

## Mosque



Interior of an Indian Mosque during prayers\_

Muslims worship in a building called a mosque. An alternative word for mosque, from the original Arabic, is *masjid*, meaning place of prostration.

Outside every mosque, or just inside the entrance, is a place where worshippers can remove and leave their shoes. There is also a place where they can carry out the ritual washing required before prayer.

The main hall of a mosque is a bare room largely devoid of furniture. There are no pictures or statues. Muslims believe these are blasphemous, since there can be no image of Allah, who is wholly spirit.

Everyone sits on the floor and everywhere in the mosque is equal in status.

A niche in one of the walls, called a mihrab, shows the direction that the worshippers should face in order to face Mecca.

Many mosques have a minaret which is a tall thin tower. A muezzin stands at the top of the tower and calls Muslims to prayer at the five ritual times of the day. Not all mosques in the UK have a minaret.

Women can attend the mosque and when they do they sit separately from the men. This is out of modesty and to prevent any distraction. It is more usual for women to pray at home.