

The Virtue of Congregational Prayer

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
﴿ ائْتِلْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ
تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا
تَصْنَعُونَ ﴾

سورة العنكبوت - ٤٥

عن عثمان بن عفان قال: سمعتُ رسول الله ﷺ يقول:

« مَنْ صَلَّى الْعِشَاءَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَامَ نِصْفَ اللَّيْلِ، وَمَنْ صَلَّى

الصُّبْحَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا صَلَّى اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ »

صحيح مسلم - كتاب المساجد - رقم الحديث: ٢٦٠

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Prayer, the ascension of the believer, the pillar of our faith and the first act to be accounted for on the Day of Judgment, is one of the five pillars of Islam. Five times a day, in every part of the world, we are called to salvation and to stand in the presence of our Lord in a language that all Muslims understand. By responding to this call, establishing prayer and performing it with devotion, we find life, peace and ultimate success. In the verse I recited at the beginning of my khutba, Allah (swt) says, **“Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds, and the remembrance of Allah (through prayer) is the greatest (of deeds). And Allah knows what you do.”**¹

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

When prayer is performed with the unity of soul, body, mind and heart, and with humility, it prevents the person from evil and immorality. If a person's prayer does not cleanse them from evil then, as the Qur'an states, they will be among those to whom it is said, **“Woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer.”**² The one who performs prayer cannot commit injustice, speak lies, deceive anyone, gossip, turn their back on the oppressed, orphans, or the poor, spread false claims, or sever ties with their Muslim brothers, neighbours, or relatives. Indeed, our Beloved Prophet (saw) said, **“The place of prayer in religion is like the place of the head in the body.”**³

For this reason, the one who prays has obeyed Allah and His Messenger and has performed the most virtuous act of worship.

The one who prays is cleansed from both physical and spiritual impurities. By praying, they organise their time and stand in the presence of Allah five times a day, strengthening their connection with Him.

Dear Jama'ah!

The reward and many wisdoms of performing the five daily compulsory prayers in congregation are great. Our Prophet (saw) said, **“The prayer performed in congregation is twenty-seven times more virtuous than the prayer performed individually.”**⁴ The prayer performed in congregation leads to connecting our hearts together. It increases the brotherhood, love, respect and compassion among us. Congregational prayer provides an opportunity for unity and sharing both joy and sorrow. Prayer is not merely an individual act of worship. Especially performing prayers in congregation brings believers together in devotion to Allah, regardless of race, colour, language or social status. Furthermore, it promotes unity, solidarity and cooperation, strengthening the social awareness, community and society in a unique way.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Prayer is a balancing element in the life of a believer. There should be no excuse or barrier preventing one from performing prayer. Therefore, those who have the ability and opportunity should strive to perform their five daily prayers in congregation at the mosque. Let us never allow ourselves to miss congregational prayer due to worldly distractions. Those who are unable to pray all five prayers at the mosque should at least make every effort to attend the mosque for Isha and Fajr prayers in congregation. Furthermore, let us participate as a family in the Fajr prayers. Let us remember that on our journey to the Hereafter, we will be sent off with the funeral prayer of our brothers and sisters, who have once stood shoulder to shoulder with us, with their good witnesses and prayers.

In the hadith I recited at the beginning of my khutba, the Prophet (saw) gives us this glad tidings: **“Whoever prays the Isha prayer in congregation, he will be rewarded as if he prayed until midnight, and whoever prays the Fajr prayer in congregation will be rewarded as if he spent the entire night in prayer.”**⁵

May our Friday be blessed. May Allah's mercy, blessings, grace and help be upon us all. Let us not forget that "Prayer does not abandon the believer."

¹ Surah Al-Ankabut, 29:45

² Surah Al-Ma'un, 107:4-5

³ Taberânî, el-Mu'cemu's-Sağir. Hadis No: 107

⁴ Buhârî, Ezân, 30

⁵ Müslim Mesacid, 260, 1, 454