

Sunnah Prayers

To do a sunnah or to follow the sunnah means to follow the example of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him.

When it came to prayer (salat), Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him, would consistently offer voluntary or supererogatory prayers in addition to the “fard” or five daily prayers of fajr, dhuh, asr, maghrib and ‘isha prescribed by Allah. These additional prayers before or after the prescribed prayers are called sunnah prayers.

Typically, the sunnahs associated with the prayers are:

- 2 rak’at before fajr
- 2 before and 2 after dhuh
- 2 rak’at before asr
- 2 rak’at after maghrib
- 2 rak’at after ‘isha

However, one can offer additional sunnah prayers as follows:

- 2 rak’at before fajr
- 4 rak’at before and 4 after dhuh
- 4 rak’at before asr
- 2 rak’at after maghrib
- 2 rak’at before and 2 rak’at after isha

Sunnah prayers are typically prayed in sets of 2, and are typically offered quietly.

It’s recommended to establish your fard prayers first, and then once you are consistent with them, begin adding the sunnah prayers.

Witr

One ends their prayers for the day with an odd number of rak'ats called witr (which means odd, for example an odd number like 1,3,5). Witr is normally offered after the sunnah prayers of 'isha, but if you know you are intending to get up and pray in the night (sunnah prayers called tahajjud), then you can offer your witr after those prayers. However, if you aren't certain you will get up to pray in the night, it's better to offer witr after the sunnah prayers that follow 'isha.

The minimal number of rak'ats for witr is 1. Typically, people offer 3 rak'ats of witr, although you can offer up to 11 rak'at of witr.

If you pray 3 rak'ats witr you would intend 2 rak'ats witr (often called "ash-shafa" which means even, like an even number of 2,4,6) and pray them like a normal sunnah prayer, then offer a single rak'ah witr after it. It is recommended to pray surah 112 (al-ikhlas), OR surah 112 (al-ikhlas), 113 (al-falaq), and 114 (an-nas) in the single rak'ah of witr.

If you later get up to pray in the night after having offered witr, you don't have to offer 1 additional rak'ah to make it even, or repeat witr again later.

In general, extra prayers offered between sunset and sunrise can be offered out loud or quietly, depending on what will help you be more present in your prayer, whether you are leading others (in which case you would recite out loud), and whether you would disturb others by an out loud recitation.

Sunnah Prayer

First Rakat:

Recite al-Fatihah silently

Recite any surah from the Qu'ran silently for the second surah

While bowing you may say, quietly: “Subâḥāna rabbiya-l-‘Adḥīm” (Glory to my Lord, the Tremendous) 3 times

While moving to stand you may say, aloud: “Sami‘a-llāhu li-man ḥamidah” (Allah hears those who praise Him)

Once standing you may say, aloud: “Rabbanā wa laka-l-ḥamd wa-sh-shukr” (Our Lord & Sustainer, all praise and thanks are due to You)

While in prostration you may say, quietly: “Subâḥāna rabbiya-l-‘A‘lā” (Glory to my Lord the Most High) 3 times

While sitting you may say, quietly: “Rabbi-gh-firlī wa-r-ḥamni” (My Lord, forgive me and have mercy on me)

While in prostration you may say, quietly: “Subâḥāna rabbiya-l-‘A‘lā” (Glory to my Lord the Most High) 3 times

Second Rakat:

Recite al-Fatihah quietly

Recite any surah from the Qu'ran quietly for the second surah

While bowing you may say, quietly: “Subâḥāna rabbiya-l-‘Adḥīm” (Glory to my Lord, the Tremendous) 3 times

While moving to stand you may say, aloud: “Sami‘a-llāhu li-man ḥamidah”
(Allah hears those who praise Him)

Once standing you may say, aloud: “Rabbanā wa laka-l-ḥamd wa-sh-shukr”
(Our Lord & Sustainer, all praise and thanks are due to You)

While in prostration you may say, quietly: “Subāḥāna rabbiya-l-’A‘lā” (Glory to my Lord the Most High) 3 times

While sitting you may say, quietly: “Rabbi-gḥ-firli wa-r-ḥamnī” (My Lord, forgive me and have mercy on me)

While in prostration you may say, quietly: “Subāḥāna rabbiya-l-’A‘lā” (Glory to my Lord the Most High) 3 times

When sitting up again, recite “at-Tashahhud” quietly:

At-taḥiyyātu li-llāhi wa-ṣ-ṣalāwātu wa-ṭ-ṭayyibāt!
(Greetings, blessing & the best of prayers to Allah!)

As-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuha-n-nabiyyu wa raḥmatu-llāhi wa barakātu.
(Peace be upon you O Prophet, & the Mercy of Allah and His blessings.)

As-salāmu ‘alaynā wa ‘alā ‘ibādi-llāhi-ṣ-ṣāliḥīn.
(Peace be upon us, & upon Allah’s righteous slaves.)

’Ashḥ-hadu ’al-lāā ’ilāha ’illa-llāh wa ’ashḥ-hadu ’anna muḥammadan ’abduhū wa rasūluh.

(I bear witness that there is no god except Allah & that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.)

Then recite “Salutl-Ibrahimia” quietly:

'Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā sayyidinā Muḥammadiñ wa 'alā 'āali sayyidinā
Muḥammad

(O Allah send prayers upon our Master Muhammad, & upon the family of our
Master Muhammad,)

kamā ṣallayta 'alā sayidinā 'Ibrāhīma wa 'alā 'āali sayyidinā 'Ibrāhīm, fi-l-
'ālamīna 'innaka ḥamīdum-majīdā!

(as you sent prayers upon our Master Abraham & upon the family of our Master
Abraham, for truly You are the Most Praiseworthy & the Most Glorious in all
the worlds!)

