words during prayer. For example, Surah Al Fatihah is mentioned in every prayer because it signifies the surrender to Allah and the acknowledgment that He is the only one that you should rely on for help. That surah gives a whole meaning to belief, that despite the circumstances that are in front of you, surrender to Allah and asking him for help is necessary to go through that difficulty. The more and more an individual is invested in understanding the Quran and why it is recited in prayer, the stronger the prayer is to the individual.

Finally there is the Dua(invocation) of the prayer. Dua provides direct communication to Allah, regardless if you pray individually or as a group. Since submission to Allah is a key tenet to the faith, any problems about life, concerns about the future, desires, forgivenesses, or hopes can be shared with Allah. Allah is very similar to a close friend, because you can share anything you want to Him. If you pray with sincerity and remember Allah constantly, then Allah will hear

your concerns. That in itself is a stress reliever because you know at least your Creator is listening to your concerns and understands what you are going through.

Your dua may be answered immediately, after a long span of time, or rejected and instead replaced with something that is better for you in the long run. The beauty behind this act that separates all other types of prayer in other religions is direct communication with God. There is no need to consult a priest or someone else to make the prayer for you, just your own efforts and remembrance. The fact that the individual makes the prayer with their own free will is empowering in it of itself because there is no dependence of anyone else except for the Creator.