

# Power of prayer to help heal studied

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Two U.S. studies, scheduled to be soon released, found mixed results on the power of prayer to help cure ailing people.

Skeptics of the studies say the work is a deeply flawed and misguided waste of money that tries to validate the supernatural with science, while some believers in the power of prayer say it is pointless to try to divine the workings of God with experiments devised by mortals, The Washington Post reported Friday.

Prayer is the most common complement to mainstream medicine -- far outpacing acupuncture, herbs, vitamins and other alternative remedies and surveys have found that about half of Americans regularly pray for their own health, the Post said.

"Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism -- every religion believes in prayer for healing," said Paul Parker, a professor of theology and religion at Elmhurst College outside Chicago. "Some call it prayer, some call it cleansing the mind. The words or posture may vary. But in times of illness, all religions look toward their source of authority."

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