

Congregational Prayers in Islam

1. Salat-ul-Jama'ah صلاة الجمعة :

The Daily Congregational Prayers

UNIT

E

CHAPTER

THREE

LESSON ONE

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 1 To learn the different types of congregational prayer in Islam.
- 2 To distinguish between obligatory and recommended congregational prayer.
- 3 To understand the importance of Salat-ul-Jama'ah and other congregational prayers.

VOCABULARY

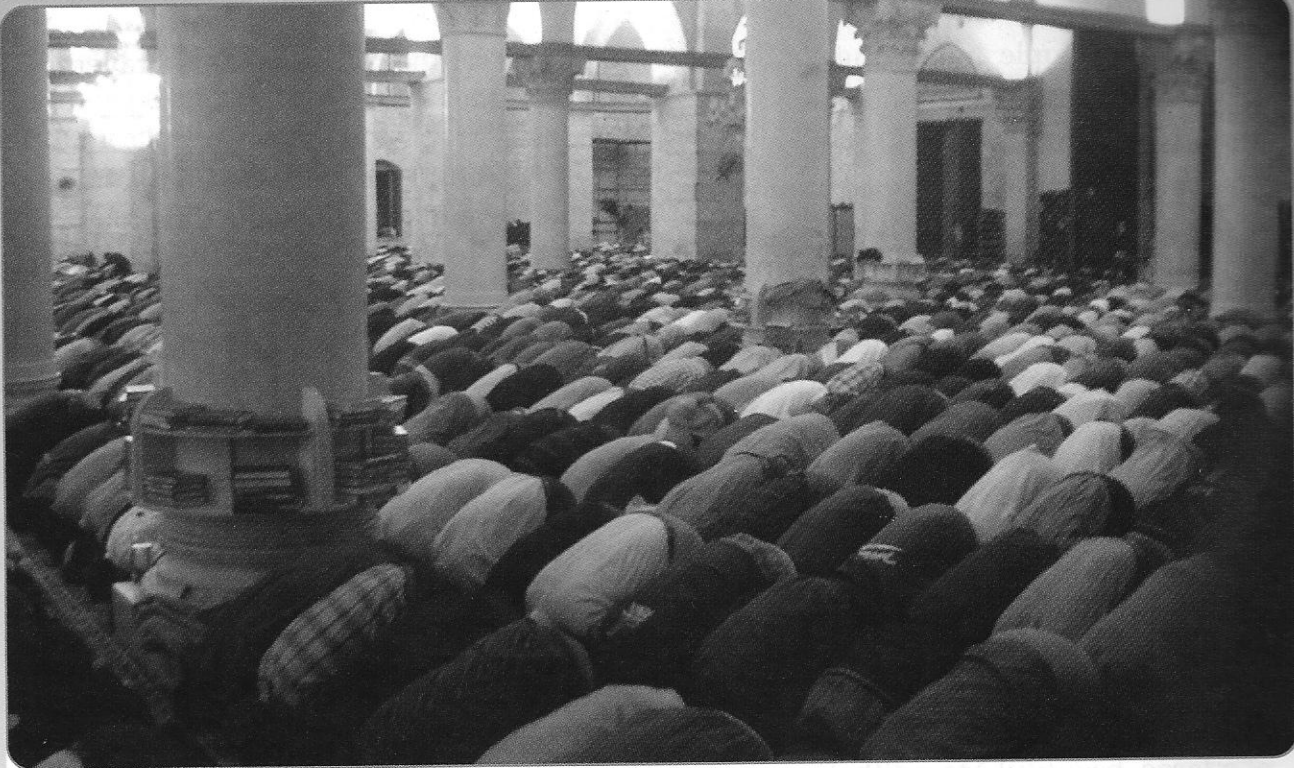
Salat-ul-Jama'ah صلاة الجمعة

Salat-ul-Jumu'ah صلاة الجمعة

Salat-ul-Eid صلاة العيد

Salat-ul-Masbooq صلاة المسبوق

Performing the five obligatory prayers (Fajr, Thuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib, and 'Isha) in Jama'ah or in a group is itself a Sunnah Mu'kkadah or Confirmed Sunnah. Some scholars like Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and others consider Salat-ul-Jama'ah in the Masjid an obligatory ritual on men. The Prophet ﷺ always prayed in the Masjid with the Sahabah, or companions. The Prophet ﷺ emphatically encouraged the Muslims to pray in a group or congregation whenever possible. The Prophet gave women the choice to come to the Masjid for Salat-ul-Jama'ah or to pray at home.



