**THE FIVE PRESCRIBED PRAYERS**



Be ever mindful and protective of the Prescribed Prayers, and the Middle Prayer (the Morning or Afternoon Prayer), and stand in the presence of Allah in utmost devotion and obedience. (al-Baqarah 2:238) (1)



If they repent and (mending their ways) establish the Prescribed Prayer, and pay the Prescribed Purifying Alms, let them go their way. (at-Tawbah 9:5) (2)

532. Mu’adh, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sent me to Yemen and said, ‘You are going to a people who have a Book. When you come to them, call on them to testify that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. If they obey you in respect of that, then tell them that Allah has made the five Prayers obligatory for them every night and day. If they obey you in respect of that, inform them that Allah has made it obligatory for zakah to be taken from their property and given to their poor. If they obey you in respect of that, beware of the things on which people place great value and beware of the supplication of the wronged. There is no veil between him and Allah.’” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Zakah, 41; Sahih Muslim, Iman, 29–31). (3)

533. Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say, ‘All that lies between a man and shirk (associating partners with Allah) and disbelief is abandoning the Prayer.’” (Sahih Muslim, Iman, 134). (4)

Annotation: If somebody abandons Prayer, no veils remain between them and unbelief. It is such a dangerous and momentary issue to step into the side of unbelief. Since the veil is removed, they do not even realize that.

The Five Prescribed Prayers

The Morning (Fajr) Prayer

The morning prayer, which is performed between the break of dawn and the approach of sunrise, consists of a total of four units, two of which are Sunnah and two *fard*. The Sunnah units are performed before the *fard* prayers. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, emphasized the importance of performing the Sunnah prayers at dawn. Therefore, one is allowed to pray the Sunnah units of the morning prayer even when the congregational prayer has started, provided that one has enough time to join the *fard* congregational prayer later on.

The Noon (Zuhr) Prayer

The noon prayer consists of ten units, four of which are *fard* and six Sunnah. Initially the first four Sunnahs are performed, followed by the four *fard*, and then the two last Sunnah units of the prayer.

The Afternoon (‘Asr) Prayer

The afternoon prayer is a total of eight units, consisting of four Sunnah and four *fard* units. The four Sunnah are performed, which is then followed by the *fard* units of the prayer. Only the *fard* units of the afternoon prayer should be performed if there is forty five minutes or less remaining to the end of prescribed time.

The Evening (Maghrib) Prayer The evening prayer is made up of five units, three of which are *fard* and two Sunnah. The three *fard* units are performed first, followed by the two Sunnah.

The Night (‘Ishâ’) Prayer Including the three units of *witr*, the night prayer is a total of thirteen units. The first four units of Sunnah prayer are performed, followed by the four units of *fard* prayer. After the *fard* prayers, the final two Sunnah units are performed. The three units of the *witr* prayer can be performed right after the night prayer up to the break of dawn. For the convenience of the believers, however, it can be prayed after the night prayer, so that one will not miss it because of sleep. In performing the daily prayers, it is not permissible to combine the Sunnah and *fard* prayers, each specific prayer must be completed before beginning the next prayer.

