

Praying in congregation

One prayer, many multiples. The jama'ah is where a Muslim's prayer is meant to live — and the walk there is counted too.

✦ Bow with those who bow

وَأَقِمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

“And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow.” The command names the company, not only the act.

Qur'an 2:43

✦ Twenty-seven · twenty-five

Ibn 'Umar narrated twenty-seven times superior to praying alone; Abu Sa'id, twenty-five. Both are in al-Bukhari; the multiple is large either way.

Sahih al-Bukhari 645 · 646

✦ The walk is counted

Wudu at home, then going out for nothing but the prayer: every step raises a degree. Allah prepares an honourable place for the one who goes.

Sahih al-Bukhari 647 · 662

✦ The first row

“If the people knew the reward of pronouncing the adhan and of standing in the first row, they would draw lots for them.”

Sahih al-Bukhari 615

✦ Straighten the rows

“Straighten your rows and stand closer together.” Straightening a row, he ﷺ said, is part of the perfection of the prayer.

Sahih al-Bukhari 719 · Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Salat

✦ Fajr and 'Isha'

“No prayer is heavier upon the hypocrites than the Fajr and the 'Isha'.” These two show whether jama'ah is a habit or a convenience.

Sahih al-Bukhari 657

✦ A blind man got no excuse

A blind man explained that he had no one to lead him to the mosque. He was asked whether he could hear the call — and told to answer it.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Masajid

✦ What the Companions saw

Ibn Mas'ud: in our time nobody stayed away from the prayer except a known hypocrite or a sick man — and a sick man was walked in between two.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Masajid

✦ How binding is it

The schools differ on whether it falls on every man or on the community. None of them call it optional. Women may pray at home, and may attend.

Sahih al-Bukhari 645 · the positions of the four schools