



Congregational Prayers

صلاة الجماعة

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

Congregational Prayers

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded of the importance of Jamā'ah prayers briefly.
- Understand that Jamā'ah prayers is very rewarding
- Be encouraged to recite Jamā'ah prayers whenever possible introducing them to the minimum number of people required
- Learn some of the general rules of Jamā'ah prayer

In previous years, we have learnt about Jamā'ah prayer, which means when we pray together in a congregation behind a person called the Imam. There are many benefits when we pray in Jamā'ah which includes discipline and unity. The reward for the person who joins in Jamā'ah prayer is very high. In this lesson we will focus on some basic rules of Jamā'ah prayers.

ONE OF THE MOST RECOMMENDED ACTS

Ṣalāt is the most important act of worship in Islam, and if it is accepted by Allah (SWT), then all other acts of worship are accepted as well. However, if the Ṣalāt is not accepted, then all other actions also will not be accepted. It has been narrated from Imam Ja'far (as) quoting his forefathers up to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, that he said:

“If there was a stream at the house of any one of you in which he washes himself five times a day, will there remain any dirt on your body? Ṣalāt is like that stream. The person who looks after his Ṣalāt, purifies himself from his sins with this Ṣalāt.”ⁱ

THE IMPORTANCE OF JAMĀ'AH PRAYER

In Islam, perhaps there is no other act as rewarding as Jamā'ah prayer. As for the importance of it, we quote one narration in which the Prophet (saw) says:

"The rows of my followers in the congregational prayer on the earth are like the rows of angels in the sky; and a rak'ah of prayer in congregation is equivalent with twenty-four rak'āt, and every rak'ah with Allah, Almighty and Glorious, is more beloved than forty years of worship. Therefore, on the Day of Justice, when Allah gathers all human beings from the beginning to the end for Reckoning, there will be no believer who has attended the congregational prayer but for whom Allah will decrease the grievousness of the Day of Reckoning and after that the one will be told to enter Heaven."ⁱⁱ

It is recommended to perform all the five prayers in Jamā'ah as much as possible. It is even more recommended to pray Jamā'ah at the mosque if we live close to the mosque.

RULES OF CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

We have already learnt some basic rules we have to follow when performing Jamā'ah prayers. Some key rules include the following:

- There is always a person to lead Jamā'ah prayer who is called *Imam*
- The people who follow the Imam should stand behind the Imam in rows
- When performing Jamā'ah prayer, it is important to listen to the Imam when he is

ⁱ (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 82, Pg. 236)

ⁱⁱ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 88, p. 6

reciting any sūrah. Therefore, when we are standing in the first two rak'āt of each prayer, we should not recite the sūrah. Instead, we should just listen to the Imam.

- There should not be any gap in the lines of the followers. Everyone should be connected somehow.
- Children (who are not yet Muballigh) always should stand between two adults while performing congregational prayers.
- If we arrive to the mosque late and the Jamā'ah prayer has already started, we can still join the prayer and follow the Imam in his actions. Once the Jamā'ah prayer finishes, we should continue and make up the rak'āt we missed at the beginning. We will learn more details about this next year.

Review Questions

1. If we arrive at the mosque late:

- a. We should not join the Jamā'ah prayer
- b. We should join the Jamā'ah prayer and make up what we missed at the end
- c. We should join the Jamā'ah prayer and finish with everyone else

2. When the Imam is reciting the sūrah in the first two rak'āt, we should:

- a. Recite as well
- b. Listen to the Imam only
- c. Listen to the Imam and recite