

Being Too Lenient about Combining Prayers

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Author: Muhammad Ibn Saalih Al-'Uthaymeen

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Being Too Lenient about Combining Prayers¹

Question: We notice that some people are very lenient about combining prayers. Do you feel it's justified to do so for reasons like cold weather?

Answer: It's not allowed to be too lenient in combining prayers, because Allaah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْقُوتًا ﴾

Certainly, the prayers have been prescribed for the believers at specified times.

[Soorah An-Nisaa, 4:103]

And He (ﷻ) says:

﴿ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنِ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ

مَشْهُودًا ﴾

Establish prayer from the declining of the sun until the darkness of night. And the Quraan of dawn; for sure the dawn recitation is witnessed.

[Soorah Al-Israa, 17:78]

So, if the prayer is obligated at certain times, then they must be performed at those specific times. This is generally summed up by His verse, “**Establish prayer from the declining of the sun...**” (a time including the Thuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha prayers). And the Prophet (ﷺ) went into further details, saying:

¹ Taken from Fataawaa Arkaan Al-Islam by Shaykh Ibn Al-'Uthaymeen. This particular article isn't actually one of the numbered Fatwaas in the collection, but it's a separate article and can be found between Fatwa numbers 314 and 315, page 384 of the book published by Dar Ath-Thurayyaa Publishing.

وَقْتُ الظُّهْرِ إِذَا زَالَتْ الشَّمْسُ وَكَانَ ظِلُّ الرَّجُلِ كَطُولِهِ مَا لَمْ يَحْضُرِ العَصْرُ وَوَقْتُ
العَصْرِ مَا لَمْ تَصْفُرَّ الشَّمْسُ وَوَقْتُ صَلَاةِ المَغْرِبِ مَا لَمْ يَغِبِ الشَّفَقُ وَوَقْتُ صَلَاةِ
العِشَاءِ إِلَى نِصْفِ اللَّيْلِ الأَوْسَطِ وَوَقْتُ صَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ مِنْ طُلُوعِ الفَجْرِ مَا لَمْ تَطْلُعْ
الشَّمْسُ

“The time of Thuhr is from the time the sun stops rising and when a man’s shadow is the same length as his height up until the time of Asr. The time of Asr is until the sun turns yellow. The time of Maghrib prayer is until the light disappears from the horizon. The time of the Ishaa prayer is until the middle of the night. And the time of the morning prayer is from the first light until the sun rises.”²

So, if the Prophet (ﷺ) specified in detail the prayer times, then leaving the prayer until other times is a form of overstepping the bounds set by Allaah:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

And whoever transgresses the limits set by Allaah – those are the wrongdoers.

[Soorah Al-Baqarah, 2:229]

So for example, if someone knowingly and intentionally prays a prayer before its time, he’s sinful and must repeat it. This is exactly what happens when someone combines prayers without a valid, Islaamic-legislated reason; the prayer that’s prayed early is incorrect and must be repeated.

Similarly, whoever knowingly, intentionally delays a prayer until after its set time without a legitimate excuse, then he’s also sinful and his prayer isn’t accepted according to the most correct opinion. And this is what happens when combining prayers at the later time without a valid reason; the later prayer is not accepted according to the correct opinion.

So, a Muslim should conscientiously fear Allaah (ﷻ) and not be too lenient about such a great and possibly dangerous issue.

² Recorded by Muslim (no. 612).

As for the Hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) that's been authentically recorded in "Saheeh Muslim":

"The Prophet (ﷺ) combined between Thuhr and 'Asr, and between Maghrib and Ishaah while still in the city (not traveling) and not due to any fear or rain."³

Even in this Hadeeth, there's no proof for being too lenient about the matter because Ibn 'Abbaas was then asked, "Why did he do that?" He replied, "He wanted to not place any difficulty on his nation." In this, there's actually evidence that combining is only allowed for the reason that it's difficult to perform each prayer at its proper time. So, if any Muslim finds difficulty in praying each prayer at its time, he's then allowed to combine, or it may even be preferable. And if there's no hardship on him, he's required to pray all prayers at their specified times.

Based on this, cold weather by itself doesn't permit combining unless it's associated with strong winds or snow or hail that would bother people if they went out to the mosques.

So, my advice to my Muslim brothers, especially to the Imaams, is to conscientiously fear Allaah regarding this matter and to seek His help in performing this obligation (the prayer) in the way that pleases Him.

- Muhammad Ibn Saalih Al-'Uthaymeen (July 8th, 1413 Hijrah)

³ Recorded by Muslim (no. 705).