'Allāhumma bārik 'alā sayyidinā Muḥammadiñw-wa 'alā 'āali sayyidinā
Muḥammad

(O Allah send blessings upon our Master Muhammad, & upon the family of our
Master Muhammad,)

kamā bārakta 'alā sayyidinā 'Ibrāhīma wa 'alā 'āali sayyidinā 'Ibrāhīm, fi-l-
'ālamīna 'innaka ḥamīdum-majīdā!

(as you sent blessings upon our Master Abraham & upon the family of our
Master Abraham, for truly You are the Most Praised & the Most Noble in all
the worlds!)

-You can make personal prayers here before ending the prayer

As-salāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāh.

(Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah.)

1 rak'ah of Witr

Recite al-Fatihah (quietly or outloud)

Recite surah Ikhlas (112) (quietly or out loud) for the second surah (or recite surahs 112, 113, 114)

While bowing you may say, quietly: “Subâḥāna rabbiya-l-‘Aḏḥīm” (Glory to my Lord, the Tremendous) 3 times

While moving to stand you may say, aloud: “Sami‘a-llāhu li-man ḥamidah” (Allah hears those who praise Him)

Once standing you may say, aloud: “Rabbanā wa laka-l-ḥamd wa-sh-shukr” (Our Lord & Sustainer, all praise and thanks are due to You)

(Optional – you might raise your hands to chest level, palms open and facing the ceiling, and make du’a/supplication out loud or silently here)

While in prostration you may say, quietly: “Subâḥāna rabbiya-l-‘A‘lā” (Glory to my Lord the Most High) 3 times

While sitting you may say, quietly: “Rabbi-gh-firlī wa-r-ḥamnī” (My Lord, forgive me and have mercy on me)

While in prostration you may say, quietly: “Subâḥāna rabbiya-l-‘A‘lā” (Glory to my Lord the Most High) 3 times

When sitting up again, recite “at-Tashahhud” quietly:

At-taḥiyyātu li-llāhi wa-ṣ-ṣalāwātu wa-ṭ-ṭayyibāt!
(Greetings, blessing & the best of prayers to Allah!)

As-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuha-n-nabiyyu wa raḥmatu-llāhi wa barakātu.
(Peace be upon you O Prophet, & the Mercy of Allah and His blessings.)

As-salāmu ‘alaynā wa ‘alā ‘ibādi-llāhi-ṣ-ṣāliḥīn.

(Peace be upon us, & upon Allah’s righteous slaves.)

’Ashḥ-hadu ‘al-lāā ‘ilāha ‘illa-llāh wa ‘ashḥ-hadu ‘anna muḥammadan ‘abduhū wa rasūluh.

(I bear witness that there is no god except Allah & that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.)

Then recite “Salutl-Ibrahimia” quietly:

’Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā sayyidinā Muḥammadiñ wa ‘alā ‘āāli sayyidinā

Muḥammad

(O Allah send prayers upon our Master Muhammad, & upon the family of our Master Muhammad,)

Kamā ṣallayta ‘alā sayyidinā ‘Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā ‘āāli sayyidinā ‘Ibrāhīm, fi-l-‘ālamīna ‘innaka ḥamīdum-majīdā!

(as you sent prayers upon our Master Abraham & upon the family of our Master Abraham, for truly You are the Most Praiseworthy & the Most Glorious in all the worlds!)

’Allāhumma bārik ‘alā sayyidinā Muḥammadiñw-wa ‘alā ‘āāli sayyidinā

Muḥammad

(O Allah send blessings upon our Master Muhammad, & upon the family of our Master Muhammad,)

Kamā bārakta ‘alā sayyidinā ‘Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā ‘āāli sayyidinā ‘Ibrāhīm, fi-l-‘ālamīna ‘innaka ḥamīdum-majīdā!

(as you sent blessings upon our Master Abraham & upon the family of our Master Abraham, for truly You are the Most Praised & the Most Noble in all the worlds!)

-You can make personal supplication/du'a here before ending the prayer

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāh.
(Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah.)

*In the name of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate,

Please note that these videos are intended to be a brief introduction to the beginning student to help them get started in the basics of the prayer (salat). They are in no way meant to be a comprehensive guide, rather simply a starting place. As you begin your journey to establish the salat, you will surely learn more than what is presented here. We are not scholars and do not claim to be an authority on the information presented. Rather we are sharing what we know in an effort to help you get started. We have drawn upon years of practical experience, as well as conversations with and observation of our guide, Shaykh Sidi Muhammad Sa'id al-Jamal ar-Rifa'i ash-Shadhuli. In addition, we have consulted the following references: "Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law" (based on the Shafi'i school), "An Introduction to the Practices of the Shadhuli Way," from the Shadhiliyya Sufi Communities Promise Packet, "Getting Started – Finding Your Way Along the Path: A Beginner's Guide to Shadhdhuliyah Sufism," as well as review of numerous hadith (traditions containing the sayings of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings upon him). If you have already been practicing, you may do things differently than what we show. Please know that we are not trying to say that this is the only correct way, as Islam is a wide path and there are many acceptable ways to practice. So, if you see something different than what you do, please view it as an invitation to begin to ask questions and learn more. If you do have further questions about the material presented, please consult your University of Sufism or Institute of Spiritual Healing teacher, or your Shaykh or local Imam. Any errors in the information presented are purely our own, and we ask for Allah's forgiveness for them, as well as for your patience and kindness with us. May Allah send blessings and peace upon Prophet Muhammad and all the prophets, may Allah make establishing the salat easy for us all, may Allah accept it from us all, and may Allah cause us all to be a source of goodness and help for each other as we walk the path, Ameen. With peace, Ahmed & Mahabbah