

Friday Prayer (part 1 of 2)

Description: What a Muslim needs to know about the Friday prayer - the most important weekly prayer for Muslims.

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Objective:

- To understand how the Friday prayer is conducted and who is required to pray.
- To appreciate the wisdom behind the Friday prayer.
- To learn the virtues of the Friday prayer.

Arabic Terms:

- *Salat ul-Jumuah* - Friday prayer.
- *Dhuhr* - the afternoon prayer.
- *Khutbah* - sermon.
- *Khatib* - person delivering the sermon.
- *Rakah* - a unit of prayer.
- *Imam* - someone who leads the prayer.
- *Adhan* - an Islamic way of calling Muslims to the five obligatory prayers.

On Fridays, the *Dhuhr* (afternoon prayer) is replaced with a what is known as *Salat ul-Jumuah*. *Salat ul-Jumuah* consists of a short sermon and a congregational prayer. The Friday prayer **cannot** be done at home or prayed individually. That is why Muslims gather in a central mosque to pray and listen to a sermon, known as *khutbah* in Arabic. It is common for a designated *Imam* (prayer leader) to give the *khutbah*, but sometimes this is done by invited guests or general members of a community.



In the West, sermons are mostly delivered in English, however sometimes they are only in Arabic. In any case, at least part of the sermon is always in Arabic. The sermon is made

of two parts. After the first part is over, the *khatib* (person delivering the *khutbah*) takes a short break and sits, and then resumes it. The quality of a sermon greatly differs depending on the speaker who might be a knowledgeable scholar of Islam or a lay person. The speaker will praise Allah and then discuss issues relevant to the Muslim community. Afterwards, the *Imam* will lead the congregation in a short prayer of two *rakahs*. *Salat ul-Jumuah* (the sermon and the prayer), usually lasts for an hour or less.

Men Must Pray *Salat ul-Jumuah*

The Friday prayer is compulsory and required from all Muslim **men**. This is based on the Quran in which Allah says,

“O you who believe, when the call to prayer (*Adhan*) is proclaimed for the prayer on Friday, hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade aside. That is better for you, if you did but know.”
(Quran 62:9)

Prophet Muhammad has stated very clearly who is required to pray *Salat ul-Jumuah* and who is exempt:

“The Friday prayer in congregation is an obligatory duty on every Muslim except four: a slave, a woman, a child, and a sick person.” [\[1\]](#)

To be precise, Friday prayer is required from every Muslim male who has reached puberty. Others can attend it, but are not sinful if they don't.

Additionally, Prophet Muhammad has given a stern warning against missing the Friday prayers. He said,

“People should stop missing Friday prayers otherwise Allah will put a seal on their hearts and thus they will be among the heedless.” [\[2\]](#)

A Muslim man who is sick or travelling may miss the Friday prayer. A Muslim woman is not required to pray the Friday prayer, but she is allowed to attend the prayers if she wants to. Most mosques have separate seating arrangements for women, but some may lack women's area for praying the Friday prayer. Also, the women who decide not to attend the *Salat ul-Jumuah* should offer the regular *Dhuhr* prayer at home.

Wisdom Behind Friday Prayer

1. The Friday prayer brings local Muslims together in one place on a fixed day, thereby increasing the bonds of brotherhood between Muslims.
2. The purpose of the *khutbah* (sermon) is to educate the Muslims and serves as a weekly reminder about their duties to Allah and fellow human beings. It warns against sin and disobeying Allah, and encourages to be good and to obey Allah.

3. The topics are varied and often update the Muslims on current affairs and as Muslim what should be their role.

Virtues of Friday

Friday is a virtuous day with many special qualities.

1. Prophet Muhammad said:

“When it is a Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque and keep on writing the names of the persons coming to the mosque in succession according to their arrivals. The example of the one who enters the mosque in the earliest hour is that of one offering a camel (in sacrifice). The one coming next is like one offering a cow and then a ram and then a chicken and then an egg respectively. When the Imam comes out (for the Friday prayer) they (i.e. angels) fold their papers and listen to the *Khutbah*.” [3]

This narration shows the reward of coming early to the Friday prayer. The earlier a person arrives, the greater his reward. The first arrival attains the reward of sacrificing a camel for Allah, but those who arrive later receive lesser rewards.

2. He also said:

“The best day on which the sun has ever risen is Friday. On it Adam was created, on it he was admitted into Paradise, and on it he was expelled from it, and the Hour will not be established except on Friday.” [4]

The purpose of this narration is to tell us of the magnificent events that took place on Friday or will take place.

Endnotes:

[1] *Abu Dawood*

[2] *Saheeh Muslim*

[3] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[4] *Saheeh Muslim*

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