

## A Visit to the Mosque

Purpose and Etiquette when visiting a U.S. Islamic Center

**Mosques (often officially called Islamic centers) are the center of Islamic prayer and meditation and may serve other purposes such as a court, market or a school. The Arabic term masjid, literally means "a place to prostrate."**

Call ahead and ask permission to come and observe prayers. Make it clear that you are Christians simply wishing to observe the prayer ceremony.

### Purpose of the Visit

Always go with at least one other believer; don't go alone.

Your purpose should be:

- To pray for a blessing and the salvation of Muslims
- To learn about the concept of worship in Islam

### Inside the Mosque

- Pray silently** from the moment you enter. Ask God to reveal His Word to them.
- Women must dress modestly** (long skirts and long sleeves are best; bring along a scarf in case you are required to cover your head).
- Men must dress modestly** in long pants and a shirt or t-shirt.
- Take off your shoes** and put them on the rack.
- Sit in designated places for men or women.** Stay in the rear of the room as you observe prayer.
- Be a learner.** Ask good questions while listening to the responses carefully.
- Avoid prolonged conversations about Christianity** in the mosque. Make an appointment with individuals who wish to discuss issues in detail.

### Features

- Imam** -He leads prayers and is a leading elder. There is no institutionalized clergy.
- Mihrab** - Recess in wall indicating the direction of Mecca (Qiblah).
- Flooring** - Often mats aligned in rows facing Mihrab.

- **Place for Wudu** - Where ablutions before prayer are carried out.
- **Rack for shoes** · **Separate room or section for women**

Note: These guidelines apply only to North American mosques that accommodate non-Muslim visitors. Mosques in Muslim states are often restricted and open to Muslims only.