

Queensland Faith Communities Council

Draft Guidelines for Multi-Faith Prayer (September 2018)

Underlying Principles:

Our diversity is something to be celebrated. It is our gift to one another. It enriches us.

Multi-Faith Prayer is integral to what we do when Faith Communities come together. It is important that we are clear about what we are doing.

Definitions:

Prayer is talking to or with, communicating with, venerating, or meditating on God, the Divine, Other ...

There is no such thing as a common prayer we can all use.

There should be no expectation that everyone will join in with a prayer or song from a particular tradition.

Prayer of a particular faith tradition with invited Interfaith guests is perfectly valid and a useful learning experience. It is **NOT** Multi-Faith Prayer.

Types of Multi-Faith Prayer:

Series Prayer: Each Faith Community is allocated a set period of time and asked to pray from its own tradition on a particular topic. Others listen in respectful silence. Prayer leaders should be in good standing with their own community and focus on prayer, not making a speech.

It is advisable that the MC introduces all prayer leaders before prayer begins, and establishes an atmosphere of reflection. If necessary, it should be made clear that applause after a prayer is not appropriate.

Rostered Prayer: For groups that meet regularly there may be a roster established so that each tradition has an opportunity to pray.

Silent Prayer: All in attendance pause for a set period of time and pray according to their own tradition.

Venue: a neutral venue is always to be preferred. Some traditions have pictures, statues, icons which may be problematic for others. Only use designated places of worship if all others are comfortable with doing so.

Music: a number of traditions use songs, hymns, chants as forms of prayer. These could be used as the contribution of a particular tradition when series prayer is used.

Music could be used before prayer begins or for an entrance procession. If there are words, these should be appropriate and sung by a choir. There should be **NO** expectation that everyone will join in.

Dance: For indigenous people dance has a strong spiritual element and is therefore appropriate as their contribution to series prayer. This may also apply to other traditions. If there is a program for the event the meaning of the dance should be explained clearly so that people understand the significance. Multi-Faith Prayer is **NOT** a concert.

Collaboration and Respect

When planning a Multi-Faith Prayer event it is extremely important that all involved are consulted and, if possible, involved in the planning. Respect for each other's beliefs and customs is the starting point for good interfaith relations. Therefore, the dress of attendees should be appropriate/respectful; intoxicants (e.g. alcohol, cigarettes) should not be brought to the event, etc.