



Ruling on i'tikaaf and the evidence for it being prescribed in Islam

Praise be to Allaah.

Firstly:

I'tikaaf is prescribed according to the Qur'aan and Sunnah and scholarly consensus.

In the Qur'aan, Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and We commanded Ibraaheem (Abraham) and Ismaa’eel (Ishmael) that they should purify My House (the Ka’bah at Makkah) for those who are circumambulating it, or staying (I’tikaaf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in prayer)”

[al-Baqarah 2:125]

“And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I’tikaaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques”

[al-Baqarah 2:187]

With regard to the Sunnah, there are many ahaadeeth, such as the hadeeth of ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to observe i'tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadaan until Allaah took his soul, then his wives observed i'tikaaf after he was gone. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2026; Muslim, 1172.

With regard to scholarly consensus, more than one of the scholars narrated that there was scholarly consensus that i'tikaaf is prescribed in sharee'ah, such as al-Nawawi, Ibn Qudaamah, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, and others.

See *al-Majmoo'*, 6/404; *al-Mughni*, 4/456; *Sharh al-'Umdah*, 2/711.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz said in *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 15/437:

Undoubtedly i'tikaaf in the mosque is an act of worship, and (observing it) in Ramadaan is better than at other times. It is prescribed in Ramadaan and at other times.

Staff and volunteers incurring authorised expenditure must, wherever possible, receive, retain and produce receipts, invoices, vouchers, tickets, or other evidence of such expenditure.

Secondly:

The ruling on i'tikaaf.

The basic principle is that i'tikaaf is Sunnah, not obligatory, unless one made a vow to do it, in which case it becomes obligatory, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever vows to obey Allaah, let him obey Him, and whoever vows to disobey Him, let him not disobey Him.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6696.

And ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “O Messenger of Allaah, during the Jaahiliyyah I vowed to observe i'tikaaf for one night in al-Masjid al-Haraam.” He said: “Fulfil your vow.” (6697).

Ibn al-Mundhir said in his book *al-Ijmaa'* (p. 53):



They were unanimously agreed that i'tikaaf is Sunnah and is not obligatory unless a man obliges himself to do that by making a vow, in which case it becomes obligatory for him.

See Fiqh al-I'tikaaf by Dr Khaalid al-Mushayqih, p. 31.

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Briefly some of the rules and etiquettes of *I'tikaf*:

1. As for the number of days, one may spend any number of days; but while sitting for i'tikaf in ramadhan, it is recommended to do so during the last ten days. If, however, a person cannot afford to do one may sit any number of days, for something is better than nothing.
2. It is important for those who wish to sit in *I'tikaf* to formulate the niyyah to do so; if one has vowed to sit in a particular mosque such as the Haram of Makkah or Madinah one should fulfil his vow;
3. He should also make sure to devote the time exclusively for *dhikr, salah, du'as*, and reading of the Qur'an. He may, however, attend sessions of beneficial religious knowledge;
4. One should refrain from all frivolous words or actions as well as unnecessary worldly conversations;
5. It is not allowed to go out of the mosque for other than performing the most basic chores such as using the facilities to answer the call of nature, etc.

Finally, we pray to Allah to help us all to strive to purify our hearts by developing concentration in worship and mindfulness of Allah.