**THE CHART FOR DAILY**

*How to Perform the Prayers*

The prayer begins with the opening takbîr. Raise your hands, palms facing the qiblah, and recite “Allâhu Akbar.” According to the Hanafis, men raise their hands up to the ears, with their thumbs touching the earlobes. Women raise their hands up to the shoulders, placing them in front of their chest, with the palms facing the qiblah. Following the opening takbîr, men should place their hands just below the navel with the right hand holding onto the left one at the wrist. Women place both hands on the chest, the right hand on top of the left one. After placing your hands in the appropriate place, recite Subhânaka (or any other supplication which the Prophet used to recite in his prayers.) Following this opening supplication, recite A‘ûdhu-Basmala and then Sûrah al-Fâtihah. Say “Âmîn” quietly or loudly when reciting Sûrah al-Fâtihah. Then recite another sûrah or passage from the Qur’ân (at least three short ones or one equally long verse of the Qur’ân). Then bow down saying “Allâhu Akbar.” Recite “Subhâna Rabbiyal ‘Azîm” at least three times in the bowing position (rukû‘). Say “Sami‘allâhu liman hamidah” while rising from the bowing position, and “Rabbanâ lakal-hamd” when fully upright (i.e. after reaching the standing position). Then say “Allâhu Akbar” while going into prostration. Recite “Subhâna Rabbiyal-A’lâ” at least three times while in the prostration position. Then say “Allâhu Akbar” when rising from the prostration and sit upright for a moment with your knees bent and palms resting on them. Prostrate again saying “Allâhu Akbar” and recite “Subhâna Rabbiyal- A’lâ” at least three times while in the prostration position. Then stand up from the prostration position saying “Allâhu Akbar.” This completes one rak‘ah, or unit, of the prayer. The second rak‘ah, or unit, of the prayer is performed in the same manner as the first rak‘ah above, except that you only recite “Bismillâhir- Rahmânir-Rahîm” without reciting the opening prayer of Subhânaka. Following the prostrations of the second rak‘ah (unit) of the prayer, remain seated and recite the prayers of at-tahiyyât, Salât alan Nabî (i.e., Allâhumma Salli and Allâhumma Bârik) as well as Rabbâna Âtinâ and Rabbanâghfirlî while in the sitting position. Then give salâms (peace greetings), saying “as-salâmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullâh” while turning your head to the right and left (both times). When you give salâms, turn your head first to the right and then the left, with the eyes looking down at the shoulder. This completes the two-Sunnah unit of the morning prayer. After completing the two fard-units of the morning prayer in the same way, then recite the tasbihâtus-salâh as a supplement of prayer in remembrance of God. First recite A‘ûdhu-Basmala and then Âyatul Kursî. Then recite the tasbihât, or words, of glorification (“Subhân Allâh”), of praise (“al-hamdulillah”), and of exaltation (“Allâhu Akbar”), 33 times each. Finally, you make du‘â’s. You can pray to God, ask for forgiveness and mercy from Him, and offer greetings to the Prophet. You can pray in your own language and in your own words to your heart’s content.

How to Perform the Fard Units of the Morning Prayer

The *fard* units are performed in the same manner as the Sunnah units of the morning prayer, the only difference being the intention for prayer. Before beginning the *fard* units of the morning prayer, the individual must make the intention, “I intend to perform the *fard* of the morning prayer for the sake of God” in the heart. In addition to this, the *iqâmah* is also recited before beginning the *fard* prayer. It is Sunnah for men to recite the *iqâmah* before performing the *fard* units of every prayer.

How to Perform the Other Prayers

All of the Sunnah prayers consisting of two units are performed in the same manner as the Sunnah of the morning prayers; the only difference is the intention for prayer. The individual must have the intention of performing that specific prayer. If the Sunnah prayers consist of four units, *at-tahiyyât* is recited during the first sitting after the first two units of the prayer, and the individual immediately rises to the standing position for the third unit of the prayer. In the third and fourth units of the Sunnah prayers only *Basmala* is pronounced before the recitation of *Al-Fâtihah*.

It is to be noted that in the first sitting of the Sunnah units of the afternoon and the first Sunnahs of the night prayer, the supplications *Allâhumma salli* and *Allâhumma bârik* are recited after the recitation of *at-tahiyyât*, and when standing for the third unit of these two prayers, reciting Subhânaka and *A‘ûdhu- Basmala* is necessary, whereas in the fourth unit of the prayer only *Basmala* is pronounced before reciting *Al-Fâtihah*.

After expressing the intention of performing a specific prayer, all of the *fard* prayers are executed in the same way as the *fard* units of the morning prayer. After reciting *Al-Fâtihah* in the third and fourth units of the *fard* prayers of the noon, afternoon and night prayers and the third unit of the evening prayers no other verses of the Qur’ân are recited.

Witr Prayer

􀂊 The *witr* prayer is a *wâjib* act of worship that consists of three units. First, the individual defines the intention for prayer: “I intend to perform the *witr* prayers for the sake of God.”

􀂊 The first two units are performed in the same way as the Sunnah of the morning prayer.