Hadeeth Shareef

عن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنه قال:
 "صلاة الجماعة أفضل من صلاة الفرد بسبع وعشرين
 درجة"

رواه البخاري ومسلم

Abdullah Ibn Umar narrates, "The prayer in congregation is superior to a prayer performed individually by twenty-seven degrees."

(Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

By the example and sayings of the Prophet ﷺ we come to understand the importance of attending the obligatory prayers in the Masjid and performing them in a group. We should all aspire to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation and encourage others to do so. When we are at home we should politely ask our parents or the adults in our family to take us to the Masjid in order to pray. If no one is able to drive us there, we should ask them to pray in a group with us at home.

Do you think that Allah commanded Muslims to build Masajid all over the world only for Salat-ul-Jumu'ah or the Friday prayer once a week? The image of a large, beautiful Masjid that is empty all week long is a sad one. Allah wants us to visit His house, the Masjid every day. Here is a story about the importance of visiting the Masjid and praying in congregation every day:

A blind man once came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and said: "O Rasoolullah(S), I am a blind man and my house is a little far from the Masjid. Would you allow me not to come to the Masjid every day?" The Prophet ﷺ first said: "Yes". As the man started walking away the Prophet ﷺ quickly called him back and asked:

"Do you hear the call to prayer (from your house)?" "Yes," the man replied. The Prophet then said:

"Then, you should answer the call," meaning that it is better to come to the

Masjid for the congregational prayers every day.

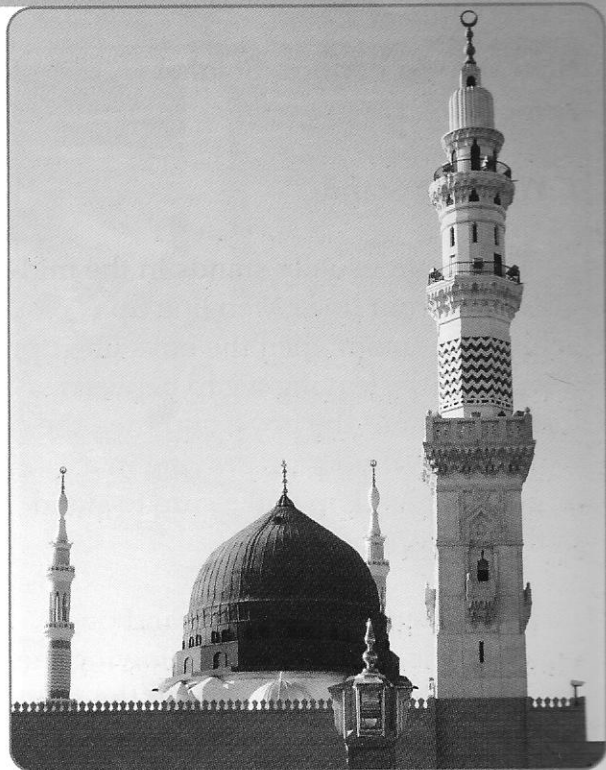
Although the man was blind and it may have taken him some time to find his way to the Masjid five times a day, the Prophet ﷺ told him to answer the call to prayer and come to the Masjid for every prayer. This is how important it is to center one's life around praying in the Masjid and to put all of one's efforts into doing so consistently. Every step one takes towards the Masjid will be rewarded immensely.

Later, Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktoom, the blind man, was to become a great Muslim. The Prophet came to trust Abdullah greatly and he made him the Mu'athin of the Masjid so that Abdullah would now give the call to prayer. Abdullah was also sometimes chosen as the leader of Medina when the Prophet was traveling outside the city. Had the Prophet allowed Abdullah to stay home instead of coming to the Masjid every day, Abdullah would never have become such an important Muslim in the community.

When we go to the Masjid to perform Salat-ul-Jama'ah in congregation we receive much reward. We please Allah and gain the barakah, or the blessing of praying in His house. We come to know the Muslims in our community and gain a sense of unity. In Salat-ul-Jama'ah, the rich man prays next to the poor man and they are both equal as they stand before Allah. Furthermore, at the Masjid, we are surrounded by other people who are strug-

gling to be good Muslims. By getting to know one another and attending Islamic classes together at the Masjid, we can help each other to become great Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ, always checked to make sure that his Sahabah or Companions came to Salat-ul-Jama'ah or the Congregational Prayers every-day. He would be upset with those who were always absent without good reason, such as being sick or traveling outside Medina.



How to Pray Salat-ul-Jama'ah

Where Do We Pray Salat-ul-Jama'ah or Congregational Prayer?

