

# WITH WHOM TO PRAY

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: PRAYER QUORUM (MINYAN)

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: SEEKING A QUORUM (MINYAN)

### How Much Effort To Pray with a Minyan

Praying with a minyan is very important and you should travel up to 18 minutes away in order to get to a minyan.

**NOTE** If waking up early will mess up the rest of your day, you do not need to wake up to go.

**EXAMPLE** You may pray by yourself if joining a minyan would cause you:

- To be late to work,
- To lose your job,
- To interfere with your caring for a sick person or someone who needs attention,
- To injure your health,
- Financial loss, or
- Shalom bayit problems.

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: WHAT CONSTITUTES A QUORUM (MINYAN)

### How Many Men Needed for a Minyan

A minyan is a prayer quorum of 10 Jewish men who are at least 13 years old. At least six of the men must be praying.

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: WHO MAY BE COUNTED IN A QUORUM (MINYAN)

### Non-Shomer Shabbat Jew Counted in Minyan

A non-shomer Shabbat Jew may be counted as part of a minyan.

### Boy less than 13 Years Old

A boy who has not reached 13 years of age may not be counted in a minyan, even if one day short of 13 years.

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: QUORUM (MINYAN) SIZE

### Large Minyan or Small

In general, praying with a large group of Jews is preferable to praying with a small group.

**REASON** A large group is considered to be more honoring of God (b'rov am hadrat melech).

**NOTE** You may pray with a smaller minyan if you are not happy with the large minyan, such as the speed of the service, people talking during the service, or inconvenient timing when you need to get to work.

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: WHICH PRAYERS REQUIRE A QUORUM (MINYAN)

### Prayers that Require a Minyan

Although it is preferable to join a minyan whenever possible, prayer services may be said without a minyan. However, certain prayers may be said (or omitted) only with a minyan present:

- Bar'chu (morning and night),
- The word “Eloheinu” in the birkat ha'mazon introduction,
- Kaddish,
- Kedusha,
- Reader's repetition of the amida,
- Sheva brachot (the seven blessings) at a wedding,
- Sheva brachot during the week following the wedding,
- 13 midot in selichot,
- Torah reading if there will be aliyot, and
- Skipping the three introductory words for the shema.

**NOTE** A minyan is preferable but not required for a circumcision.

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN ETIQUETTE

### WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN ETIQUETTE: PRIORITY

#### Priority of Synagogue Members

In leading the prayers, members of a synagogue have priority over ANY non-member, regardless of status. Next in priority:

- Yahrzeit up to second ashrei;
- Mourner within 30 days;
- Mourner after 30 days.

**EXCEPTION** A mourner from out of town may lead one prayer service.

### WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN ETIQUETTE: NUSACH

#### Minyan Leader Follows Custom of Minyan

Say the entire prayer service (and not just the public portions) according to the custom of the minyan of which you are the leader, even if it differs from your custom.

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN: AMEN

### MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN TO SAY

#### Wait for Amen until after Completion of Blessing

Don't say amen to reply to the prayer leader's blessing until he has completely finished the blessing.

#### Don't Answer Amen within 2.5 Seconds

Don't answer amen if you finish a prayer or blessing within 2.5 seconds after the prayer leader (cantor) finishes the same prayer or blessing as you are saying. However, in these three cases, you may say amen, even if you finish exactly together with the leader:

- End of yishtabach;
- End of Hallel;
- Ma'ariv's shomer amo yisrael la'ad.

## **MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN TO INTERRUPT YOUR PRAYER**

### **Interrupting Your Prayer To Say Amen**

You may say amen to a prayer leader's blessing even if you are at a different part of the prayer service, but only at a part that you are permitted to interrupt.

### **Interrupting Your Blessing To Say Amen**

You may not interrupt saying your own blessing in order to say amen to someone else's.

### **Interrupting Your Amida To Say Amen**

When saying the amida yourself, do not say amen or any other replies to the prayer leader's repetition. If he says kedusha or kaddish:

- Pause in your own amida and listen without answering or saying anything.
- Once the leader has finished kedusha or kaddish, resume your private amida.

**EXCEPTION** If you finish the final blessing of the amida (“...Ha'mevareich et amo yisrael ba'shalom”) as the leader starts to say the kedusha, and you want to respond along with the congregation:

- Quickly say the line, “Yihyu l'ratzon ....”
- Reply to the entire kedusha (kadosh, amen, and any other words that are said by the congregation) as if you had finished the amida.
- Once the leader has said the final blessing of kedusha, say “elohai netzur....”

