

(a) What is the purpose of prayers in congregation? [10]

- *Prayer is the second pillar of Islam.*
- *Five daily prayers are obligatory on all adult Muslims.*
- *It is compulsory for men to offer prayers in congregation, however, if it is missed it can be offered alone.*
- *The daily congregational prayers can be offered by more than one person. However, the congregational prayers of Juma , Eid and Funeral prayers are offered in large gathering .*
- *Congregational prayers can be offered at home, in masjid or at any place if it is clean.*
- *There are many purposes of congregational prayers. The foremost is that it is submission to the command by Allah*
- *“ and bow down with those who bow” (Quran). Thus the one who offers it in fact submits to the will of Allah due to which he deserves Blessings from Allah*
- *As more people gather in congregation so it can strengthen bonds of brotherhood as Muslims usually discuss issues of common interest before or after the prayers*
- *Another purpose of congregational prayers is that this prayer develops equality among Muslims*
- *when different people gather in mosques and stand shoulder to shoulder with others then they forget their differences based on tribe, language or status.*
- *The congregational prayer gives practice to follow an Imam in all acts of Qiyam, Ruku, sajda etc., which develops obedience to their heads in all just matters*
- *By regular offering salat at one time and at one place the whole community practices unity. Allah says:*
- *“ Indeed the prayer has been made obligatory on believers at its fixed times”.*
- *Muslims wake up early in the morning and offer prayer in mosques at the break of dawn then they gather at fixed times of Zuhar,Asar, Magrib,Isha which develops regularity in them*
- *Another purpose of this prayer is to give Muslims a chance to get more reward through one worship. “Prayer in congregation is twenty seven times better than prayer prayed individually.” (Hadith)*
- *Muslims show strength when they offer Juma and Eidain prayers in very large gatherings as they can only be offered in very large gatherings. These prayers also give knowledge, due to sermons speeches*
- *This shows that Muslims are united under the law of Allah*