**Translated Sermons' Template**

 **Warning Against not Observing Prayers in Congregation**

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| Sermon's details (in English)  |
| **Title**  **عنوان المادة** | **التحذير من ترك صلاة الجماعة** Warning Against not Observing Prayers in Congregation |
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| **عناصر الخطبة****Basic Elements**  | **1- /أهمية الصلاة في الإسلام. 2/ حرص الشيطان على صرف الشيطان عن الصلاة.3/ مداخل الشيطان لصرف الإنسان عن الصلاة. 4/ الحث على صلاة الجماعة، وخطر التخلف عنها. 5/ عتاب وتذكير.** 1. The importance of Prayer (Salâh) in Islam.
2. Satan, the devil's keenness to distract one from observing Prayer (Salâh).
3. Entrances of the devil to distract one from observing Prayer (Salâh).
4. Exhortation to observe prayer in congregation and the risk of defaulting in attending it.
5. Reproach and reminder.
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| **المراجع****References** | **خطبة للشيخ:** [**صالح بن فوزان الفوزان**](http://www.khutabaa.com/index.cfm?method=home.KhClassifications&bb=khateeb&khateebid=44) **- ركن الخطب – شبكة ملتقى الخطباء Sermon delivered by:** Sheikh Salih bin Fawzan Al-Fawzan – Sermons section – Al-Khutaba Forum Net |
| **التصنيف****Category** | **الرئيسي:** **الصلاة Main category:** Prayer (Salâh) | **الفرعي:****Sub-category:** |

**First Sermon:**

All praise is due and belongs to Allâh. We praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness and repent to Him. We seek refuge with Allâh from the evils of ourselves and from the wickedness of our own deeds. Whomever that Allâh guides, none can mislead him, and whomever He sends astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allâh alone with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

**( يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلاَ تَمُوتُنَّ إِلاَّ وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ )**

(O you who believe, fear Allâh as he should be feared and die not unless you are Muslims) [Al-Imran: 102]

**( يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالاً كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاء وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءلُونَ بِهِ وَالأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا )**

(O people fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul. From it, He created its spouse, and from both of them scattered many men and women. Fear Allâh, by whom you ask one another, and (fear) the wombs (lest you sever its relationship). Allâh is ever watching over you). [An-Nisa: 1].

**( يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا \* يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَن يُطِعْ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا )**

(O you, who believe, fear Allâh and say sound statements. He will mend your deeds for you and forgive your sins. Whosoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger shall win a great victory) [Al-Ahzab: 70-71].

O believers! Prayer has a great status in the sight of Allâh . He, the most Purified, ordered that it should be observed in more than a verse in the Noble Qur'an, paid tribute to those who establish it, and made it a sign of the righteous people. Allâh , the most High, said,

**(** وَأَنۡ أَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَٱتَّقُوهُ‌ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ إِلَيۡهِ تُحۡشَرُونَ **)**

And to establish regular prayer (Salâh), and to be obedient to Allâh and fear Him, and it is He to Whom you shall be gathered [Al-An'am: 72 ].

He the most Purified, again said,

**(** وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ طَرَفَىِ ٱلنَّہَارِ وَزُلَفً۬ا مِّنَ ٱلَّيۡلِ‌ۚ إِنَّ ٱلۡحَسَنَـٰتِ يُذۡهِبۡنَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ‌ۚ ذَٲلِكَ ذِكۡرَىٰ لِلذَّٲكِرِينَ **)**

 And establish regular prayer (Salâh), at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night [i.e. the five compulsory Salâh (prayers)]. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (i.e. small sins). That is a reminder (an advice) for the mindful [Hud: 114].

Allâh , the Almighty, further said,

**(** إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ ۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤۡتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمۡ رَٲكِعُونَ **)**

Verily, your Walî (Protector or Helper) is none other than Allâh, His Messenger, and the believers, - those who establish regular prayer (Salâh), and give Zakâh, and they bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allâh in prayer) [Al-Maedah: 55].

Moreover, Allâh , the Most Purified, said,

**(** قَدۡ أَفۡلَحَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ (﻿١﻿) ٱلَّذِينَ هُمۡ فِى صَلَاتِہِمۡ خَـٰشِعُونَ **)**

Successful indeed are the believers. (1) Those who offer their Salâh (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness [Al-Mu'minoon: 1-2].

