

The sunnah prayers of the day

Beyond the five obligations, twelve rak‘ah the Prophet ﷺ kept every day and night. They are not obligatory — and they are not spare.



Twelve, and a house

“Whoever prays twelve rak‘ah in a day and a night, a house will be built for him in Paradise.”

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 415 · sahih · Sahih Muslim, Kitab Salat al-Musafirin



Where the twelve fall

Four before Zuh, two after it, two after Maghrib, two after ‘Isha’, and two before Fajr.

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 415 · sahih



The two before Fajr

“He ﷺ was never more regular and particular in any nawafil than the two rak‘ah of Fajr.” ‘A’ishah found them remarkably short.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1163 · 1165



The four before Zuh

‘A’ishah: the Prophet ﷺ never missed four rak‘ah before the Zuh prayer and two rak‘ah before the Fajr prayer.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1182



Four before ‘Asr

“May Allah have mercy upon a man who prays four before ‘Asr.” Not part of the twelve, and still worth praying.

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 430 · hasan



Before Maghrib, if you wish

He ﷺ told them to pray before Maghrib, then added: whoever wants to, may — so that nobody would take it for a fixed practice.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1183



Pray them at home

The Prophet ﷺ prayed his voluntary prayers in his house. Praying them where the family can see teaches more than praying them in the row.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab Salat al-Musafirin



They cover a shortfall

On the Day of Judgement, if the obligatory prayer is found defective, the voluntary prayers are looked for to make up what is missing.

Sunan Abi Dawud 864 · sahih per al-Albani



On a journey, let them go

The rawatib may be left while travelling. What he ﷺ held on to even then were the two rak‘ah of Fajr and the Witr.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1102 · Sahih Muslim, Kitab Salat al-Musafirin