Usually Salat-ul-Jama'ah takes place at the Masjid. The Prophet and the Sahabah used to pray in the Masjid five times a day. However, a Muslim can pray Salat-ul-Jama'ah in a group with other Muslims at school, work, or at home when he is unable to go to the Masjid because of a good reason. Of course, Salat-ul-Jama'ah is most rewarded in the Masjid.

When Do We Pray Salat-ul-Jama'ah?

Five times a day, Muslims pray Salat-ul-Jama'ah in the Masjid shortly

after the prayer time starts and the adhan or call to prayer is given.

Who Should Pray Salat-ul-Jama'ah?

The Prophet ﷺ encouraged all Muslims to pray Salat-ul-Jama'ah at the Masjid. However, while men are only excused if they are sick, traveling, or have a valid excuse, women are generally excused from praying at the Masjid if they are busy at home. When a woman is unable to pray in the Masjid because she has young children, Allah gives her great reward for praying at home and taking care of her children.

How Do We Perform Salat-ul-Jama'ah?

1. Where to Stand

The Imam usually stands in the middle of the front line. Men line up behind the Imam; then the boys line up; then the girls, leaving a gap between themselves and the boys; and then the women. So, if you are praying in a large congregation, make sure to stand in the appropriate line.

- If there is a male Imam and one male Ma'moom or person following the Imam, the Ma'moom stands to the right of the Imam. The same goes for a female Imam and one female Ma'moomah.

- If there is a male Imam and one female Ma'moomah, the female Ma'moomah stands behind the Imam.

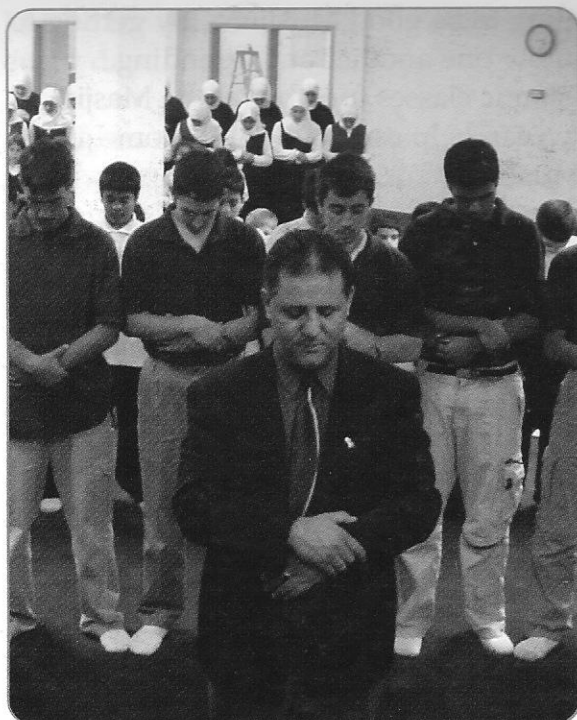
2. How to Follow the Imam

- Follow the Imam in every move that he makes during the prayer.

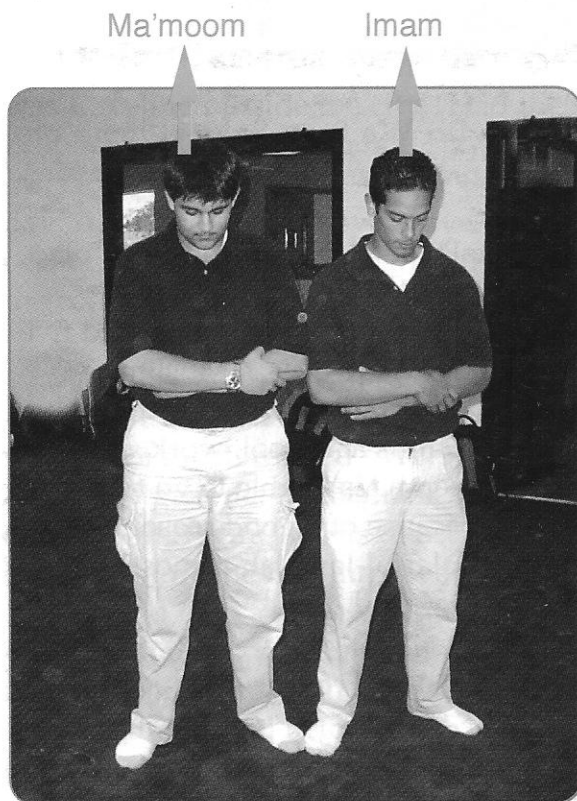
- When the Imam says Allahu-Akbar out loud, you should say it quietly to yourself.

- Some Muslims recite Al-Quran quietly to themselves, even when the Imam is reciting out loud. They wait a moment and make every movement right after the Imam. This is the correct way to pray in a congregation according to the Shafi'i school of law.

