14247 - Can Women Lead Prayer?

the question

Can women pray in congregation (Jama`ah) with a woman performing as Imam? Can women give adhan and iqamah?

Summary of answer

It is not correct for a woman to lead men in prayers at all. It is permissible and correct for a woman to lead other women in prayer.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Can women give Adhan and Iqamah?

It is not prescribed for women to recite the adhan and iqamah as it is for men. If a woman does recite the adhan and iqamah, it may be one of the three following scenarios:

1. She recites the adhan and iqamah for a group of men only, or for a mixed group of men and women. This is not prescribed in Islam and her adhan and iqamah for a group of men do not count
2. She recites them for a group of women only.
3. Or she recites them for herself when she is alone.

It is permissible for her to recite the adhan for a group of women or for herself, but it is not like the case with men. For men it is more emphatically required, whereas for women, if they give the adhan it is permissible, and if they do not, it is also permissible.

If a woman does recite the adhan, she must keep her voice low and make it just loud enough for

her companions to hear.

If a woman says the iqamah for herself or for a group of women, that is better and is closer to what is mustahabb, but if she does not do that, the prayer is still valid.

Can women lead prayer?

With regard to a woman leading the prayers and acting as an imam, one of the two following scenarios may apply:

1. A woman leading men, or a mixed group of men and women. It is not correct for a woman to lead men in prayers at all , regardless of whether it is an obligatory prayer or a nafl (supererogatory) prayer.
2. A woman leading women in prayer . It is mustahabb for women to pray together in congregation when they get together in a place. One of them should lead the others, but she should stand with them in the middle of the row . It is permissible and correct for a woman to lead other women in prayer.

And Allah knows best.