WHERE TO PRAY

WHERE TO PRAY: SET PLACE

Set Place (Makom Kavu'a): Enhancement of Prayers

It is an enhancement of your prayers to set aside a regular place for praying (*makom kavu'a*), but it is not required.

NOTE If you have a regular seat/*makom kavu'a* in *synagogue* and you find someone sitting in your seat, it is not proper to ask that person to move if it will upset that person.

NOTE Your *makom kavu'a* extends to 4 *amot*/6'7" away from the actual seat and so you could sit in a nearby seat and still be within your *makom kavu'a.* However, even if there are no other seats available near your normal seat, it is still not proper to upset a person by asking him or her to move from your seat.

WHERE TO PRAY: HOW CLOSE

Prayer with Minyan in another Room

If you are outside the room in which a *minyan* is praying, you may still join and reply to all of the prayers as long as:

- You can see or hear the congregation, or
- There are at least 10 men (in addition to you) inside the main room.

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.

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE: HUGGING/KISSING

Don't Hug or Kiss People in Synagogue

Don't hug or kiss people in *synagogue*.

REASON We are supposed to show love only for God there.

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE: EATING OR SLEEPING

Eating or Sleeping in Synagogue

You may not eat or sleep in a *synagogue* that is only used for prayer.

Eating or Sleeping in Bet Midrash

You may nap or eat in a *bet midrash*, even if the same room is used for prayer.

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE: CHILDREN

Bringing Children to Synagogue

Do not bring children to *minyan* until they are able to say the prayers and to keep quiet.

WHERE TO PRAY: BLESSINGS

Where To Pray: Blessings

For where to say blessings, see Blessings: Where To Say.

WHERE TO PRAY: NON-JEWISH PRAYER PLACES

Where To Pray: Non-Jewish Prayer Places

See NON-JEWISH PRAYER PLACES.

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