Our Prophet, (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), has reminded us of it in many occasions of reminding and education, including what he said on the last day of his life, but in the final words in his will, which he left behind while leaving this world, when he, (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), said, "Be mindful of your prayer, be mindful of your prayer, and what your right hands possess "(Abu Dawud).

Prayer, dear slaves of Allâh , is the mainstay of Islam, without which it cannot exist. The Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), said, " Shall I not inform you about the head of the entire matter, and its pillar, and its highest point?' I said: 'Of course O Messenger of Allâh ! He said: 'The head of the matter is Islam, and its pillar is the Salâh, and its highest point is Jihad (striving in the cause of Allâh ) "(At-Tirmidhi).

It is the second pillar of Islam after the two words of testimony. The Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), said, "Islam is built upon five pillars: testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allâh , and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, establishing regular prayer (Salâh), paying the obligatory alms (Zakâh), pilgrimage to the House of Allâh (Ka'bah in Makkah), and fasting (the month of) Ramadan" (Agreed upon).

It is also the distinguishing factor between the Muslim and entrapment in disbelief and polytheism, as in the hadith narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah, may Allâh be pleased with them, that the Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), said, " Between a man and disbelief and paganism is the abandonment of Salâh (prayer) " (Muslim).

It is the first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Doomsday. Abu Hurairah, may Allâh be pleased with him, narrated saying, I heard the Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), say, " The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Doomsday is his prayer. If it is found sound and perfect, he will be safe and successful; but if it is incomplete, he will be unfortunate and a loser" (An-Nasaei).

Prayer (Salâh) is the basis of all acts of worship. It is a link between a person and his Lord. There is no excuse for anyone who abandons it, as long as he is in a state of wellbeing and ability, was not prevented by any impediment or overwhelming force from performing it.

Slaves of Allâh ! By considering the textual evidence on the importance of prayer, we can see the amount of duty the Muslim is obliged to perform with respect to the issue of prayer, and the magnitude of sin to be borne by anyone that defaults in its performance, or abandons it, and that if a Muslim neglects the prayer, he is surely going to neglect other things.

This is why Satan, the enemy of the children of Adam, is astutely keen to distract the Muslim from worshipping his Lord, the head of which is the prayer (Salâh), knowing that, if he distracts a Muslim from observing it, he can easily distract him from the rest of the legal provisions of the religion of Islam, as the Prophet, (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), said, "The first thing you would lose of your religion, is humility during the prayer, and the last thing you would lose of your religion is the prayer, and the bonds of Islam would be rescinded bond by bond" (Al-Hakim).

So, losing and neglecting the prayer, is tantamount to losing the mainstay of the religion of Islam, upon which it stands and is considered sound and perfect. There is no other pillar of Islam that can substitute this pillar besides the prayer, even though one may proceed to perform many other acts of worship and good deeds. That is why it was recorded in the hadith from the Prophet, (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), that he said, " The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Doomsday is his prayer. If it is found sound and perfect, he will be safe and successful; but if it is incomplete, he will be unfortunate and a loser" (At-Tirmidhi).

Indeed, the devil has many entrances through which he distracts the Muslim from observing the prayers and if he is unable to prevent him from performing the prayer, he defrauds him by preventing him from praying with the congregation, and then prevents him from performing on time. However, if he could not prevent him from the congregation, he lures him with laziness and delays in attendance to the mosque, so that he misses part of it, and thus depriving him of the virtue of punctuality to the mosque and attending the prayer from its beginning. So Allâh , the most High, said, warning of the luring of the devil to a person in order to distract him from performing acts of obedience, or getting him into sin:

**(** يَـٰٓأَيُّہَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَٲتِ ٱلشَّيۡطَـٰنِ‌ۚ وَمَن يَتَّبِعۡ خُطُوَٲتِ ٱلشَّيۡطَـٰنِ فَإِنَّهُ ۥ يَأۡمُرُ بِٱلۡفَحۡشَآءِ وَٱلۡمُنكَرِ‌ۚ **)**

O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of Shaitân (Satan). And whosoever follows the footsteps of Shaitân (Satan), then, verily he commands to commit indecency (illegal sexual intercourse), and Al-Munkar (i.e. to do evil and wicked deeds; and things forbidden in Islâm) [An-Nur: 21].