􀂊 On completion of the prostrations following the second unit the individual remains seated, and following the recitation of *attahiyyât*, he or she rises to the standing position and recites *Al-Fâtihah* followed by another *sûrah* or Qur’anic verses, after which men raise their hands to ear level and women chest level to pronounce the *takbîr*.

􀂊 The hands are then placed on the navel or chest again, and the *Qunût* supplications are recited (The *Qunût* supplications are a *wâjib* act of the prayer).

􀂊 After the recitation of the *Qunût* supplications, the individual bows and performs the prostrations as usual.

􀂊 In the last sitting of the prayer following the prostrations, the usual supplications are recited, and then greetings are given to the right and left, therefore completing the prayer.

What are the tasbihâtus-salâh (glorifications recited after the prayer)?

Various *tasbihât* (words of glorification repeated in a set number of times) and *du‘a*s (prayers and supplications) are recited after worship as a supplement of prayer and in remembrance of God. The Prophet recited these *tasbihât* and *du‘â’*s after every prayer and advised all Muslims to practice this on a regular basis. The manner of performing *tasbihât* after the prayer is:

􀂊 Reciting “Allâhumma antas-Salâmu wa minkas-Salâm. Tabarakta yâ Dhal-Jalâli wal-Ik râm” after giving *salâm* on completion of the *fard* prayers. The meaning of this supplication is as follows: “O God, You are Peace, and from You is peace. You are the All-Blessed and One bestowing blessings, O One of Majesty and Munificence.”

􀂊 If there is no Sunnah units after the *fard* prayers, “Allâhumma salli ‘alâ Sayidinâ Muhammad” should be recited after the above supplication.

􀂊 This is followed by “Subhânallâhi wal-hamdu lillâhi wa lâ ilâha illallâhu wallâhu akbar. Wa lâ hawla wa lâ quwwata illâ billâhil ‘azîm” (Glory be to God and all praise to God, there is no deity other than God, God is the All-Great. None has the majesty and none has power to sustain except God.) This is followed by the *A‘ûdhu-Basmala* and the recitation of *Âyatul-Kursî* (“the Verse of the Throne” in Sûrah al-Baqarah 2:255).

􀂊 Subsequently the following words of glorification, praise and exaltation are each recited thirty three times in the following order: “Subhân Allâh,” “alhamdulillâh,” and “Allâhu akbar”.

*Subhân Allâh* bears the meanings “Glory be to God, He who is free from all fault.” *Alhamdulillâh* means “Praise is for God alone. Only God is worthy of praise and gratitude,” and *Allâhu akbar* means “God is the All-Great.”

􀂊 Followed by “Lâ ilâha illallâhu wahdahû lâ sharîka lah. Lahul mulku wa lahul hamdu wa huwa ‘alâ kulli shay’in qadîr” which is followed by a supplication of prayer.

The meaning of the above supplication is: “There is none worthy of worship but God, He is One and has no partner. His is the kingdom (universe), only He is worthy of all praise. God has power over all things.”

Congregational Prayers

The *fard* prayers can be performed either alone or in congregation. Performing the prayers in congregation is emphasized by the Prophet, and it is not difficult to form a congregation for the prayer as two people are sufficient to form a congregation—one as the imam and the other the congregation. Therefore, if a person is praying, for instance, the second unit of the first Sunnah of the noon prayer alone and finds some people starting their *fard* prayer in congregation, he should abandon his prayer by giving *salâm* at the end of the second unit of his prayer and join the congregation.

According to the Hanafis, it is a strong Sunnah for men to perform the five daily prayers in congregation, and *fard* to perPrayer form the Friday prayers in a congregational prayer. In addition, Muslim women should dress modestly while going out or to the mosque; therefore, she should wear neither transparent, tightfitting clothing nor perfumes while praying in the mosque.

Is the reward greater for performing congregational prayers?

Performing the prayers in congregation bears great importance in our religion. Although the congregational prayers were not prescribed an obligatory duty by God, the Prophet emphasized that the reward for praying among a community is twenty seven times greater than the reward for praying alone. In one of the hadith the Prophet said: “Whoever attends the mosque for prayer will be forgiven one sin for each step taken, and his degree will be raised one level,” and in another hadith: “One who performs the night prayer in congregation is as if he has prayed for half of the night. And one who performs the morning prayer in congregation as well is as if he has prayed the whole night.”

