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After hundreds of years without them, prayer rooms are suddenly regarded as an essential requirement for the workplace. A guide produced by St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, in the City of London, says that employers should take into account the “needs” of their religious employees. It says that that “the business case for providing prayer rooms and best practice on creating and managing effective space” makes good business sense by “helping to attract, motivate and retain staff, and building a reputation for diversity.”

The guide is sponsored by Barclays and The Mercer's Company, and was created in collaboration with the Employers Forum on Belief, Quiet Room Designs and a number of other organisations – many of which have a vested interest.

The guide has the backing — inevitably — of the Department for Communities and Local Government and contains a preface by The Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP who writes: "No matter who we are, I believe we can all benefit from finding a little time to reflect and rise above the daily routine. I hope this guide will inspire many more businesses, large and small, to help people find their own moments of refuge in a busy day."

Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society, said: “Let's cut through the gobbledegook and double talk that surrounds religion in the work place and look at the reality. ‘Quiet rooms’, ‘meditation areas’ and ‘multi-faith prayer rooms’ are all euphemisms for Muslim prayer rooms. There has been no call for such spaces before Muslim activists started the clamour. Now all religions have to have one. The staff room or the canteen used to be the place to go and have a coffee and unwind, now we have to have a prayer room.”

Mr Sanderson said that however inclusive such spaces were intended to be, they were invariably taken over by Muslims who then started excluding other people. He pointed out the case of the [Royal Mail](#) and the [hospital](#) in Glasgow where conflict over the use of prayer rooms has led to court cases and extreme unpleasantness.

“This sudden push for prayer rooms has been created by Islamic activists and taken up opportunistically by Christians. It won't be long now before prayer rooms are mandatory and employers become further beholden to the never-ending demands of religionists.”

See also:

[Practising religion on the job can lead to conflict](#)
[Wars over religion seen in a third of workplaces](#)