**(** وَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَٱرۡكَعُواْ مَعَ ٱلرَّٲكِعِينَ **)**

Establish regular prayer (Salâh), pay the poor-due (Zakâh), and bow your heads with those who bow (in prayer) [Al-Baqarah: 43].

So, He ordered the establishment of prayer and to bow along with those who bow in prayer, and this means one should observe it in the congregation. This is because a person cannot be said to have complied with an order restricted by some description, or condition, unless he executes that order in that manner or description as ordered. Hence, the verse indicates that prayer must have a congregation in which it is performed. Allâh , the most High, further says,

**(** يَوۡمَ يُكۡشَفُ عَن سَاقٍ۬ وَيُدۡعَوۡنَ إِلَى ٱلسُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسۡتَطِيعُونَ (﻿٤٢﻿) خَـٰشِعَةً أَبۡصَـٰرُهُمۡ تَرۡهَقُهُمۡ ذِلَّةٌ۬‌ۖ وَقَدۡ كَانُواْ يُدۡعَوۡنَ إِلَى ٱلسُّجُودِ وَهُمۡ سَـٰلِمُونَ **)**

(Remember) the Day when the Shin shall be laid bare (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) and they shall be called to prostrate themselves (to Allâh), but they (hypocrites) shall not be able to do so. (42) Their eyes will be cast down and ignominy will cover them; they used to be called to prostrate themselves (offer prayers), while they were healthy and good (in the life of the world, but they did not) [Al-Qalam: 42-43].

So, Allâh , the Almighty, would punish them on the Day of Judgment by preventing them from prostration in the Hereafter. He would enforce on them that with which He threatened those that would disobey him, because when he called them to prostrate in the world, they refused to answer the caller. The Prophet, (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), has explained answering the caller, with what was reported from Abu Hurairah, may Allâh be pleased with him, that A blind man came to the Messenger of Allâh (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), and said, "O Messenger of Allâh ! I have no one to guide me to the mosque". He, therefore, sought his permission to perform Salâh (prayer) in his house. He (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), granted him permission. When the man turned away, he called him back, and said, "Do you hear the Adhan (call to prayer)?" He replied in the affirmative. The Messenger of Allâh (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him) then directed him to respond to it". (Muslim).

This hadith indicates that the answering to the call as ordered here is to attend the prayer in the mosque in congregation.

Moreover, regarding the meaning of the Arabic word (يُدۡعَوۡنَ) – [Used to be called]- as used in the word of Allâh :

**(** وَقَدۡ كَانُواْ يُدۡعَوۡنَ إِلَى ٱلسُّجُودِ وَهُمۡ سَـٰلِمُونَ **)**

They used to be called to prostrate themselves (offer prayers), while they were healthy and good (in the life of the world, but they did not) [Al-Qalam: 43].

More than one scholar among the Salaf said that this word refers to the saying of the Muadh-dhin "Hayya 'Alas-Salaah Hayya 'Alal-Falaah" (Come to prayer, Come to success).

To those who hear the adhan (Call to prayer) but remain in their homes, or in their markets, and abandon observing the prayer with the congregation without any excuse, we tell them: Turn to your Lord, so that you do not be among those who violated the command of Allâh and His Messenger, (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), and get disgraced before Allâh and before His creation. Furthermore, remember that not praying in congregation is among the signs of hypocrisy. In the two most authentic collections of Hadith (Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) on the authority of Abu Hurairah, may Allâh be pleased with him, the Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), said, " The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are the night prayer (Al-'Isha) and the morning prayer (Al-Fajr). If they were to know the blessings they have in store, they would have come to them, even if they had to crawl, and I thought that I should order the prayer to be commenced and command a person to lead people in prayer, and I should then go along with some persons with a bundle of firewood to the people who have not attended the prayer (in congregation) and would burn their houses with fire."

In a certain narration by Imam Ahmad, the Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), said, " Had it not been for the women and offspring in the houses, I would have established the prayer and ordered my men to set the houses to flames".

I seek refuge with Allâh from the accursed Satan.

