

Prayer Issues Pertaining to COVID-19

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Fiqh Council of North America

All praise is due to Allah, and may peace and salutations be upon the Prophet ﷺ.

During this time of crisis, we remind all Muslims of their duty towards their Lord. We believe every calamity that occurs has benefits in this world and the next, and that a believer has the potential to always come out a winner no matter what the circumstances, if our intentions and frame of mind and faith is correct.

Given the extenuating circumstances surround the coronavirus crisis, the Fiqh Council of North America convened online and has unanimously issued the following statements:

Regarding Friday prayers and communal salats the Fiqh Council states:

- The suspension of the communal prayers in the masjids, and all religious activities in person, is a necessary matter in light of the overall goals of the Sharī‘ah, and not only is there no sin in doing so, rather it is sinful to flout such regulations and bring risk to oneself and to others. Of the primary goals of the Sharī‘ah is the preservation of life; and this ban is not a ban on actual prayer (which is an individual obligation on a person), but on the communal prayer (which according to the majority of scholars is not an individual obligation, and can be lifted for many reasons, including slight hardship). This suspension should remain until medical experts give indications that it can be lifted. This is a matter for medical experts to assess, not religious authorities.
- While in-person activities should be suspended, religious lectures and all other classes and even sermons can and should be delivered online and distributed to the community. We advise every community that it should be connected with its religious leaders during this time of crisis, and communities should do their best to maintain some semblance of activities online.
- The khutbah (Friday sermon) that is being broadcast, even if live, does not take the ruling of a Friday sermon for those who listen to it from their houses. This is because there is unanimous consensus amongst all of the legal schools that an unreasonable gap in between the lines breaks a congregational prayer (jamā‘ah); hence there is no jamā‘ah with many households praying many miles apart. As well, in particular for Jum‘ah, the default is that it is done in major masjids, and it is a ‘gathering’ (jam‘) of the people. Therefore, it is not permitted for people who are watching the sermon remotely to then pray two rak‘ats Friday prayer even if they are listening live. Rather, those in their homes will pray four rak‘at Dhuhr in lieu of regular Jum‘ah.
- While some schools of law did allow three (or four) people to perform Jum‘ah (with some conditions), and hence according to those schools it would not be invalid for families to establish Jum‘ah in their houses if these numbers were met, the Fiqh Council does not encourage this practice unless extenuating individual circumstances exist that make this option the better one. The goal of the ban on social intermingling would be defeated if mini-Jum‘ah services began in people’s houses.

And Allah the Exalted knows best.