95288 - Ruling on delaying ‘Asr prayer and its adhaan for an hour so that employees can gather

the question

We are work colleagues in al-Jubayl Industrial City (Eastern Province). We pray Zuhr and ‘Asr in a small mosque at work, and there is no other congregation. Some of the brothers suggested that we organise the time of the adhaan and iqaamah as follows:
1. Zuhr prayer: adhaan at 11.45 and iqaamah at 12.00 noon
2. ‘Asr prayer: adhaan at 3.35 and iqaamah at 3.45
The reason for that is to enable everyone to pray in the mosque in congregation. This is the most suitable time when everyone will have returned to their offices from various distant places. Our question is: by doing that, will we have fulfilled what is meant in the hadeeth narrated from our Messenger Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), “The most beloved of deeds to Allah is prayer offered on time”? Another question: is praying ‘Asr at 3.45 within the time for ‘Asr prayer?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Sunnah is to give the adhaan when the time for the prayer begins, because that was the usual practice of the mu’adhdhins of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). But there is nothing wrong with those who want to offer the prayer later than the beginning of its time delaying the adhaan so that it will be closer to the time when they offer the prayer.

Ar-Ramli said in his commentary on Asna al-Mataalib (1/133): The adhaan should be given for the prayer when the time for it begins, although it is acceptable to do it until the time for the prayer ends. End quote.

In other words, the time for the adhaan lasts from when the time for the prayer begins until that time ends.

With regard to giving the adhaan before the time for prayer begins, that is not permissible except in the case of Fajr prayer.

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Mughni (1/246): Giving the adhaan before the time for prayer begins, except for Fajr, is not acceptable, and we do not know of any difference of opinion concerning that. Ibn al-Mundhir said: The scholars are unanimously agreed that the Sunnah is to give the adhaan for prayer after the time for the prayer has begun, except in the case of Fajr. Because the adhaan was prescribed to signal the time for prayer, it is not prescribed to do it before the time begins, lest the purpose for which it was prescribed is missed. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the ruling on delaying the adhaan from the beginning of the time for prayer.

He said: If a person is in a town, it is not appropriate to delay it from the beginning of the time, because that will lead to chaos and differences among the mu’adhdhins, and it will lead to people becoming confused as to which of them is more correct, the one who does it sooner or the one who does it later? But if the adhaan has nothing to do with the town (rather it is the matter of a group of people working in some institution and the like) then it is up to them, but it is better for them to give the adhaan at the beginning of the time and then pray, because doing the prayer at the beginning of its time is preferable except in cases where it is prescribed to delay it. If it is prescribed to delay it, then the adhaan may also be delayed. Hence it is proven in Saheeh al-Bukhaari that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was on a journey and the mu’adhdhin got up to give the call to prayer, but the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Wait until it cools down.” Then he wanted to get up and he said, “Wait until it cools down.” Then he wanted to get up and he said, “Wait until it cools down,” until the hill was the same length as its shadow, then he gave the call to prayer. This indicates that the adhaan is prescribed when the prayer is prescribed. If the prayer is one of those that may be delayed, such as Zuhr prayer in the case of extreme heat and ‘Isha’ prayer, then the adhaan may be delayed.

This applies outside of towns and villages in which there are mu'adhdhins. Otherwise it is not appropriate to delay it from the time when the people usually give the adhaan.

End quote from Fataawa ash-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 12/189. The hadeeth mentioned was narrated by al-Bukhaari (539) and Muslim (616)

Based on that, you may give the adhaan at the beginning of the time for prayer, then you may give the iqaamah only when you want to pray, or you may delay the adhaan so that it will be close to the time when you actually pray.

Secondly:

The preferred time for 'Asr prayer ends when the sun turns yellow, and it is not permissible to delay the prayer until after that except in case of necessity, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The appropriate time for 'Asr is so long as the sun has not turned yellow." Narrated by Muslim (612) from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas (may Allah be pleased with him). See also the answer to question no. 9940

The best is to hasten to offer the prayer, because of the general meaning of the hadeeths which speak of the virtue of offering the prayer at the beginning of its time. But if delaying it is appropriate so that the employees may gather and prepare themselves for the prayer, and that is before the sun turns yellow, then there is nothing wrong with it.

Referring to the Umm al-Qura prayer timetable, we see that the shortest time for 'Asr prayer is at the end of November and the beginning of December, when the time for 'Asr begins at 2.30 pm and the sun sets at 4.50 pm, and you said that you want to pray 'Asr at 3.45 pm. This is before the sun turns yellow, in sha Allah.

Based on that, there is nothing wrong with you praying 'Asr at the time stated.

With regard to Zuhr prayer, we see that on some days of the year the time for it begins after 11.45 am, which is the time that you mention for the adhaan. In the middle of February, the time for Zuhr begins at approximately 11.55 am according to the Umm al-Qura timetable.

What this means is that on some days of the year, you will be giving the adhaan for Zuhr prayer before the time for it begins, and this is not permissible according to scholarly consensus, as stated above.

So you have to revise the time for the adhaan of Zuhr, even if that means delaying it so that it will be at 12.00 noon.

Thirdly:

With regard to the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) when he was asked which deed is most beloved to Allah, and he said: “Prayer offered on time” (narrated by al-Bukhaari (527) and Muslim (85), this indicates that prayer should be offered on time. Some of the scholars said that it indicates that it is preferable to offer it when the time for it begins. See: Fath al-Baari.

But Abu Dawood (426) narrated that Umm Farwah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was asked: Which deed is best? He said: “Prayer offered when the time for it begins.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

This clearly indicates that it is preferable to pray when the time for the prayer begins, with the exception of waiting until it cools down to pray Zuhr in the case of extreme heat, and delaying ‘Isha’ prayer if that does not cause any hardship to the worshippers.

With regard to Zuhr prayer, you will be offering it at the beginning of its time throughout the year, according to the Umm al-Qura timetable.

With regard to ‘Asr prayer, there are some days of the year when the day is short, so you will be offering it after more than half of its time has passed, which means that you will not be offering it at the beginning of its time; however doing it at that time is permissible, so long as it is before the sun turns yellow.

And Allah knows best.