


## Fiqh of the Sermon & Varied Opinions[1]

The legal (fiqh) aspects of the Friday Sermon (khuṭbah) vary with respect to the aspects scholars categorize as essential (farḍ) or recommended (mustaḥab). This guide presents the basic obligations and recommended aspects of the Sermon according to the Shāfiʿī School of Law because it generally fulfills the requirements of the other Schools of Law.

## Integrals (Arkān) of the Sermon

The Friday khuṭbah consists of two Sermons which are divided by a brief period of the imām sitting. Below are the necessary integrals that must be present in the Friday Sermon in order for it to be considered valid:

1. Standing: To be in a standing position while delivering both khuṭbahs.
2. Praise: To begin both khuṭbahs by saying, "Al-ḥamdu lillāh" ("Praise be to God"), or a variation of that. For example, "Inna al-ḥamda lillāh" ("Praise is for God") or "Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rab al-ʿālamīn" ("Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds").
3. Salutations: To invoke God's peace and mercy upon the Prophet Muḥammad s in both khuṭbahs. This can be fulfilled by merely saying, "Allāhumma ṣalli ʿala Muḥammad," ("O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad") although it is better to include the Prophet's family and companions in the invocation. For example, "Allāhumma ṣalli ʿala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ʿala ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim" ("O God send your peace and mercy upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions").
4. Call to Taqwā: To urge the attendees to have taqwā (fear and consciousness of God) in both khuṭbahs. This can be fulfilled several ways, for instance, by reciting verses of the Qurʾān that call to taqwā, or by simply saying, "Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh" ("I counsel you to have fear of God").
5. Sitting: To sit briefly between the 1st and 2nd khuṭbah for no longer than the time it takes to pray 2 brief rakʿahs.
6. Verse of Qurʾān: To recite one verse of the Qurʾān in either of the two khuṭbahs. One verse, or an understood portion of a verse, fulfills this requirement.
7. Prayer (Dua'a) for the Believers: To supplicate (duʿāʾ) for the believing men and women in the 2nd khuṭbah for something which benefits them in the hereafter. This is fulfilled by saying, "Allāhumma ighfir lil-Muʾminīn wa al-Muʾmināt" ("O God, forgive the believing men and women").

## Prophetic Practices (sunnahs) of Friday

It is especially important upon the one giving the Friday Sermon (khaṭīb) to perform the Sunnahs of Friday. The following are a few of the recommended acts for Friday.

1. Ghusl: Performing the ritual bath (ghusl) before the Friday Prayer.
2. Wearing White: The Prophet s used to love white clothing, and he encouraged wearing white clothing to Ṣalāt al-Jumuʿah.
3. Reciting Surat Al-Kahf: It is highly encouraged to read the 18th Surah from the Qurʾān on Friday.
4. Good Scent: It is also a Sunnah to adorn oneself with a nice scent.

## Practical advice on public speaking[2]

***For many people, the Friday Prayer is their primary method of revitalizing spiritually for the entire week. For this reason, it is important to both prepare a good sermon and convey it well. A poorly delivered khuṭbah can have adverse effects on the community and should be avoided.***

These are some basic guidelines that apply to public speaking in general and should be used when giving the Friday Sermon:

- Speak in an audible voice, making it easy for those listening to hear and understand.
- Speak clearly and do not be monotonous!
- Use certain gestures and hand movements to clarify and highlight important points, but do not be excessive in using them.
- It is important to be even more formal during the Friday Sermon for Ṣalāt Al- Jumuʿah than one would normally be while teaching a lesson or presenting a lecture. Jokes and other types of informal speech should be avoided.
- Make appropriate eye contact to make sure that attendees are focused and listening.
- Do not read verbatim from a printout!
- Repeat the most important points of the lesson and give a summary of what was just mentioned.
- Tell stories to gain the attention and concentration of those who are attending preferably stories about the Prophet Muḥammad, other prophets and messengers, and righteous people.
- Be appropriate in length—give the topic its due right, but do not wear out the attendees. **A 15-20 minute time limit is ideal for the (full) khuṭbah.** Depending on the group one might need to make the Ṣalāt al-Jumuʿah short—e.g. People taking a lunch break from work to attend the Friday Prayer.
- In the case of the short winter days, be cognizant of the short time window of Ẓuhr; therefore make sure to complete both the khuṭbah and Prayer before the time of ʿAṣr.
- Select an appropriate topic that is both relevant as a khuṭbah and relevant to the realities of life of those who are hearing it.
- Speeches that can be divisive or controversial should be avoided. Do not mention sectarian terms such as "Salafī," "Ṣufī," or "liberal Muslims," because the Friday Sermon is meant to gather all Muslims and unite their hearts in mutual love and piety. Khuṭbahs should be spiritually uplifting and inspiring, giving people the drive to make it through the next week.
- Khuṭbahs are primarily spiritual reminders, but can also be a platform for mentioning current events. In this case, find a religious topic that relates to the current event and tie the two together—***be sure not to lose the spirituality of the khuṭbah***, but also do not forget to address the current affairs that are pertinent to the congregation.
- It is also of the utmost importance that one's ideas are organized during the Friday Sermon to provide a clear message to attendees. One should be sure to clearly introduce the topic, and then support the topic by presenting relevant verses, ḥadīths, and stories. In addition, the khaṭīb should highlight the lessons and wisdoms to be taken from the verses and ḥadīths.
- Make sure to translate any important Qurʾānic verses, ḥadīths, and duʿāʾ— especially since the majority (or even a few) of people attending the Friday Prayer will not understand Arabic.
- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, one should conclude by connecting the passages quoted to a practical way of implementation for the attendees, so that the khuṭbah does not remain abstract and theoretical; rather, worshippers can realize the lessons mentioned are relevant to their lives.

## Template for Basic Khutbah

1st Sermon:

1. Al-ḥamdu lillāh (“Praised be God”). *
2. Allahumma ṣallī ʿala Muḥammad (“O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad”). *
3. Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh (“I counsel you to fear God”). *
4. Verse of the Qurʾān (or else you must recite it in 2nd Sermon). *
5. Begin 1st Sermon
    i. Intro
    ii. Lessons
    iii. Conclusions
6. Sit down briefly.

End of 1st Sermon

2nd Sermon:

1. Al-ḥamdu lillāh (“Praised be God”). *
2. Allahumma ṣallī ʿala Muḥammad (“O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad”). *
3. Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh (“I counsel you to fear God”). *
4. Begin 2nd Sermon
5. Inna Allāha wa malāʾikatahu yuṣallūna ʿalā an-nabī, yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ʿalayhi wa sallimū taslīmā.
6. (“God and His angels bless the Prophet; so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.” —Qurʾān 33:56).
7. Allāhumma ighfir lil muʾminīn wa al-muʾmināt (“O God, forgive the believing men and women”).

End of 2nd Sermon

Begin the Prayer

[1] Modified from https://www.mihraab.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Practical-Guide-To-Giving-Sermons-Amjad.pdf

- [2] Some of the following points are based on the booklet: Al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar bin Hafīẓ, Thaqāfat al-Khaṭīb