The prayer performed in congregation encourages brotherhood and charity, arouses our emotions of respecting and caring for each other, and helps us to protect our unity and solidarity as a community.

How to Perform the Congregational Prayers

Those who comply with the imam for the congregational prayer must make the intention for both the prayer and compliance with the imam. After the imam pronounces the opening *takbîr*, the congregation also performs the *takbîr*, and then recites *Subhânaka*. According to the Hanafis, the congregation does not recite *Al-Fâtihah* or any other verses of the Qur’ân with the imam. Followers of various Islamic schools should, therefore, take into consideration the difference of preferences regarding it. As the imam bows, those performing the prayer also bow down and recite “Subhâna Rabbiyal-‘Azîm” (“All- Glorious is my Lord, the Mighty”) (at least) three times. When the imam rises from the bowing position and says, “Sami‘allâhu liman hamidah,” those praying behind him silently say, “Rabbanâ lakal-hamd” (“Our Lord, to You is all praise”,) and then follow the imam to prostration and recite “Subhâna Rabbiyal- A‘lâ” (“All-Glorious is my Lord, the Most High”) (at least) three times. Only *at-tahiyyât* is recited in the first sitting of a three or four unit prayer, and in the last sitting *at-tahiyyât*, the two supplications of the *Salât ‘alan Nabî* (“Blessings for the Prophet”) and then the usual supplications recited during the last sitting. Finally, those praying bestow *salâm* (“greetings”) towards the right and the left together with the imam, thus completing prayer.

What should a latecomer do if the prayer has already begun?

First of all, the latecomer should not run or hasten to join the congregation but should walk with ease and dignity, and he should join the existing rows of congregation as he is not allowed to form a row alone if there is space available in the front. The rows need to be straight and compact so that the shoulders of those praying in congregation touch one another.

In order to reach the prayer in time, an individual must make the intention for prayer and perform the *takbîr* before the imam rises from the bowing position of the first unit of prayer, saying “Sami‘allâhu liman hamidah.” A person who makes the intention of complying with the imam who is still in the bowing position of the first unit of prayer has arrived in time for the first unit of prayer in time. If a latecomer joins the congregation before or in the bowing position of any unit of prayer, then it means he has completed that unit (*rak’ah*) of prayer.

Those who arrive late, and make the intention of complying with the imam in the second, third, or fourth units continue the congregational prayer as usual, but after the imam gives *salâm* at the end of the prayer, the person rises from the sitting position and, proclaiming “Allâhu akbar,” completes the missed units of prayer in order, beginning with the first unit.

Therefore, the latecomer who complies with the imam does not give *salâm* together with the imam but stands up to complete the missed units right after the imam gives the *salâm*. While he is in the standing position to perform the units of missed prayers, he must recite *Al-Fâtihah* (and the additional verses of the Qur’ân while performing the first two units of his missed prayer) as he would while praying alone. We should keep in mind that the unit in which the individual complied with the imam is classified as his first unit of prayer, and then the individual must continue the subsequent units accordingly. For example, a person who arrives during the last unit of the night prayer should make the intention of complying with the imam, pronounce the *takbîr*, and continue the prayer without reciting anything else. Then he must remain seated, recite *at-tahiyyât* in the sitting position, and then wait for the imam to give *salâm*. The individual must then stand without giving *salâm* and begin to perform the first unit of prayer that he missed. Reciting *Subhânaka* and *Audhu-Basmala*, then *Al-Fâtihah* and some more verses of the Qur’ân, the individual performs the bowing, prostrations, and recitation of *at-tahiyyât* in the sitting position. Then he stands up to perform the second unit of prayer that he missed. reciting *Al-Fâtihah* and other verses of the Qur’ân. Finally, he stands up to perform the third unit of prayer that he missed and recites only *Al-Fâtihah*, then performs the bowing, prostrations, and recitations of supplications in the final sitting position and gives *salâm* to the right and the left as usual. (5)

**References**

**(1) 2:238 /The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(2) 9:5 /The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

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**(5) The Young Person’s Guide to Living Islam, Asli Kaplan, Tughrabooks**