

101732 - Is it better to supervise an Islamic forum or to read Qur'aan and do acts of worship?

the question

We are supervisor women to a female forum. Men can be on it but with limits and in specific sections only. We sit for hours arranging and deleting topics. This forum is Islamic, Alhamdulillah. Is what we do considered acts of da'wah? Is it better to spend this time reciting Quraan and worshipping Allah?.

Detailed answer

Calling people to Allaah is one of the greatest of righteous deeds and beneficial acts of worship and obedience that bring benefit to others. Hence the one who does it and busies himself with it is treading the path of the Prophets and Messengers, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): “This is my way; I invite unto Allaah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allaah — Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allaah, i.e. to the Oneness of Allaah — Islamic Monotheism with sure knowledge). And Glorified and Exalted be Allaah (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the Mushrikoon (polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allaah; those who worship others along with Allaah or set up rivals or partners to Allaah)”

[Yoosuf 12:109]

“And who is better in speech than he who [says: ‘My Lord is Allaah (believes in His Oneness),’ and then stands firm (acts upon His

Order), and] invites (men) to Allaah's (Islamic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: 'I am one of the Muslims'”

[Fussilat 41:33]

Many texts in the Qur'aan and Sunnah enjoin da'wah or calling people to Allaah, such as the hadeeth in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever calls others to guidance will have a reward like that of those who follow it, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest” Narrated by Muslim (3674).

And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“Allaah, His angels and the inhabitants of heaven and earth, even the ant in its hole and the fish, send blessings on the one who teaches the people good.” Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2685); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

The ways of calling people to Allaah are many and various, such as speaking directly, in khutbahs (sermons), speeches and lectures, or on tapes; and by writing in letters, publications and on forums.

That includes setting up useful forums and supervising them, and directing their members and commenting on their articles and contributions. All of these are ways of calling people to Allaah and teaching the people good.

Indeed these forums have become a prominent means of teaching, guiding, calling people to Islam and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and those who are in charge of them will have a great reward, according to their intentions, actions and efforts.

Based on this, you should seek reward with Allaah for the time that you spend in following up on these participants and commenting on

them and guiding them, but you should be careful not to let that distract you from things that are more important and beneficial, such as looking after your husband and children, acquiring shar'i knowledge, regularly reading Qur'aan and reciting wurd (dhikr), because some people become distracted by forums from doing more important things and greater acts of worship. Fiqh means understanding priorities and giving precedence to that which is more important.

How wonderful it is when a person manages to have a share of every kind of booty, so he has a share of this and of that, and he pays attention to that which will benefit him and others, and he strives to improve himself in terms of knowledge and action, and he spends some of his time to benefit others and call them to Islam and guide them, so he does not let one duty distract him from another, or let one good thing keep him from doing another. Hence Allaah causes his words to be effective and his advice to be beneficial, because he has accompanied his words with actions, and his slogan is: "I wish not, in contradiction to you, to do that which I forbid you. I only desire reform to the best of my power. And my guidance cannot come except from Allaah, in Him I trust and unto Him I repent" [Hood 11:88].

Taking care of oneself requires proper understanding and wisdom, so a person should take advantage when he has energy and is able to focus and make the most of his time. So sometimes he reads Qur'aan and does a lot of naafil acts of worship, and sometimes he attends circles and classes or studies books of knowledge, and sometimes he goes to forums and supervises them. The best kind of worship is that which one feels inclined towards and feels at ease with it when there is a need for it.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) wrote some useful words about priorities with regard to acts of worship, and we will

quote some of it. For example he said: "... The same applies to the person's state of mind. When he is in the state of mind that helps him to achieve the purpose for which he was created, then that state of mind is much nobler than any other. And the same applies to actions. Any action which helps him to get closer to the purpose for which he was created is better than any other. Hence prayer and jihad are among the best of deeds because they bring one closer to that aim, and this is how it should be, because the closer a thing is to the goal the better it is than that which is far away from it.

The action which prepares the heart and mind to know Allaah and His names and attributes, and to love Him, fear Him and put one's hopes in Him is better than that which is not like that. If a number of deeds have this quality in common, then the best of them is that which brings one closest to this goal. Hence acts of worship have this goal in common, so they are required for the sake of Allaah and sins have in common the fact that they block the heart and prevent it from reaching this goal, so they are forbidden. The effect of acts of worship and sins depends on their degree. This is something to which attention must be paid, which is that a particular deed may be better for one person than another.