**(** قُل لِّعِبَادِىَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ يُقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُنفِقُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقۡنَـٰهُمۡ سِرًّ۬ا وَعَلَانِيَةً۬ مِّن قَبۡلِ أَن يَأۡتِىَ يَوۡمٌ۬ لَّا بَيۡعٌ۬ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَـٰلٌ **)**

 Say (O Muhammad) to My slaves, who have believed, that they should establish regular prayer (Salâh), and spend in charity out of the sustenance We have given them, secretly and openly, before the coming of a Day on which there will be neither mutual bargaining nor befriending [Ibrahim: 31].

I said what you have heard, and I ask forgiveness from Allâh, the Almighty for you and me. Hence, ask for His forgiveness; for He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

**Second sermon:**

All praise is due and belongs to Allâh alone. May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon the last Prophet.

O believers!

Indeed, the Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), intended to burn the houses that sheltered those who default in attending congregational prayers for their negligence to observe this great duty, so that the fire will burn away their lives and wealth as punishment for abandoning this ritual. This is a severe penalty which cannot be inflicted unless for a great sin.

Had he set a house ablaze with its inmates, people would have felt scared and severely panicked, and if he had done so for those who abandon the congregational prayer, it would have been an established legal punishment for them but he didn’t. That is the reason the Sahabah (noble companions of the Prophet) used to care about observing prayer in congregation and strongly reprove one that neglects it and even describe him with hypocrisy. It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Mas'ud, may Allâh be pleased with him, that he said, " He who likes to meet Allâh tomorrow (i.e., on the Day of Requital) as a Muslim, should take care and observe the prayers (Salawaat) when the Adhan is announced for them. Allâh has expounded to your Prophet (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), the ways of right guidance, and these (the prayers) are part of the right guidance. If you have to perform Salâh in your houses, as this man who stays away (from the mosque) and performs Salâh in his house, you will abandon the Sunnah (practice) of your Prophet (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), and the departure from the Sunnah of your Prophet (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), will lead you astray. There is no man who purifies himself and does it well, and comes to the mosque and prays there, but for every step that he takes, Allâh raises him in status one degree thereby, and takes away one of his sins. I have seen the time when no one stayed behind except a well-known hypocrite. I also saw that a man was brought swaying (on account of weakness) between two men till he was set up in a row (in the mosque) ". (Muslim).

 This is what Abdullah bin Mas'ud, may Allâh be pleased with him, said about the status of prayer in congregation in the sight of the Companions of the Messenger of Allâh , (May the blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him), and their judgment of hypocrisy on anyone that failed to observe it, where they used to consider him a hypocrite, thrust him aside and boycott him.

Today, one that defaults in attending Prayer in congregation is considered a commendable comrade that we honor, befriend and commune with and honour, just as if he has not disobeyed Allâh and His Messenger, by abandoning an act of worship he has been commanded to perform. Moreover, this shows that the balance of prayer, in our own estimation is light and simple, although it has been clarified for us in the Holy Qur'an, Sunnah, practice of the noble companions and the practice of Muslims to this day that observing prayers in congregation is obligatory and that it is mandatory to rebuke and punish whoever that abandons it in this world and the hereafter.

What excuse has he that hears the call to prayer and the mosque may even be next to his house, while he is physically healthy and safe not afraid of anything and yet he does not attend the congregational prayers?!

O Muslims! Our condition today with respect to the prayer is a very bad one. Its weight has become light before us, we have taken its issue for granted, and negligence in its respect has become a simple matter and a commonplace thing.

You discover that in a large family at home, only some of its members do attend the prayer, and in some homes nobody attends, and those who attend do not reproach those who default and they may even be from among their own children, who they have been assigned to really care about and to beat them if they refuse to pray, but they favored that which is the meanest to that which is the best. It is only Allâh we seek for help.

O Allâh ! Mend the condition of all Muslims, and kindly return them to Your religion.

Invoke prayers and blessings of Allâh upon the one Allâh, the Most Exalted and Glorified, has commanded you to do so when He said,

**( إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا )**

Allâh sends His Salâh (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy, etc.) on the Prophet (Muhammad) and also His angels too (ask Allâh to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your Salâh on (ask Allâh to bless) him (Muhammad), and (you should) greet him with the Islamic way of greeting [Al-Ahzab: 56].