## Individual prayer within a place of worship

## ****Permitted use****

* You can now enter a place of worship to pray or take part in religious or spiritual contemplation on your own and not as part of a wider group.
* You must be physically distanced from other individuals not in your household group.
* Public gatherings are still restricted. Attending pre-arranged acts of worship, including gathering for collective or communal prayer or worship or for regular scheduled services, within a place of worship is not yet permitted. This includes a minister of religion or lay person leading devotions or prayer of any sort.
* It is encouraged that services continue to take place online wherever possible.
* Contact your local place of worship to find out what activity is permitted and what is prohibited. Those responsible for running a place of worship should engage and communicate with worshippers and the wider community to explain what activity is permitted and what is still prohibited.

### Faith-specific practices

Faith leaders and those responsible for places of worship should consider whether it is safe to carry out certain faith-specific rites and rituals at this time in accordance with this guidance.

In addition to the [key principles](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/pages/key-principles/), it is strongly advised that:

* You do not touch or kiss devotional and other objects that are handled communally.
* You avoid touching property belonging to others such as shoes which, if taken off, should be handled only by their owner.
* Communal resources such as books, prayer mats and services sheets are removed from use. If you use single use alternatives then you should remove these after use.
* You should remove any personal items brought in to aid worship after use.
* Kitchens are closed and no food or drink will be available with the exception of water, if this is necessary for health reasons. Bring your own bottled water, but where water is provided this will be in single use cups or bottles that are disposed of immediately after use.
* You must wipe water taps after use.
* Use of shared spaces such as washing/ablution areas is limited, with physical distancing observed at all times. Areas should be cleaned between each use. Wherever possible, washing/ablution rituals should be carried out at home
* Cash giving is discouraged, with online giving used instead. Where cash offerings continue, you must wear gloves when handling money.
* Activities such as singing and chanting should be avoided at this stage

### Restrictions on capacity

* There is no legal limit on the maximum number of people that may attend a place of worship for individual prayer or contemplation at any one time.
* However, there will be restrictions set by individual places of worship to limit the number of people permitted to enter for individual prayer or contemplation at any one time, so that a safe distance of at least 2 metres can be maintained between individuals from different household groups.
* Those responsible for a place of worship should determine the maximum number of worshippers that can be accommodated based on the available space (taking into account total floor space and likely ‘pinch points’ and busy areas), the building design and layout, and the availability of staff/volunteers to help manage attendance.
* It is strongly recommended that places of worship are closed to individual prayer or contemplation during the time normal services would be taking place to avoid the potential for over-crowding.

The full guidance can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/pages/overview/>