For example, in the case of a rich man who has acquired much wealth and is reluctant to spend of it, his giving charity is better for him than spending the night in prayer (qiyaam al-layl) and observing naafil fasts by day.

In the case of a brave man who can strike fear into the enemy's heart with his whip, his spending an hour in the ranks and fighting against the enemies of Allaah in jihad is better than Hajj, fasting, giving charity or doing naafil acts of worship. In the case of a scholar who knows the Sunnah, halal and haraam, and the ways of good and evil, his mixing with the people and teaching and advising them about their religion is better

than his withdrawing and spending his time in prayer, reading Qur'aan and tasbeeh. End quote from 'Uddat al-Saabireen, p. 93.

He also said:

The best act of worship is striving to please the Lord at all times by doing whatever is suited to that time and expected for it. The best act of worship at times of jihad is jihad, even if that means forsaking regular naafil actions such as praying qiyaam at night and fasting by day, or even if it means not offering the obligatory prayers in full as one does at times of peace and security.

The best act of worship when a guest comes is fulfilling his rights and taking care of him rather than reciting the mustahabb witr. The same applies to fulfilling the rights of one's wife and children.

The best act of worship at the time before dawn is to occupy oneself with prayer, Qur'aan, du'aa', dhikr and asking for forgiveness.

The best act of worship when guiding the seeker of knowledge and teaching the ignorant is to focus on teaching them.

The best act of worship at the time of the adhaan is to stop what one is doing of witr (dhikr) and respond to the muezzin.

The best act of worship at the time of the five daily prayers is to strive sincerely to perform the prayers in the best possible manner, and to hasten to pray when the time for prayer begins. Going out to the mosque even if it is far is better.

The best act of worship at times when someone needs help is to use one's position, physical capabilities and wealth to help him and to answer his call, and to give that precedence over reciting your witr and staying alone.

The best act of worship at times of reading Qur'aan is to when one's mind is focused and one is in the right frame of mind to ponder its meanings and understand it, until it is as if Allaah is addressing you, so you can focus on pondering it and understanding it and resolving to implement its commands more than a person would focus if he received a letter from the ruler.

The best act of worship when standing in 'Arafah is to focus on beseeching Allaah, du'aa' and dhikr, and not to fast which would make one too weak to focus on that.

The best act of worship during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah is to do a lot of acts of worship, especially reciting takbeer ("Allaahu akbar"), tahleel ("Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah") and tahmeed ("al-hamdu Lillaah"). This is better than jihad for the one for whom jihad is not an individual obligation.

The best act of worship during the last ten days of Ramadaan is to spend a lot of time in the mosque, and to be alone and observe i'tikaaf without mixing with people and being distracted by them. It is even better than focusing on teaching them knowledge and Qur'aan according to many scholars.

These are the people whose worship Allaah in every sense of the word; other people worship Him in a limited sense (i.e., the people who are mostly focused on one type of worship, such as qiyaam al-layl or reading Qur'aan or fasting). When one of them stops doing the kind of worship that he is attached to, he feels as if he is falling short and has stopped worshipping, so he worships Allaah in just one way. But the one who worships in every sense of the word is not more inclined to one type of worship than another, rather his aim is to seek the pleasure of Allaah wherever it lies.

So his worship is based on that, and he keeps moving through different stages of worship, and every time he strives to reach a certain status, he keeps himself busy with that, until he sees another level that he wants to reach, so he persists in that until the end of the course. So if you see the scholars you will find him with them, and if you see the worshippers you will see him with them, and if you see the mujaahideen you will see him with them, and if you see those who remember Allaah you will see him with them, and if you see those who give charity and do good you will see him with them, and if you see those whose hearts are devoted to Allaah you will see him with them. This is the one who worships Allaah in every sense of the word, who is not restricted by one type in exclusion to others, and his actions are not based on what he is inclined towards and what he finds pleasure in, rather he chooses the act of worship that pleases Allaah most, even if his joy and ease may be in some other act of worship. This is the one who truly fulfils the meaning of *Iyyaaka na'budu wa iyyaaka nasta'een* ("You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything)" [al-Faatihah 1:5]). End quote from Madaarij al-Saalikeen (1/88).

To sum up: Supervising this forum is a kind of calling people to Allaah, so you should not give it up, but the Muslim should organize his time, giving some time for da'wah and some time for reading Qur'aan and some time for prayer, and some time for his wife and family, and so on, giving each its rights.

We ask Allaah to help and guide us and you.

And Allaah knows best.