WHERE TO PRAY: AVOIDING DISTRACTION

WHERE TO PRAY: DISTRACTING ATTIRE

Men's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed Woman

A *man* may not pray within visible distance of an immodestly dressed woman. She must be far enough away that he cannot tell what she is wearing. Alternatively, he can turn away from her.

Husband's Prayer near Wife

A husband may say *shema* and the *amida* (and study *Torah*) in his wife's presence if her hair is uncovered (as long as he is not looking at her hair), but not if she is immodestly dressed.

Women's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed People

A woman may say blessings or prayers around men who are not completely dressed as long as the men's genitals are covered. Women may say even the *amida* around immodestly dressed women as long as the woman praying is dressed appropriately.

WHERE TO PRAY: DISTRACTING SMELL

Prayer near Feces

Don't say prayers or blessings within 6'7" (4 *amot*, or 2 m) (in any direction except in front of you) of any feces—human or animal—unless:

- They have no odor, or
- They are covered by something and you cannot smell them.

NOTE If there are no feces in front of you as far as you can see, assume that none are there.

Prayer near Animal

You may say blessings, the *shema*, and even the *amida* if you are near an animal, as long as the animal does not smell.

WHERE TO PRAY: DISTRACTING PEOPLE/MECHITZA

Room Divider/Mechitza: Purpose

Men and women should be separated during prayer services with a *mechitza* that blocks the men's view of the women. The goal is to keep the men and women from distracting each other during prayer. This idea originated in the *Temple* in Jerusalem.

Where Mechitza Needed

A *mechitza* to separate men and women is needed only when praying in a place dedicated as a permanent location for regular Jewish prayer services with a *minyan*. If not, no *mechitza* is needed, and any separation that prevents distraction between men and women is sufficient. Even if the women are just behind the men, that is sufficient, even without a physical barrier.

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