

Halacha Highlight

Davening with a tzibbur in a Bais HaKnesses

Shulchan Aruch Siman 90 Seif 8
שתדל אדם להתפלל בבית הכנסת עם הצבור

A person should make an effort to daven in a Bais HaKnesses with a tzibbur

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ט') writes that one should make an effort to *daven* in a *Bais HaKnesses* with a *tzibbur*. The reason is that Hashem will never despise the *tefila* of a *tzibbur* and even if there are sinners in the *tzibbur* one should not refrain from *davening* with them. Although Shulchan Aruch's choice of word—*שתדל*—one should make an effort - implies that *davening* with a *tzibbur* is not obligatory, Rav Moshe Feinstein (שו"ת אגני"מ או"ח ח"ב סי' כ"ז וח"ג סי' ז') contends that there is an obligation for one to *daven* with a *tzibbur*. The reason it is obligatory for one to *daven* with a *tzibbur* is that one who *davens* by himself cannot be assured that his *tefila* will be answered even if he is great and righteous. Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchok (ח"ו סי' ו') suggests that the word *שתדל* refers to the combination of the two dimensions of 1) *davening* with a *tzibbur* and 2) in the *Bais HaKnesses*. In other words there is an absolute obligation to *daven* with a *tzibbur* but that obligation could be fulfilled even if one *davens* with a *tzibbur* in his home. One should also make an effort to *daven* with a *tzibbur* in the *Bais HaKnesses*. That additional dimension is not obligatory but certainly preferable.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ח) writes that when given the choice between *davening* in a *Bais HaKnesses* with a small *minyan* and a *Bais HaKnesses* with a large *minyan* one should give preference to the larger *minyan* since a large *minyan* gives more honor to Hashem – רב עם הדרת מלך. *Poskim* (אגני"מ יו"ד ח"ד סי' ס"א אות ד' וכן דעת הגרשו"א במשנ"ב ביצחק יקרא) write that when there are numerous mourners who want to serve as *shaliach tzibbur* it is preferable to *daven* in a large group rather than to divide into smaller *minyanim*. Other *Poskim* (דעת הגריש"א המובה באש"י ישראל פ"ח הע"י כ"ו) disagree and contend that the favor one does to allow a friend who is a mourner to serve as *shaliach tzibbur* outweighs the advantage of *davening* in a large group.

Stories to Share

Praying at a Distance

ש"ע סי' צ"י, ט' י"א כיוון להתפלל בשעה שהצבור מתפללים בו..."

A certain man lived very far from any shul. It was impractical for him to travel to the minyan but he would daven shemoneh esrei every day at exactly the same time the closest minyan—one hundred miles away—was scheduled to pray. When the man was at a simchah and a friend asked him how he managed never davening with a minyan, the man casually mentioned this practice. The person hearing about this thought it was, halachically speaking, a worthless practice.

"I always understood that the principle of davening at the same time as the nearest minyan refers to the minyan in your town. But if the minyan is in a very distant city, presumably one who davens at the same time is considered to be praying at a different time altogether."

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, zt"l, he agreed with this reasoning. "As long as the shul is within the boundary of the city where the lone mispallel is praying, he has the benefit of davening 'with' the local minyan if he is on their schedule. But if he is at a greater distance than this, his practice does not afford this benefit."

קונטרס הלכות תפילה, ס"י

Another man lived in a city with many small shuls. When he fell ill, he consoled himself with the observation, "Since this city is filled with minyanim I don't have to bother to find out the exact time when a minyan davens shemoneh esrei. Any time I daven—even quite late—I will at least daven at the time when some minyan prays. If not shemoneh esrei, I will be with some minyan

Overview

Siman 90 Seif 8:

It is prohibited to pass by the entrance of a *Bais HaKnesses* while the *tzibbur* is *davening* since it appears as though one is a heretic since he is not entering to *daven*. If he is carrying something heavy, wearing *tefillin*, if there is another *Bais HaKnesses* in town or if there is another entrance to this *Bais HaKnesses* (or if he is riding on an animal) it is permitted.

- ❖ Pri Megadim writes that one should be stringent even regarding *shema* and *pesukai d'zimra*. (M.B. 23)
- ❖ If there are multiple *minyanim* in this *Bais HaKnesses* it is also permitted to pass by without entering. (M.B. 25)

Siman 90 Seif 9:

One should make an effort to daven in the Bais HaKnesses with the tzibbur. If one is an ones and cannot come to the Bais HaKnesses he should time his davening so that he davens at the time that the tzibbur is davening. (The same *halacha* applies for those who live in settlements that do not have a *minyan*, i.e. they should *daven* at the time that the *tzibbur* is *davening*.) Similarly, one who is an *ones* and did not *daven* at the time the *tzibbur* davened and will *daven* by himself should make an effort to *daven* in the *Bais HaKnesses*.

- ❖ One should *daven* in the *Bais HaKnesses* even if he has a *minyan* in his home. (M.B. 27)
- ❖ One should not refrain from *davening* together with a *minyan* even if it includes sinners. (M.B. 28)
- ❖ Given the choice it is preferable to *daven* in the *Bais HaKnesses* that has a larger *minyan* unless there is a lot of commotion there that prevents one from being able to hear what is going in. (M.B. 28)
- ❖ It is better to *daven* with a *minyan* in a private home than to *daven* alone in a *Bais HaKnesses*. (M.B. 28)
- ❖ The primary component of *tefila b'tzibbur* is for ten adults to *daven* together. (M.B. 28)
- ❖ If one *davens* at an early *minyan* because the larger *minyan* may miss *davening* in the correct time one should wait, if possible, to *daven mussaf* with the larger *minyan*. This ruling, however, is limited to where the person has his own place to *daven* in the *Bais HaKnesses* but if not it is better to *daven* everything in a single location. (M.B. 28)
- ❖ Radvaz writes that if one is given one day to leave prison one should go the next day to *daven* with a *minyan* rather than wait for Yom Kippur or Purim. (M.B. 28)
- ❖ One who is weak, even if he is not ill is considered an *ones* for this *halacha*. If one's *ones* is money related he may *daven* alone in the *Bais HaKnesses* or in his home but only if he stands to suffer a loss of principal not if he stands to miss out on earning a profit. Elya Rabba writes in the name of Teshuvos Bais Yaakov that those who miss *minyan* to study Torah or to earn money should be fined. (M.B. 29)
- ❖ This *halacha* assumes that one cannot gather together a *minyan*. (M.B. 30)
- ❖ The Gemara Avodah Zarah (4b) implies that *davening mussaf* when the *tzibbur* is *davening shacharis* is not considered "*davening* at the time the *tzibbur* is *davening*" but if he is physically with them in *shul* it is called *tefilas hatzibbur*. (M.B. 30)
- ❖ In Ashkenaz where the custom is to *daven ma'ariv* early someone who lives out of town should wait until nightfall to *daven ma'ariv*.

for shacharis at least."

When this man's argument was discussed with Rav Eliyashiv, he ruled that it was erroneous. "You need to daven at the time when a specific minyan davens. Shteiblach do not count for this since you cannot be sure when they daven shemoneh esrei."