News 22 November 2026 | English article

Florida Christians Recite Lord's Prayer Over Imam's Invocation at City Meeting, 20 Escorted Out

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Christ is King!"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

On Monday evening 16 November 2026, Imam Sajid R. Bhuiya of Masjid Al-Nur Mosque in Bartow, Florida, was invited to deliver the opening invocation at the Bartow City Commission meeting. As he stepped to the lectern, dozens of Christian protesters began reciting the Lord's Prayer in unison, chanting "USA!" And "Christ is King!" The disruption lasted nearly ten minutes, through multiple recitations, before Bhuiya could finally deliver his invocation.

For ten minutes, a Florida city hall rang with two prayers at once - one man at the microphone, and a whole room answering him with the Lord's Prayer. Nobody in that chamber will forget the sound of it. The question now is what the rest of America makes of it, because the video has already travelled far beyond Bartow.

Bhuiya had been invited to open the meeting in the usual way, with a short prayer before the city's business began. He stood at the lectern as the crowd rose around him, and the Lord's Prayer rolled over his words again and again. When the room finally quieted, he delivered his invocation, quoting from the Quran, chapter 49, on the dignity and respect owed to all people and all faiths.

Police escorted about 20 people from the chamber, and no one was arrested. One attendee shouted at Mayor Tanya Tucker: "This is a Christian nation, Ms. Mayor!" The words hung in the air long after the meeting moved on to its agenda.

The protest had not come out of nowhere. Word spread on social media over the weekend, and around 100 protesters and concerned residents turned up for the meeting. The invitation itself had a quiet, ordinary origin: a member of a local Hindu temple had asked to deliver a future invocation, and City Attorney Sean Parker then suggested reaching out to Bartow's mosque.

The city has defended the invitation. Officials say the invocation slot is open to all faiths and consistent with the Constitution. That is the rule in Bartow: any faith community may be asked to open a meeting, and the city's position is that the First Amendment requires nothing less.

Not everyone in Bartow agreed with the protest, and not everyone agreed with the invitation either. Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer said the city had recieved 214 emails supporting the Christian community by late Monday afternoon. That number tells its own story - hundreds of residents felt strongly enough to write in, and the commissioners heard them.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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