

307722 - When to Seek Permission to Enter Someone's House

the question

We know that there are situations in which we should ask permission to enter inside and outside the house, but could you give us more details on these situations, such as when entering the kitchen or living room, or entering the house? Because my students have asked me these questions. And is it permissible to praise other people?

Summary of answer

- If the house is not your house, and you want to enter it, then you must ask permission.
- If the house is your house, and no one else is living in it, then you may enter without asking anyone for permission.
- Seeking permission to enter someone's house is waived when: 1- it is not possible to give permission; 2- asking permission could result in harm; 3- for the one who has a right and asking for permission will cause his right to be lost.
- Praising other people which means speaking highly of someone for some good that he did, or for some good characteristics that he possesses is permissible in Islam.

Detailed answer

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Why Seek permission before entering someone's house?

Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded” [An-Nur 24:27].

Shaykh As-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Here Allah instructs His believing slaves **not to enter houses other than their own without asking permission**, because that leads to a number of bad consequences, including that to which the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) referred when he said: “Asking permission has only been prescribed so that one will not see that which is not appropriate for him to see.” Because not following this ruling properly may lead to one’s gaze falling upon private things inside other people’s houses. A person’s house, by covering what is private inside its walls, is like a garment that covers what is private of his body.

Entering other people’s houses without permission may create suspicion about the one who enters them, and he may be accused of evil deeds such as stealing and so on, because entering houses surreptitiously is suggestive of evil intent. Allah forbids the believers to enter houses other than their own until they seek permission; the word used in the original Arabic suggests that seeking permission creates a sense of assurance, whereas entering without permission may cause alarm.

“and greet their inhabitants” – the manner in which this is to be done is mentioned in the Hadith: “As-salaamu `alaykum (peace be upon you); may I come in?”

“That” namely seeking permission to enter “is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded”, because it will serve many interests, and because it is part of the noble characteristics that are required of the Muslim. If he is given permission, then he may enter.” (Tafsir As-Sa`di (565)

When to seek permission to enter someone's house?

As for the details of situations in which one should ask permission to enter, in Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Fiqhiyyah Al-Kuwaitiyyah (3/145 ff), this matter is discussed in detail; we may sum it up and make it clearer by noting the following points:

- If someone wants to enter a house, that house is either his house or it is not his house. If it is his house, it is either empty, and no one else lives there except him; or his wife is in it on her own; or she has one of his Mahrams with her, such as his sister, daughter, mother and so on.

If the house is his house, and no one else is living in it, then [he may enter without asking anyone for permission](#) , because permission is his, and asking oneself for permission is a kind of foolishness; Islamic teaching is far above such nonsense.

- If his wife is in the house and no one else is with her, then he does not have to ask permission to enter, because it is permissible for him to see all of her body. However, it is recommended for him to ask permission to enter by clearing his throat, stamping his feet so that his shoes make noise and the like, because she may be in a situation in which she does not want her husband to see her.
- If one of his Mahrams is in the house– such as his mother, sister and so on – whom he is not allowed to see naked, then it is not permissible for him to enter without asking permission. Details of that are mentioned in some scenarios.
- If the house is not his house, and he wants to enter it, then he must ask permission, and it is not permissible for him to enter before permission is given to him, according to scholarly consensus, whether the door of the house is open or closed.

Exceptions to the obligation to ask permission to enter houses in general include the following:

1. Entering non-residential buildings [such as shops and the like], if that serves a useful purpose. It is permissible to enter them without asking permission, based on the fact that there is general permission to enter them. There are some differences of opinion regarding the details of the definition of such buildings.

2. Entering a house in order to save a life or some property, when asking permission and waiting for permission could result in loss of life or property.
- The basic principle is that it is not permissible for a person to dispose of or use the property of someone else, or dispose of something belonging to someone else, except with permission from the Lawgiver or from the owner of the property. In that case, it is not a transgression. So it is not permissible to eat someone else's food except with the permission of its owner, or in the case of necessity, and it is not permissible to live in someone else's house except with his permission.
 - One who is in a subordinate position asking permission to enter the space of one who is in a position of authority. This is a matter that depends on custom, meaning that if it is known that the teacher, for example, does not allow the students to enter the classroom without permission, then they must ask permission to enter, because positions of authority are given to protect common interests, and seeking permission to enter from the one in authority, in the place in which he has authority, is something that is very important, so that things may be managed properly and chaos may be avoided. This matter is broad in scope.
 - A guest should ask permission before leaving his host's house.
 - If someone wants to sit down between two men, he should ask them for permission first.
 - If someone wants to look in a book in which there is something that is private belonging to someone else, he must ask him for permission before looking.

When is seeking permission to enter someone's house waived?

The requirement to ask permission may be waived for several reasons, including the following:

- When it is not possible to give permission:

The requirement to ask permission may be waived when it is not possible to give permission for some reason, such as if the one who could give permission has died, or he is

travelling far away, or he has been detained and prevented from meeting anyone, and something needs to be done that cannot be delayed until he returns from his travel, or is released from detention, and the like.

- Warding off harm:

The requirement to ask permission is waived if asking permission could result in harm. Therefore it is permissible to sell items that may otherwise be damaged or ruined, that have been left with someone for safekeeping, without asking permission of their owners. And it is permissible to enter a house without asking permission, if doing so will prevent a crime from occurring.

- Attaining some right that cannot be attained by asking for permission.

The requirement to ask permission is waived for the one who has a right, if asking for permission will cause his right to be lost. So it is permissible for a woman to take from her husband's wealth whatever is sufficient for her and her children, on a reasonable basis, without asking permission, if he refuses to spend on her maintenance, for example.

Is praising someone permissible in Islam?

With regard to praising other people, which means speaking highly of someone for some good that he did, or for some good characteristics that he possesses, that is permissible.

So if you say, "I praised So-and-so," it means that you commended him for his good qualities.

In the Hadith it says: "He does not thank Allah who does not thank people." (Narrated by Ahmad, 7939)

The kind of praise that it is not permissible to direct to anyone other than Allah is praising in an absolute sense.

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. [146025](#) and [89945](#) .

And Allah knows best.