

Regulations congregational Prayer (Salah al-Jama'at)

Performing the Prayers in congregation is a Sunnah Muakkadah. Many Ahaadith discuss the superiority and excellence of Prayers in congregation. Such Ahaadith include the following:

- Hazrat Abdullah bin 'Umar ؓ narrates Prophet ﷺ said; "The reward of the congregational Prayer is twenty seven times greater than that of the Prayer offered by a person alone." (Tirmidhi, Muslim)
- Hazrat Abu Dardah ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "If there are three men in a village or desert and Salah is not established among them, then the Shaitaan takes mastery over them. So be with the congregation since the wolf devours the remote (stray) sheep." (Abu Dawud)
- Hazrat Ammar ibn Yasir ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "A man may complete the Salah and only have recorded for him self one-tenth or one-ninth or one-eighth or one-seventh or one-fifth or one-fourth or one third or one-half." (Abu Dawud, Nasa'i)
- Hazrat Zayd ibn Khalid Juhanni ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "If the person who walks in front of someone who is offering Salah only knew the seriousness of this sin, he would prefer standing and waiting for the person to complete his Salah even if it meant waiting forty years for him to complete it." (The narrator was not sure whether the Prophet ﷺ said forty days, months or years)." (Ahmed, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Ibn Maajaah)
- Hazrat Anas bin Malik ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "How is it that some people raise their eyes towards the sky during Salah (Prayer)?" He stressed (this point) and added, "People must refrain from raising their eyes towards heaven in Salah, or else their sights will certainly be snatched away." (Bukhari)

The qualifications of the Imam for Salah:

One who leads the Prayers is called the Imam and he must be;

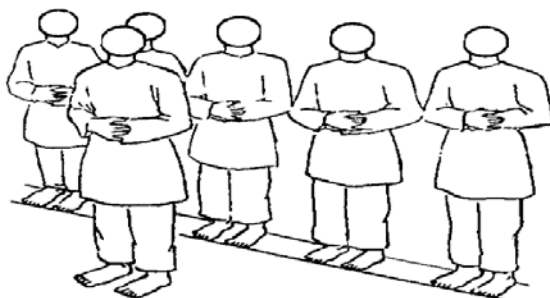
- The most worthy of people of Imamate is the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah.
- Baligh (Adult) meaning that he has attained the age of responsibility and puberty.
- Sane ('Aqil).
- Able to recite correctly.

They are also allowed to lead the Salah in their homes among their family members, if they are more knowledgeable of the Qur'an and Islamic rules.

If there is a single follower, he should stand on the right of the Imam with his heels a little behind the Imam. It is Makrooh (odious) for a single follower to stand behind the Imam in a separate row.

- Hazrat Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "Let the Imam stand in the middle (so that those Praying behind him should be standing both on his right and his left) and close the gaps." (Abu Dawud)
- Hazrat Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "Does he who raises up his head before the Imam not fear that Allah will make his head that of a donkey or make his appearance similar to that of donkey?" (Bukhari, Muslim)
- Rasulullah ﷺ said; "Do not hasten before the Imam! When he says the takbeer, then you should do the same..." (Muslim)
- Hazrat Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "Isn't he who raises his head before the Imam afraid that Allah ﷻ may transform his head into that of a donkey or his figure (face) into that of a donkey?" (Bukhari)

If the followers are more than one, they should invariably stand behind the Imam; it is Makrooh (odious) for two or more followers to stand beside the Imam on his right or left.



Follow the Imam, When the Imam goes into Rukoo, Sujood (prostrates) or rises, do it either with him or after him; but do not precede him. This is important as far as the acts are concerned.

For example, when the Imam says “Allahu-Akbar” for Rukoo, and starts to bend forward and you start to bow simultaneously with the Imam this is Makrooh (odious), because the Rasulullah ﷺ said, "When he bows, then bow and do not bow until he bows." And in Sujood when he says takbeer for Sujood, if you prostrate and reach the floor at the same time as him, this is Makrooh, because the Rasulullah ﷺ disallowed that and said: "Do not prostrate until he prostrates."