## **MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN YOU CANNOT HEAR BLESSING**

### **Saying Amen When You Cannot Hear the Blessing**

Answer amen even if you cannot hear the leader saying blessings or prayers, as long as you know when he is finished each blessing.

## **MINYAN: AMEN: MISPRONOUNCED BLESSING**

### **Saying Amen to Mispronunciation**

Do not answer amen if the prayer leader is not saying blessings or prayers correctly, such as mispronouncing words, mumbling, slurring words, etc.

## **MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN 10 MEN INCLUDES PRAYER LEADER**

### **Prayer Leader of 10 Men Should Wait**

A prayer service leader for a group of only 10 men including himself should (but is not required to) wait until all 10 men have finished the private amida before he begins the reader's repetition.

- Shabbat
- Jewish Festivals
- Rosh Chodesh musaf.

**REASON** To have nine men replying amen to each blessing.

**NOTE** A minimum of six men must be finished before the reader begins the repetition. If delaying the repetition at mincha will cause the repetition to be finished after sunset, consult a rabbi.

## NOTE

If all nine other men will not (or may not) say amen, the leader should intend that his public amida be a “free-will offering” (nedava); otherwise, his public amida may be a bracha l'vatala. He may not intend to offer a "free-will offering" on days or services that this sacrifice was not offered in the Temple in Jerusalem:

- Shabbat
- Jewish Festivals
- Rosh Chodesh musaf.

## Amida with Minyan but with less than Nine Men Answering

On Shabbat, even if there will not be at least nine men answering amen to the reader's repetition of the amida, the reader should say the repetition anyway, without intending that his repetition be counted as a nedava (which can only be offered on weekdays). If less than six men will be answering, the leader must wait before doing the repetition.

## WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN: KEEPING PACE

### MINYAN: KEEPING PACE: SHACHARIT MINYAN

#### What To Skip To Catch Up in Shacharit

If you arrive late for a shacharit minyan, or if you are lagging behind the leader, you may skip all of psukei d'zimra to catch up--except for:

- Baruch she'amar,
- Ashrei, and
- Yishtabach.

You may also not skip any parts from yishtabach to the amida.

**NOTE** After you have said the amida, you do not need to return to say the rest of psukei d'zimra.

**NOTE** This should not be done routinely. It is better to pray alone or to say the amida along with the leader during the reader's repetition of the amida in order to allow yourself time to say the psukei d'zimra.

#### If Arrive Late on Shabbat or Jewish Festival Morning

If you are late to minyan on Shabbat (or Jewish festival) morning, say:

- Shacharit while the minyan is saying the musaf amida (as long as it is not yet too late to say shacharit), and then say
- Musaf while the reader is repeating the amida.

## MINYAN: KEEPING PACE: ANY MINYAN

### FINISHING AMIDA BEFORE KEDUSHA

#### Finishing Amida before Leader Says Kedusha

If you arrive late for any minyan (except ma'ariv) that is about to start the amida, try to finish saying your amida before the leader gets to kedusha, if you can.

If you know you will not be able to finish your amida in time to say kedusha with the minyan:

- Wait for the leader to start the repetition of the amida.
- Say the repetition of the amida word for word with the leader, including kedusha, until the end of the third blessing (ha'el ha'kadosh).

- Once you and he have both finished saying the third blessing, you may continue at your own pace regardless of whether you will finish before or after him.

If for any reason you have not yet finished saying your amida by the time the leader begins saying the reader's repetition, do not say amen or any other replies to the prayer leader's repetition. However, when he begins to say kedusha or kaddish:

- Pause in your own amida and listen without answering or saying anything.
- Once the leader has finished kedusha (that is, he has said *baruch kevod adonai mi'mkomo*) or kaddish (that is, he has said *da'amiran be'alma v'imru amen*), resume your private amida.

**EXCEPTION** See [Responding to Prayer Leader before Elohai Netzur](#).

**NOTE** For ma'ariv, if you arrive late and the minyan is about to start the amida, do not say shema and the other prayers that precede the amida but start immediately so you say your amida with the minyan and then return to say the parts you skipped.

## 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.