

**PASSAGE - 4****Read the following passage carefully****(10 marks)**

1. As religious people believing in God, we are all aware of the influence of prayer in our individual lives. It is true our temples, gurudwaras, churches and mosques reverberate with the prayers of the devout on festive occasions and even in the course of daily life. When individuals face dire situations, often they are led into prayer; their faith thus opens for them a source of comfort and encouragement in their hour of need.
2. But how does India as collective entity, exercise its faith in prayer? It may be recalled that during the freedom struggle and subsequently after Independence, the Father of the Nation used to lead the people in prayer on matters affecting its destiny. The men of different faiths used to take part in such meetings, which gave them a sense of purpose and also a sense of solidarity as people sharing one destiny.
3. Since the Mahatma fell to the bullets of an assassin, no one else probably came forward to provide leadership to an exercise of prayer at the national level. No doubt, people of all faiths had organized prayers at their places of worship in the aftermath of national tragedies like the Gujarat Earthquake of the Orissa cyclone. The hijacking of an Indian plane with its passengers of Kandahar in the recent past had moved this nation to pray.

The whole nation again had taken to prayers in mass on two other occasions when Amitabh Bachchan fell seriously on the sick bed.

4. Man's need for prayer is as great as his need for bread. As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul. I have not a shadow of doubt that the strife and quarrels with which our atmosphere is so full today are due to the absence of the spirit of true prayer. True prayer never goes unanswered," wrote Gandhiji. According to Vasudevan, Secretary of the Rajghat Samadhi Samiti, all-religion prayer meetings are held every Friday at Rajghat from 4 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.
5. It is said that the act of prayer changes people and situations. There is a general impression that prayer is an act of seeking favours from God for selfish ends. It is as if all praying people are only interested in taking their shopping lists to their Maker!

For from it, the very act of praying teaches one to sympathize with those who suffer. It broadens one's vision and outlook. It builds up one's character by imparting a sense of responsibility towards other people and situations.

6. The latest example of a praying nation comes from the United States which is often labelled as too materialistic. Speaking at the national Prayer Breakfast at Washington in the second week of February, President George Bush praised Americans of all faiths for turning to prayer in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. He said he had spent much time 'one bended knee' since terrorists attacked the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, killing more than 3000 people.



ENGLISH

7. Regardless of the religious affiliations, people in the affected areas showed an exemplary sense of togetherness in the hour of tragedy. All differences of religion, ethnicity, race and language were forgotten as volunteers got busy assuaging the pain and sorrow felt by the victims. The American example has several lessons for India which is also a pluralistic society. It has demonstrated that differences of religion and ethnicity need not stand in the way of the nation unitedly facing all its challenges. If it is true that all religious faiths teach tolerance, humility and the value of helping neighbours, then the religious leaders of this nation could also engender unity and oneness of purpose by coming together periodically to pray for the nation. And when they focus on the fact that all people, regardless of their differences share one common destiny, there could be greater communal harmony. Such a consciousness ought to pave the way for peace in society.
1. On the basis of your reading of the passage, answer the following questions by choosing the most appropriate option.

(1x2=2 marks)

1. People often pray when they _____
 - (a) Are sick
 - (b) Face dreadful situations
 - (c) Want their desires to be fulfilled
 - (d) Are depressed
 2. What is the general impression about the prayer?
 - (a) It provides food to the soul.
 - (b) It is an act of seeking favour from God.
 - (c) It teaches us to sympathise with those Who suffer.
 - (d) It imparts in us a sense of responsibility towards other people and situations.
- II. Answer the following questions as briefly as possible.

(1x6=6 marks)

1. Comment on the importance of the collective prayer organized by the Father of the Nation.
 2. On what occasions did the people of all faiths organize prayers at their places of worship?
 3. What has the absence of the true prayer resulted in?
 4. What does the act of praying teach us?
 5. What lesson does the America example give to India?
 6. What do all religious faiths teach?
- III. Find words from the passage which are similar in meaning to the following:

(2 marks)

- (a) Killer (para 4)
- (b) Shown/displayed (para4)