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## **DAILY PRAYER AND FIVE TIMES SALAT** **A Comparative Study on Christian and Islamic Liturgical** **Discourse in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

*Daily prayer is one of the oldest ecclesiastical liturgical traditions and has been known since the time of the early church. However, this tradition seems to be fading over time. In Indonesia, daily prayer is no longer widely known by Christians. Meanwhile, the five times salat continue to be practised faithfully by its adherents in the Islamic tradition. Liturgical studies recognize the practice of daily prayer and the five times salat as "canonical hours" or hours of prayer. Although Christians were familiar with the hours of prayer before Islam, Muslims maintain them more faithfully and consistently. This phenomenon will become the focus of this paper in the frame of comparative theology. This paper explores the superior values of the Islamic five times salat, which can be appreciated as inspiration for developing Christian daily prayer.*

### **Abstrak**

*Doa harian merupakan salah satu tradisi liturgi gerejawi tertua dan telah dikenal sejak zaman gereja awal. Namun, tradisi ini tampaknya semakin memudar seiring waktu. Di Indonesia, doa harian tidak lagi dikenal secara luas*

*oleh umat Kristen. Sementara itu, salat lima waktu tetap dipraktikkan dengan setia oleh pemeluk agama Islam dalam tradisinya. Studi liturgi mengenai praktik doa harian dan salat lima waktu sebagai "jam kanonik" atau jam-jam doa. Meskipun umat Kristen sudah familiar dengan jam-jam doa sebelum Islam, umat Muslim mempraktikkannya dengan lebih setia dan konsisten. Fenomena ini akan menjadi fokus dalam makalah ini dalam kerangka teologi komparatif. Makalah ini mengeksplorasi nilai-nilai unggul dari salat lima waktu dalam Islam, yang dapat diapresiasi sebagai inspirasi untuk mengembangkan doa harian umat Kristen.*

**Keywords:** *Daily prayer, five times salat, comparative theology.*

## **A. Introduction**

Among many religions and beliefs in Indonesia, Islam and Christianity are the largest. Unfortunately, followers of these two religions are more likely to be suspicious and hostile to each other instead of being tolerant.<sup>1</sup> Dogmatically, Christian teachings and Islamic creeds are indeed very different, but both religions have some similarities. Both religions claim to be from the Abrahamic religion and practise canonical hours. Literally, canonical hours mean set hours related to times of prayer. The practise of praying at certain times in Islam is recognized as the five times salat. In Christianity, it is known as daily prayer. This similarity will be the focus of this paper as an attempt to do a comparative theology in liturgical discourse in Indonesia.

This study will be discussed using comparative theology, starting from my concern about the declining practice of canonical hours in Christianity while Islam can maintain it very well. First of all, I will briefly describe the intricacies of comparative theology. Second, I will describe the history and theological meaning of daily prayer and the five times salat. Third, I will analyze the advantages of Islamic salat that can be taken as an inspiration for the development of daily prayer. I argue that Islamic observance of practising the five times salat can be an inspiration for Christians to revive their daily prayer.

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<sup>1</sup> Husni Mubarak, "Babak Baru Ketegangan Islam Dan Kristen Di Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 21, no. 3 (March 11, 2015): 581.

## B. What and How is Comparative Theology

Comparative theology is an integral part of every religious and theological tradition. Catherine Cornille argues that religions have developed their teachings and practices throughout history through borrowing, denying, and reinterpreting elements from other religious traditions.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, she claims that the age of the world's religions is as old as the practice involving teachings and traditions of other religions.<sup>3</sup> Then we can say that the attention of other religions is not new. However, the models and study objectives are different time by time. A new uniqueness developed by comparative theology is the conscious, open, and systematic involvement of other religions in the theological development process of the theologian's "origin religion". If previously religions borrowed ideas from others without realizing or revealing their sources, comparative theology recognizes and values other religions as storage and constructive theological inspiration.<sup>4</sup>

Comparative theology is rooted in the theology of religions. However, the theology of religions generally focuses on differentiating and evaluating other traditions from the perspective of the researcher's tradition.<sup>5</sup> That is why theologians often consider other traditions lower than his/her. Comparative theology goes a step further. A comparative theologian examines other traditions from the perspective of the other tradition's followers. Francis F. Clooney defines comparative theology as:

Acts of faith seeking understanding which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions. This learning is sought for the sake of fresh theological

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<sup>2</sup> Catherine Cornille, *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology*, First edition (Hoboken: Wiley/Blackwell, 2020), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cornille, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cornille, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders* (Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 10.

insights that are indebted to the newly encountered tradition/s as well as the home tradition.<sup>6</sup>

To study other traditions, Clooney explains two sides that researchers must own. First, a researcher must be an expert on his/her tradition. Second, to examine other traditions, a researcher must use the perspective of the tradition examined. For example, when reading the scriptures of other religions, researchers need to study the language and interpretation methods used by followers of other religions. When Clooney read Hindu scriptures, he relied on his Sanskrit skills, learned from commentary books used by Hindu theologians in India, and even asked Hindu theologians directly.<sup>7</sup>

After studying other traditions, comparative theologians look at their original traditions using the lens of the other traditions they learned.<sup>8</sup> Positive values from other traditions are brought and used as inspiration to develop their traditions. Therefore, a comparative theologian must be open to the advantages of other traditions. He needs to subdue his interests.<sup>9</sup> In Cornille's language, "a comparative theologian approach other religions with an epistemological and theological humility attitude."<sup>10</sup> She also suggests that comparative theology can become a regret and restores the past's colonialistic religious studies.<sup>11</sup>

However, comparative theology also has weaknesses; for instance, it has no research limitation<sup>12</sup> Although most of comparative studies focuses on comparing texts and teachings, it can also be applied to ritual practices, ethical principles, spiritual practices, and institutional forms of religions, and so on.<sup>13</sup> Each researcher freely can choose any topic and religion or belief to be

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<sup>6</sup> Clooney, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Clooney, 74.

