

The Amidah An Introduction to the Amidah and beginners instructions

The Amidah – called “The Standing Prayer”, was composed around 450 BCE, by the 120 Men of the Great Assembly, including Ezra and Nehemiah at the time of the rebuilding of the Temple. It was to be said while standing. Three (3) times a day, recited at all four services of the day; shacharit (morning 9:00 am), mincha (afternoon 12:00pm), maariv (evening 3:00 pm), and mussaf (additional) on the Sabbath and or High Holy festivals.

The word Amidah literally means standing, because it is recited while standing. It is also known as Shemoneh Esrei, meaning “Eighteen”, because it originally consisted of eighteen blessings, and is considered one of the most important Hebrew prayers next to the Shema.

There are two basic forms of the Amidah prayer; one for the weekdays, and one for the Shabbat day. The Shabbat day Amidah focuses more on the holiness of the day, and reduces parts of the prayer that focuses on personal needs.

One should stand with one's feet together while reciting the Amidah as a show of respect for G-d. If one is unable to stand such as in a car or perhaps ill, you may sit. If one is alone, the prayer is to be recited with voice, but not loudly, but as one standing in throne room of G-d, in the presence of the Holy King, uninterrupted. If one is in a group, a male member recites out loud, as others contemplatively listen, uninterrupted.

To begin: take three steps backward, then three steps forward. Remain standing with the feet together while reciting.

The rabbis add that this pose mirrors the vision of angels that Ezekiel had in which the feet of the angels appeared as one (Ezekiel 1:7). The custom to face the direction of Israel, Eastward

.(See Hebrew4Christians.com > daily prayers for more informational learning)