

Can Prayer Improve Your Health? Study Reveals Surprising Benefits

Prayer is far more than a spiritual discipline—it is a lifeline. Now, new research suggests that even a brief moment of receiving prayer may be associated with measurable improvements in physical and emotional well-being.

According to a report by Fox News, researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine found that just five minutes of in-person prayer was linked to significant reductions in pain and anxiety among patients in a primary care setting.

The findings, published in the *Annals of Family Medicine*, came from a randomized controlled trial involving 180 adults who reported experiencing moderate to severe pain, anxiety or both. Participants were recruited from a family medicine clinic and randomly assigned to one of two groups. One group received five minutes of face-to-face Christian prayer from a trained volunteer, while the other listened to music for five minutes, according to Fox News.

Researchers measured participants' pain and anxiety levels immediately after the intervention and again two weeks and six weeks later.

According to the study cited by Fox News, patients who received prayer experienced greater reductions in pain immediately following the session and continued to report lower pain levels than those in the music group at the two-week follow-up. While the difference in pain levels became less pronounced by six weeks, reductions in anxiety remained statistically significant throughout the study period.



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One of the most unexpected findings was that the benefits were not limited to participants who identified as highly religious.

"Religious affiliation, religious intensity and expectancy of healing did not predict who improved," Dr. Katherine Jacobson, assistant professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, told Fox News.

The study examined a practice known as proximal intercessory prayer, or PIP, in which one person prays directly and in person for another individual. Researchers found that participants experienced improvements regardless of their religious background or expectations about prayer.

The findings also revealed a generally positive attitude toward spiritual care in medical settings. Jacobson told Fox News that 97% of participants were either neutral or supportive of having prayer available during medical visits.

Pastor Jesse Bradley of Grace Community Church said the study's findings align with what many believers have experienced firsthand.

"Prayer is powerful and beneficial on many levels," Bradley told Fox News.

In a culture increasingly marked by stress, fear and uncertainty, the study highlights something many Christians have long embraced: moments of spiritual encouragement, compassionate care and prayer can have a meaningful impact.

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