

The adab of Itikaaf

These are the most important nights of our life - imagine these are the last 10 nights of your life! In it is a night better than 1,000 months. The Prophet(SAW) would leave off jihad, janazah and visiting the sick as every single second is rewardable, even while sleeping or eating. Our advice and guidance for itikaaf in Madinah Masjid follows:



Consider your brothers with the highest respect:

- You will be sharing the masjid space with others - be patient with others whether they snore or not, and respect their privacy (no peeking in personal space - permission must be sought)
- Let others sleep - if the lights are off or you are aware someone is sleeping, do not disturb them with noise or lights unless requested
- Even in good deeds - the Prophet(SAW) reprimanded Mu'adh for leading the evening prayer and reciting Surat al-Baqarah, until a man left the prayer and Mu'adh was critical of him. The news reached the Prophet and he said three times, "You put them to trial!" The Prophet ordered him to recite two medium chapters from the end of the Quran (al-mufassal). [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 669] Same with your **reading of the Qur'an** - take it easy on the others and **lower your voice**.
- Control your tongue - the quickest & most dangerous way to burn your good deeds. This is not the time to indulge in non-essential discussion, albeit good in other times e.g. politics, difference of opinions
- Defer to the Ameer when there are matters related to others and respect their response and guidance
- Any announcements / notices for the group can be discussed when we are together at sehri time

Rules of Itikaf

1. **Make intention** of staying inside the mosque to worship Allah(SWT) in order to become closer to Him, according to the Sunnah practise of Rasoolullah (SAW). Aim to be in the **first row** for every salah.

Remember, this is an opportunity for seclusion with Allah (SWT), not others on itikaaf. Although you should continue to smile and treat each other well, try not to get diverted from your ultimate purpose of seclusion with Allah(SWT). How many a good act starts well but is corrupted during the action - our teachers advise starting with Bismillah and then refresh it with **Lillah** throughout to check your sincerity.

2. **Continuous Tawbah & Istighfaar**: This includes turning to Allah(SWT), begging His forgiveness, talking to Him(SWT), seeking His guidance and making a promise to turn away from that which displeases Him(SWT). Use your time for reflection and planning to dedicate yourself better to Allah(SWT) and begin now with the intention to continue for the remainder of your life.

3. **Increase** your good actions - this is the final sprint of Ramadan and actions are rewarded by their ending [Bukhari]. **Set goals** and then commit to exceeding them. Keep on pushing yourself to constantly be in dhikr, read more Qur'an, reflect more, pray more salaah, make more dua. Try **not** to find **yourself free**, for even a minute is worth more than 5,000 days repeating that activity.

Excel in your ibadaat - be in the **front row** of every salaah and pray all Sunnah and Nawaafil prayers. Connect with the Qurans message (**meaning**) and review your daily progress (muhaasabah)

4. The Sunnah itikaaf consists of **staying in the allocated masjid area (red carpeted areas only)**, leaving only when essential for the minimum time e.g. toilet, wudu

5. Keep the masjid **clean**: after you have eaten, clean up after yourself. Don't waste food or water.

6. Focus on **freeing your mind** from other things (**phone** on silent with minimal use by monitoring your **screen time**). You are here for your **personal** development and its important you can sustain your efforts by mixing it up so you don't tire (salaah, dhikr, read, recite)

7. Be certain of some good deeds on Laylatul Qadr, by ensuring you use every night for personal dua, ibaadah and some sadaqah. Aisha (ra) said, 'I asked the Messenger of Allah, "O Messenger of Allah, if I know what night is the night of Qadr, what should I say during it?" He said, "Say: O Allah, you are the Most Forgiving, **You love to forgive, so forgive me**". [Tirmidhi]

Objectives of Itikaaf

1. Confining the heart to worship and devotion of the Divine.
2. Seeking out Laylat al-Qadr
3. Experiencing a close intimacy with Allāh, (subhānahu wa ta'ālā).
4. Nurturing the mind, body & soul into increased, quality acts of worship

Example routine

After Fajr

- Benefit from the daily Fajr reminder
- Read some **Qur'an at fajr**
- Do your **morning adhkaar**
- Ishraq can be prayed after the sun has risen & in the first third of the morning. "Whoever prays Fajr in congregation, then sits **remembering Allah** until the sun rises, then prays two rak'ahs, will have a reward like that of Hajj and 'Umrah, complete, complete, complete." [Tirmidhi, 586] Ishraq is minimum 2 raka'at and maximum 4.

Before Dhohar

- Get some quality sleep waking before the adhan of Dhohar
- Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "My beloved (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) advised me to do three things, which I will not forsake so long as I live: to fast three days of each month, to pray **Doha**, and not to sleep until I pray Witr" [Muslim, 722] Doha is minimum 2 raka'at and maximum 12.

After Dhohar

- Spend time reviewing the Qur'an to be recited in taraweeh
- Benefit from qaylulah (afternoon nap) so that you are fresh for the Night Prayers. Rasoolullah (SAW) would say: "Take a nap at midday, for the Shaytaan does not take a nap at midday." [Tabaraani]

After Asr

1. Do your evening adhkaar
2. Read some Qur'an and ahadith
3. Make dua before Iftar

Iftar & after Maghrib

- Break fast moderately and try to minimise ordering too much if there is already a collective iftar
- Before Isha, try to listen to/read a juz summary

After Isha

- Pray with the Imam until he completes if you are able. Don't harass others if they need to rest. The Messenger of Allah(SAW) said, "Verily, whoever stands for prayer in Ramadan

