

Getting Involved in the Muslim Community

Description: The benefits of being involved in the Muslim community and some easy tips to get you started.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2015 NewMuslims.com)

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Category: Lessons > [Social Interaction](#)

Objectives

- To point out the reasons why a new Muslim should involve themselves in the community.
- To offer some general advice about how to begin.

Arabic Terms

- *Shahadah* - Testimony of Faith
- *Salat ul-Jumuah* - Friday prayer.
- *Salam* - The Islamic greeting such as '*As-Salamu Alaikum*'.
- *Du'a* - supplication, prayer, asking Allah for something.
- *Masjid* - the Arabic term for mosque.
- *Sahabah* - the plural form of *Sahabi*, which translates to Companions. A *sahabi*, as the word is commonly used today, is someone who saw Prophet Muhammad, believed in him and died as a Muslim.

You have just embraced Islam and become a Muslim, you have said your *Shahadah*, and now your new life is about to start. You are feeling excited, euphoric, and feel as though you are "dancing on air", but the long day draws to a close and you begin to wonder what happens now! Tomorrow, in the glaring light of day how do you get involved in the Muslim community? You know that they, the Muslim community, are your brothers and sisters now but it all seems so remote. How do you break that invisible barrier and step into a community that to all intents and purposes is getting along very well without you?



Step 1. Have realistic expectations.

Although Islam is the ideal way of life, not all Muslims follow their religion as they

should. As with all human beings there are some very good Muslims, and some very bad ones. Most however are stuck somewhere in the middle struggling and trying to do the best they can. Sometimes when a person converts to Islam they expect to find themselves amongst people just like the *sahabah*. This probably isn't going to be the case; however, you (the convert) are exactly like the *sahabah* in that you too made a choice, often alienating yourself from family and friends. Thus the sooner you realise that not everyone is going to be a perfect role model the better, however you will very quickly find others that have faced the same decisions, problems and tribulations that you have faced.

Step 2. Go to the *masjid*.

Force yourself to attend various programs offered at your *masjid*. Don't only go for the *Salat ul-Jumuah*. This will ease your path and open many doors, as well as adding many good deeds to your account. It is here that you will meet people, be able to network and make long-lasting friends. It is a fact, all over the world, that you can always find someone in the *masjid*. For women this might be a little bit different therefore keep an eye out for special classes or gatherings for sisters and arrange your timetable to be able to attend.

Many *masjids* and Islamic centres hold classes and gatherings for new Muslims. It would be a great idea to attend as many of these functions as possible. It is here that you will meet other new Muslims and also the community's most influential members. It is here that you can read notice boards or collect newsletters. It is also a chance to offer your services to the community. Your skills might really benefit your local community. Perhaps you could teach English, organise a computer class or help with the youth group. The possibilities are endless.

Step 3. Find friends.

Allow yourself to recognise and bask in the fact that you are now part of a global family. Like all families the bigger they get, the more differences arise, so there are bound to be some cultural and language difficulties. Sometimes people born into Islam do not recognise that cultural aberrations that have crept into their Islam and understandably sometimes ethnic groups tend to stick together. These are facts and at first it might be best just to ignore these injustices until you have found your place in the community.

Now that you have embraced Islam you speak a global language, and are part of a global culture; the language and culture of Islam, but you still need to make the effort to find friends and set up a support network. Learn to greet people in the Islamic way; say *Assalam Alaikum*. Practice a few times at home. It is a supplication whereby one asks God to grant protection and security to his fellow Muslim. It encourages believers to be a community unencumbered by tribal or national loyalties but bound together by peace and unity. The response you will hear is *Wa Alaikum Assalam*, and just like that you have broken the ice.^[1]

Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, told us that, oYou will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I tell you about something which, if you do it, will make you love one

another? Greet each other with *salam*".[2]

Chances are you will mainly be dealing with others of your own gender so shaking hands in greeting is a nice extra touch and is, along with the words *Assalam Alaikum*, a way to collect rewards whilst making friends and joining the community. Prophet Muhammad said, "When the believer meets a fellow believer and he greets him with *salam* and takes him by the hand and shakes hands with him, their sins will fall like the leaves of a tree." [3]

Step 4. It is not all smooth sailing.

Prophet Muhammad said, "oe...know that victory is with patience, and relief is with distress and that with hardship comes ease." [4] As a convert to Islam you are going to face many trials and tribulations. You probably cannot avoid this so arm yourself with ways and means to overcome it. Remember that Allah guided you to Islam and is not about to let you down now. Put your trust in Him, learn to pray, learn to make du'a and remember to be grateful. Lots of good things are happening and going to happen to you, not the least of which is that you are now on a straight path that can lead you to Paradise. There is wisdom behind the trials you will face even if you can't always discern it easily. Remember that after hardship comes ease and after distress comes relief.

Getting involved in the Muslim community is going to make your path easier and more enjoyable. It is easier to cope with your new lifestyle changes when you are feeling centred and part of a community. At the centre of your new life is a community of likeminded people, who establish the prayer and are accountable to Allah for themselves and each other. Your Islamic community might not be perfect and might occasionally be a place of inter-racial squabbles and gossip however for the most part you will find a communal focus, a sense of order and a place of spiritual support.

Endnotes:

[1] To learn more about some of the commonly used Islamic terms, please see: <http://www.newmuslims.com/lessons/269/> [2 [parts]

[2] *Saheeh Muslim*

[3] Narrated by *at-Tabaraani in al-Awsat* and classed as Saheeh by Sh Al Albani

[4] *At Tirmidhi*

The web address of this article:

<http://www.newmuslims.com/lessons/283>

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