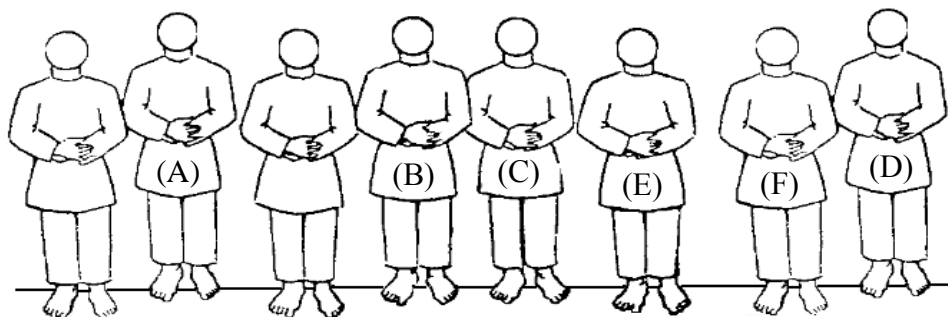
Making Rows (Saff)

All the Muqtadee (followers) should stand joining their shoulders with one another. All the participants must keep their heels in a line. The toes must be kept towards the Qiblah. There must be a gap of four fingers between the feet.

It is preferred for the Imam to order the followers to straighten the rows and fill in any gaps before he starts the Salah. Hazrat Anas ؓ relates; "The Prophet ﷺ would turn his face to us before he began the Salah and he would say: Be close together and straighten your rows." (Bukhari, Muslim)

- Hazrat Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "Arrange the rows in order, stand shoulder to shoulder, close the gaps, be accommodating to your brothers, and do not leave gaps for devil. Whoever joins up a row, he will be joined to Allah ﷻ and whoever cuts off a row, he will be cut off from Allah ﷻ." (Abu Dawud)
- Hazrat Abu Mas'ud ؓ narrates Rasulullah ﷺ said; "Keep (the rows) straight; do not differ from each other lest your hearts should suffer from discord. Let those of you who are mature and prudent be nearer to me, and then those who are next to them." (Muslim)

In the row (Saff) below, (A), (B), (C) and (D) have stood a bit back while some of them a bit forward. There is a gap (space) between (E) and (F). This is wrong.



It has commonly been noticed that even the experienced Muqtadee (followers) fail to row (Saff) up in a proper way. It is essential to keep the row straight and balanced.

- Hazrat Jabir ibn Samrah ؓ says; "Rasulullah ﷺ came to us and said; Why don't you make the rows like the angels make their rows in the presence of their Lord? We asked: O Messenger of Allah, how do the angels make their rows in the presence of their Lord? He ﷺ replied: They complete the first row and stand closely together, side by side, in the row." (Bukhari, Tirmidhi)
- Hazrat Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri ؓ narrates Rasulallah ﷺ noticed his companions going to the back rows, and He said; "Come close and follow me and let those behind follow you. People will continue going to the back until Allah ﷻ will put them in the back." (Muslim, Nasa'i, Abu Dawud)
- Hazrat Abu Umamah ؓ narrates Rasulallah ﷺ said; "Verily Allah ﷻ and His angels shower blessings on the first row. The people inquired: Rasulallah ﷺ, what about the second row? The Rasulallah ﷺ again said: Allah ﷻ and His angels shower blessings on the first row. The people asked again: Rasulallah ﷺ, what about the second one? Thereupon Rasulallah ﷺ said: Verily Allah ﷻ and His angels shower blessings on the first row. The people asked again: Rasulallah ﷺ, what about the second one? And Rasulallah ﷺ said; on the second (also). Rasulallah ﷺ said: Straighten your rows, stand shoulder to shoulder, stand close to the end of your brothers, and close up the intervening spaces for Shaitaan penetrates what is between them as does a black kid meaning the young of the goat." (Ahmad)
- Hazrat Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates Rasulallah ﷺ said; "The best of the men's rows (in Salah) is the first row and the worst is the last; but the best of the woman's row is the last and the worst of their rows is the first." (Muslim)
- Hazrat Anas ؓ narrates Rasulallah ﷺ said; "Fill (complete) the first row, then the one next to it and if there is any deficiency (incompleteness), it should be in the last row." (Abu Dawud)

The front rows should be filled and completed first. The followers should stand behind the Imam in a balanced way, equally on the right and left, keeping him in the middle in front.

The devotees stand behind the Imam. The others are required to hold their places on the right and left-sides to maintain the proportion. After the completion of the first row, the second one is formed. The following sketch indicates the defect in the row formation. It is wrong to row up in the Salah as shown below. The first row shows that there gaps among the participants. They should joint their shoulders together.

The second row (Saff) shows that the children stand among the adult participants. The third row shows that it has been formed before the completion of the second one. In addition to that it has been started from a side while it must have been formed just from the centre behind the Imam.

If there is vacant space in the rows of the congregation (al-Jama'at), it is Makrooh (odious) for a person to stand alone.

