

MANNERS OF ATTENDING A MOSQUE (PART 2 OF 2)

Rating: 4.7

Description: Not knowing what to expect, attending the mosque can be an intimidating experience. These lessons will teach the most important aspects to make mosques more accessible for new Muslims.

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Objective:

- To learn 12 additional etiquettes of attending the mosque.

Arabic Terms:

- Masjid* - the Arabic term for mosque.
- Imam* - someone who leads the prayer.
- Hadith* - (plural – *ahadith*) is a piece of information or a story. In Islam it is a narrative record of the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.
- Adhan* - an Islamic way of calling Muslims to the five obligatory Prayers.
- Nafil* - a voluntary act of worship.
- Ruku'* - the bowing position in prayer.
- Rakah* - unit of prayer.
- Fajr* - the morning prayer.
- Dhuhr* - the afternoon prayer.
- Sutrah* - a barrier a person puts in front of him while praying.

7. A person must not rush to catch up prayer that is in progress at entering the *masjid*, because the Prophet forbade rushing in such a situation. Prophet Muhammad said:

“If the prayer started, then do not join it running, but join it walking and do it calmly, and pray whatever you caught up with, and make up for what you missed.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)

If a Muslim arrives late to a prayer, he should say “*Allahu Akbar*” and join the congregation. If a *rakah* was joined after *ruku’*, then the entire *rakah* needs to be repeated after the prayer. So when the imam finishes with the prayer then you should stand up and make-up what you missed.

It is appropriate to join the back row and fill in all the spaces. If there is no more room, then a new row should start directly behind the imam, and more latecomers fill out to the right and to the left. Sisters should begin a new row in front if the row starts in the back.

8. One should keep quiet during the prayer. During the congregational prayer, there is no good reason for making a lot of noise while people are trying to pray, yet conversations can sometimes be heard during the prayer! Children should be trained to stay near their parent in prayer if possible, or if not, they should not be brought to the *masjid* to pray.

9. The Muslim should not distract others praying in the *masjid*, because a person in prayer is in contact with Allah. Causing distraction is quite a serious matter - people should not be disturbed by actions such as reciting the Quran loudly.

10. The one who enters the *masjid* should not sit until he prays two *rakahs*. You pray them the same way you pray the two *rakahs* of the obligatory *Fajr* prayer. The reason you pray them is to show respect to the *masjid* before sitting down. The Prophet said:

“When one of you enters the masjid, he should pray two rakah before sitting down.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)

11. If an individual is praying outside of the congregation (optional prayers, or obligatory prayers alone), he should place something in front of him during prayer as a barrier between himself and the passersby in front of him. It can be a chair, a wall, or a pillar. He should also come a little close to it as the Prophet used to do. Prophet Muhammad said:

“If you pray, then pray toward a sutrah (barrier) and get close to it.” (Abu Daud)

It is not necessary to have a barrier in front of a person if praying in congregation, except for the *imam*, whose barrier acts for the congregation.

12. Muslims are not supposed to walk in front of a person praying. If a person is praying with a *sutrah* (barrier), let’s say behind a chair, then you cannot walk between the person and the chair, but beyond the chair. Prophet Muhammad said: “If one knew (the sin) of passing in front of one who is praying, he would rather wait for forty than to pass in front of him.” Abu al-Nadr - one of the *hadith* narrators, said: “I do not remember exactly whether he said forty days, months or years.” (Bukhari, Muslim)

13. The Muslim should sit where he finds a place in the *masjid*. The Muslim should not jump over people or squeeze himself between two people who are already sitting so as not to bother or harm them. Many *ahadith* of the Prophet convey this meaning.

14. Instead of chatting and gossiping, it is better for a Muslim to keep himself busy supplicating and remembering Allah, because he is considered as if in the prayer as long as he is waiting for the prayer.

15. The Muslim should keep the *masjid* clean and tidy, and fragrant because it is the house of Allah. The Prophet considered spitting in the *masjid* to be a sin that could be forgiven only if the Muslim cleans the area. The Prophet of Islam said:

“Spitting in the masjid is a sin and its expiation is to clean it.” (Saheeh Muslim)

The Companions of the Prophet used to keep the *masjid* clean, like the famous Companion, Ibn Umar, used to put perfume inside the *masjid* when Umar, his father, sat on the pulpit to deliver Friday sermon (Abu Daud). Traditional incense or modern day sprays and electric devices can be used for the purpose.

16. The Muslim should not walk out of the *masjid* after the *Adhan* has been given before he prays that prayer with other Muslims in congregation. Let us say you have prayed *Dhuhr* earlier at home or another *masjid*, then you go to a *masjid* where the *Adhan* is called for *Dhuhr*. It will be considered a *nafl* (extra/optional) prayer even though you will pray it in congregation. Your intention will be of a *nafl* prayer, while others will pray it with the intention of the obligatory *Dhuhr* prayer.

17. It is proper to listen to the *Adhan* and to repeat it after the person calling it. Repeat everything, except for when he says:

“*Hayya ‘alas-Salaah*” (Hasten to the prayer) and

“*Hayya ‘alal-Falaah*” (Hasten to salvation).

Here you should say: “*Laa hawla wa laa quwwata ‘illaa billaah*” (There is no might and no power except by Allah). (Bukhari, Muslim)

This repetition of the *Adhan* is a rewarding act, however it is optional.

18. The Muslim should leave the *masjid* starting with his left foot first and say what Prophet Muhammad used to say:

“*Allaahumma innee as-aluka min fadhlika.*”

“O Allah, I ask of Your bounty.” (Saheeh Muslim)

This supplications is optional, however saying it is a rewarding act.

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