

Islamic Prayer Information Sheet



Jummah Prayers

As we have seen, Muslims are expected to pray five times. This is the pillar known as Salah. On Fridays, there is the further requirement that they must pray their Zuhr prayers (after midday) in congregation with other Muslims. This is known as Jummah Prayers.

Jummah prayers would usually be said at the mosque with other Muslims from the local community. In recent years, some schools and business with a lot of Muslim students or employees have

begun to organise Jummah prayers on their premises to avoid the problem of having to leave work or school. However, Muslims generally regard praying at the mosque as preferable and will try to do it as often as they can.

After Friday prayers, the Imam will give a sermon (Khutbah) to those who are gathered. This is a speech about religious issues, though its content may vary. It could, for example, be a lecture about how Muslims can apply their religion to current events or a story from the Hadith which shows the example set to Muslims by Prophet Muhammad.

Women can attend the mosque for Jummah prayers but are not expected to. They are generally encouraged to pray at home instead.

Praying as a congregation on Fridays is important as it unifies the Muslim community. After the prayers, Muslims will return to work or school. Friday is not a day of rest in Islam.

Du'a Prayers

Du'a prayers are additional prayers which are not part of Salah. Whilst Salah focuses on worshipping God, Du'a prayers often consist of asking God for things, such as forgiveness or aid.

Unlike Salah, which must be completed in Arabic, Du'a prayers can be said in any language. Muslims may say these immediately after their Salah prayers. They can, however, be offered at any time.



Shi'a and Sunni Islam

The Salah prayers described so far are those practiced by the majority of Sunni Muslims. However, Shi'a Muslims practice Salah slightly differently. Differences include:

1. Shi'a say all five daily prayers, but they often say Zuhr and Asr (after midday and afternoon prayers) and Maghrib and Isha (the evening and night prayers) at the same time. This means that though they complete all five prayers, they can do so in three sessions.
2. When praying, Shi'a Muslims place their foreheads on dust or earth (if you look carefully, you can see the blocks in the picture below). If possible, they use a block of earth taken from Karbala, where Imam Husayn was martyred.
3. Friday prayer is not as significant to Shi'a Muslims as to Sunnis. Though Shi'ites can attend the mosque for Jummah prayers, it is not seen as necessary. This is because their Twelfth Imam is in occultation (hiding) and he would be the appropriate person to lead these prayers. Shi'a Muslims will therefore complete their Zuhr prayers on Friday, but it is not necessarily treated differently to any other prayer time.



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