

WHEN TO PAUSE OR JOIN MINYAN

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Regular Shacharit

Shema

When the minyan reaches the shema in shacharit:

- If you are between bar'chu and end of amida, simply:
 - Cover your eyes like everyone else, but don't say the shema line.
- If you are anywhere else:
 - Pause and, with everyone else, say the first two lines of the shema (Shema, Yisrael... and Baruch shem...), and then
 - Resume where you were.

REASON You may not interrupt your prayer between bar'chu and end of amida.

Amida

SITUATION You are saying your amida in a minyan and it is close to the end of the fourth hour of the day.

WHAT TO DO Do not pause, even if the leader says kaddish or kedusha, if doing so will delay you past the fourth hour.

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Shabbat/Jewish Festival Shacharit

If the leader gets to kedusha on Shabbat or Jewish festival morning and you are saying the amida, you must:

- Pause until the leader has finished the blessing after kedusha (ha'el—or ha'melech—ha'kadosh), and then
- Resume your amida.

During birkat cohanim, you must:

- Pause in your amida until the end of birkat cohanim.

EXCEPTION Do not pause, even if the leader says kaddish or kedusha, if doing so will delay you past the fourth hour.

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Mincha

During mincha, don't pause at all (such as for kedusha or kaddish) if, by pausing, you will not finish saying your amida before sunset.

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Ma'ariv

If the ma'ariv minyan says shema, you must join them for the first two sentences (“Shema, Yisrael...” and “Baruch shem...”), unless you are saying the amida.

When To Pause or Join Minyan: General Prayer Services

Here is when to pause or join the minyan during general prayer services:

- Ashrei

You do not need to interrupt your prayers to join the minyan for ashrei.

- Torah Reading

If you are saying the amida, pause only during the actual Torah reading, not during the blessings.

- Kaddish

During kaddish, you must pause in your amida until the prayer leader finishes the line of da'amiran b'alma....

- Alenu

If the minyan says alenu and you are at a part of the prayer service at which you are permitted to interrupt, you may join them.

NOTE It is a proper practice to say alenu with the congregation, even if you have already finished that prayer service.

REASON If you don't, it seems as if you are not accepting ol malchut shamayim.