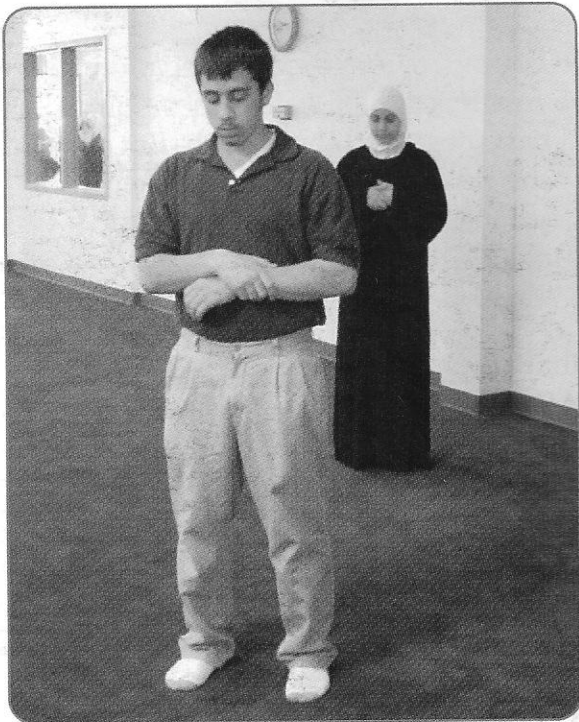
- Some Muslims listen silently when Al-Quran is being recited, even when the Imam is reciting quietly to himself.



Position of Imam and people behind him in Salat-ul-Jama'a



The positions of Imam and Ma'moom when only 2 males pray together.



The positions of Imam and Ma'moom when a male and female pray together.



They make every movement with the Imam. This is the correct way to pray in a congregation according to the Hanafi school of law.

- You should never make a movement before the Imam.

- When you are praying, remember that you are standing before Allah. Try not to make unnecessary movements and try to be respectful to those praying beside you by not being loud in your prayer and by not taking up too much space.

3. Salat-ul-Masbooq: Joining a Group in Prayer after the Imam has started

When you join a group in prayer after the Imam has finished the first Rak'ah it is called Salat-ul-Masbooq. If

you arrive late for prayer at the Masjid and you have already missed at least one Rak'ah of the prayer, you should walk in calmly and join the group with respect. Join the last line of the congregation in order not to disrupt the prayer. Immediately raise your hands and say "Allahu akbar" and follow the Imam.

After the Imam makes Tasleem by turning to his right and left sides and saying "Assalamu 'alaykum wa rahmat-ullah," you may stand up to complete your prayer by performing any parts that you may have missed. If you join the group in prayer anytime before the Imam stands up after completing rukoo' or the bowing position, you count that as a Rak'ah or unit of prayer that you have prayed with the Imam.



If you happen to join the congregation while the Imam is still in Rukoo' position, then you have observed the Rak'ah. But if you miss the Rukoo' with the Imam then you have missed the Rak'ah and you have to make it up.

The following are possible scenarios for Salat-ul-Masbooq:

- If you join the group for 'Asr prayer after the Imam has started and you pray three Rak'at with the group, then you know that you have missed one out of the four Rak'at of the 'Asr prayer. After the Imam makes Tasleem, you stand up to pray one more Rak'ah, then you end your prayer as usual, by making Juloos or the seated position, Tashahhud, and Tasleem
- If you pray two Rak'at of the 'Asr prayer with the group, then you know that you have missed two Rak'at. After the Imam makes Tasleem, you stand up to pray two more Rak'at and end your prayer as usual.
- If you pray one Rak'ah of the 'Asr prayer with the group, then you know

that you have missed three Rak'at. After the Imam makes Tasleem, you stand up to pray three more Rak'at. You make Juloos and read the first Tashahhud after one Rak'ah. Then, you pray two more Rak'at and end your prayer as usual, by making the second Juloos, reciting the final Tashahhud, and making Tasleem.

- If you realize that you have not prayed any Rak'at of the 'Asr prayer with the group, then you know that you have missed all four Rak'at. After the Imam makes Tasleem, you stand up to pray four Rak'at as you usually would and end your prayer as usual. Even though you did not pray any Rak'at with the group, insha Allah you got the reward and blessing of praying in congregation.

CHAPTER REVIEW

Projects and Activities

1. Participate in Salat-ul-Jama'ah in the Masjid and write a 300 word essay describing how the Salah was performed and your feelings about the experience of praying in congregation.
2. Make a poster illustrating how Salat-ul-Jama'ah is performed. Draw a group of people performing Salat-ul-Jama'ah. The group should include men, women, and children.

