93757 - Is Congregational Du`a Bid`ah?

the question

Is offering Du`a with the congregation not permissible?

Summary of answer

Offering Du`a with the congregation is:
1) Either proven in the Sunnah, such as the Du`a of Istisqa' and Al-Qunut, which is undoubtedly prescribed.
2) Or it is done in situations with no proof in the Sunnah, such as: the five daily prayers, immediately after burying the deceased, in `Arafah, and so on. In this case, there is nothing wrong with it if it is done occasionally, but if it is done regularly, then it is a Bid`ah (innovation).

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Offering Du`a with the congregation (in the sense that one of them offers Du`a and the rest say Ameen) is either proven in the Sunnah, as in the case of Istisqa' (prayer for rain) and Du`a Al-Qunut , which is undoubtedly prescribed,

Or it is done in situations for which there is no proof in the Sunnah, such as following the five daily prayers , immediately after burying the deceased, in `Arafah , and so on. In this case, there is nothing wrong with it if it is done occasionally, but if it becomes a custom that is done regularly, then it is a Bid`ah (innovation).

There follows a brief look at the comments of the scholars concerning that.

- Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is it disliked for people to gather together, calling upon Allah and raising their hands? He said: I do not regard it as disliked for

the brothers so long as they did not meet deliberately for that purpose, provided they do not do it on a regular basis. (End quote)

Ibn Mansur (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Is-haq ibn Rahawayh said something similar. What is meant by "provided they do not do it on a regular basis" is unless they make that a regular practice until they do it a great deal.

Abu Al-`Abbas Al-Fadl ibn Mahran (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I asked Yahya ibn Ma`in and Ahmad ibn Hanbal: Among us there are some people who gather to offer Du`a , read Quran and remember Allah, may He be exalted. What do you think of them?

As for Yahya ibn Ma`in (may Allah have mercy on him), he said: (Each individual) should read from the Mus-haf, offer Du`a after the prayer and remember Allah by himself. I said: A brother of mine joined that group. He said: Tell him to stop. I said: He will not accept that. He said: Exhort him. I said: He will not accept that; should I shun him? He said: Yes.

Then I went to Ahmad and told him something similar, and Ahmad also said to me: (Each individual) should read from the Mushaf and remember Allah, may He be Exalted, by himself, and study the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). I said: Should I tell him to stop? He said: Yes. I said: What if he does not accept that? He said: He will, in sha Allah [i.e., he will respond, in sha Allah], because this is something that has been introduced into the religion, this gathering and what you describe. I said: If he does not respond, should I shun him? He smiled and said nothing." (End quote from *Al-Adab Ash-Shar`iyyah*, 2/102)

- Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Meeting together to read Quran, remember Allah and call upon Him (Du`a) is good and recommended, so long as it is not taken as a regular practice like those gatherings that are prescribed in Islam, and so long as it is not accompanied by any reprehensible innovation." (End quote from *Majmu` Al-Fatawa*, 22/523)

- The Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas was asked about an imam who raises his hands after the prescribed prayers, and the members of the congregation do likewise, and the

imam offers Du`a and the members of the congregation say Ameen to his Du`a.

They replied:

“Acts of worship are based on Tawqif (i.e., it is not permissible to worship Allah, may He be Exalted, through any act of worship unless this act of worship is proven in the Shar`i texts (Quran and Sunnah) to be an act of worship that was prescribed by Allah), so it is not permissible to say that these acts of worship are prescribed in terms of their principle, number, form or place, except on the basis of Shar`i evidence to that effect. We do not know of any basis for that in the Sunnah of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) or in his words, deeds or what he approved of.” (End quote from *Majallat Al-Buhuth Al-Islamiyyah*, 17/55)

The Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas was also asked about a person whose habit is to give food to a group of people every Friday, and when the food is finished, they do not leave their places or their seats; rather they wait for one of them, who is appointed by the one who has given the food, to pray to Allah to cause the reward for that food to reach their deceased family members and relatives. During that supplication, the one who is asking of Allah raises his hands, as do the other people present, and they say Ameen. Is this supplication during which the group raises their hands after eating permissible or not?

They replied:

“Communal supplication in the manner mentioned after eating is something for which there is no basis in Islam. Therefore, what they must do is stop doing that, because it is an innovation; they should be content with that which is mentioned in the Sunnah of offering supplication and asking for blessing (barakah) for the one who gave the food, and the like. Each person should offer supplication of his own. It is narrated in the Sunnah that one may say “Allahummah barik lahum fima razaqtahum waghfir lahum warhamhum (O Allah, bless the provision that You have granted to them, forgive them and have mercy on them), and “Aftara `indakum as-sa’imuna wa akala ta`amakum Al-Abraru wa sallat `alaykum Al-Mala’ikah (May fasting people break their fast at your table, may the righteous eat your food, and may the angels send blessings upon you).” (End quote

from *Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah*, 24/189-190)

- Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Some people gather to recite dhikr, then at the end they offer a communal Du`a in which one person offers Du`a and the best say Ameen. Is this acceptable?

He replied:

"This is acceptable if it is not taken as a regular practice. But if it is taken as a regular practice, it may be regarded as Sunnah when it is not Sunnah. If this is a regular practice that every time they sit together, they end with Du`a, then it is an innovation (Bid`ah) that is not known from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

But if it is done occasionally, such as if they come to a text that contains a warning or encouragement, then they call upon Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, in Du`a, then there is nothing wrong with it, because there is a difference between that which is done regularly and that which is done occasionally. If a person does something occasionally, he is not to be blamed for it. Occasionally some of the Companions prayed with the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon) when he prayed at night (Qiyam), but despite that it is not Sunnah to offer that night prayer in congregation except occasionally." (End quote from *Liqa'at Al-Bab Al-Maftuh*, 21/117)

And Allah knows best.