<sup>8</sup> Clooney, 60.

<sup>9</sup> Clooney, 60.

<sup>10</sup> Cornille, *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology*, 105.

<sup>11</sup> Cornille, 108.

<sup>12</sup> Catherine Cornille, "The Problem of Choice in Comparative Theology," in *How to Do Comparative Theology*, ed. Francis X. Clooney and Klaus von Stosch (Fordham University Press, 2020), 34, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823278435-002>.

<sup>13</sup> Cornille, *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology*, 2.

studied. This paper compares the hours of prayer in the Christian and Islamic liturgy, known as daily prayer and five times salat.

### C. Historical Comparison

#### *Daily Prayer*

Since the early church's times, daily prayer has been practised in Christianity. In the Didache, we find the admonition for Christians to say the Lord's Prayer three times a day.<sup>14</sup> The Gospel of Luke tells Jesus' disciple's daily prayer after the resurrection. Mary, the mother of Jesus, with several women and brothers of Jesus persevered with one accord in prayer (Acts 1:12-14). Peter and John went up to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1). They prayed daily (Acts 2:46), when they were alone (Acts 10:9), together (2:46) or apart (20:36-38; 21:5).<sup>15</sup>

The early Church adopted two communal synagogue services; *tefilat syarar* (sunrise prayer) and *tefilat ha'erev* (sunset prayer).<sup>16</sup> Those prayers were intended to maintain people's relationship with God.<sup>17</sup> After separating from the synagogue, the early Church continued the practice and added recitation of psalms, hymns, and Scripture readings (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:14). They also reinterpreted daily prayer in a new meaning: remembering Christ. They believed that God had saved mankind in Jesus Christ, and now they had new life in Him. This new meaning underlies all the Church's hymns in daily prayer.<sup>18</sup>

At the beginning of the third century in Egypt, there was already a fixity regarding daily prayer: at the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, in the morning, before bed, and at midnight. This division was based on Daniel's practice of praying three times a day (Dan. 6:10) and the apostles' custom of praying (Acts 10:9, 11).

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<sup>14</sup> James F White, *Pengantar Ibadat Kristen*, trans. Liem Sem Kie (Jakarta: BPK-Gunung Mulia, 2009), 119.

<sup>15</sup> Robert F. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Robert R. Boehlke, *Sejarah Perkembangan Pikiran & Praktek Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dari Plato Sampai Ignatius Loyola* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016), 133.

<sup>17</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Taft, 6.

Daily prayer began with Greetings, thanksgiving, and intercession, followed by Bible reading and teaching. After the teaching, several Psalms are selected to be sung, then conclude with a doxology and a sending. They prayed toward the east, the direction of the rising sun, understanding that Christ is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2).<sup>19</sup>

In Rome, daily prayer set times were established at the beginning of the second century by Hippolytus, a priest and teacher. He compiled a Church Order entitled *Apostolische Paradosis* (Apostolic Tradition), which contains ordination of bishops, priests and deacons, the appointment of widows and lectors, consecration of the virgin, catechumenate, baptism, fasting, agape, and daily prayer.<sup>20</sup>

In the Middle Ages, liturgy developed rapidly. The church had not experienced persecution since the publication of the Milan Edict in 313 A.D. The edict guaranteed religious freedom throughout the empire. In fact, since then, the empire seems to have favoured Christianity. The empire built many Basilicas. Priests and bishops were appointed as state officials. Christians got plenty of conveniences, so many people ask to be baptized.<sup>21</sup> Church visitors grew, and worship became lively and attractive. Liturgical experts began to develop liturgical formulas during these ages.<sup>22</sup>

All worships held in the Basilica, commonly known as cathedral offices, were presided over by a bishop. They used many symbols such as light and incense and always started with a procession. The Cathedral office performed daily prayer in the morning and evening. Its main elements were a recitation of the Psalms, and hymn,<sup>23</sup> followed by the *Gloria in Excelsis* and several dismissal prayers.<sup>24</sup> One additional prayer at night during the passion

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<sup>19</sup> Taft, 14.

<sup>20</sup> Theodor Klauser, *Sejarah Singkat Liturgi Barat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1991), 19–21.

<sup>21</sup> Emmanuel Martasudjita, *Pengantar Liturgi: Makna, Sejarah Dan Teologi Liturgi* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1999), 54.

<sup>22</sup> Rasid Rachman, *Pembimbing Ke Dalam Sejarah Liturgi* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2015), 59.

<sup>23</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church: A Study of the Origin and Early Development of the Divine Office* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 72.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas P. Rausch, *Katolisisme: Teologi Bagi Kaum Awam* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2001), 278.

weeks was called *nocturnal vigils*.<sup>25</sup> In the morning, they recited Psalm 63, and in the evening, Psalm 141.<sup>26</sup> It was rarely any preaching in daily prayer, except in Egypt and Cappadocia.<sup>27</sup> The most important symbol in the cathedral office daily prayer was light. In the East, evening services were preceded by greeting the light (*lucernarium*) to praise and glorify Jesus Christ as the light giver from the eternal Father.<sup>28</sup>

Not all people at the time liked the splendour of cathedral offices. Some found it too secular, like the theatre where the priests played. They then started the tradition of asceticism, which began in Egypt and Syria.<sup>29</sup> They left the church and went to the desert, intending to restore the nobility of the early church tradition.<sup>30</sup> They assumed that the church had been too worldly in structure and function.<sup>31</sup> At first, the monks meditated separately, but later they lived together in the monastery. Inside the monastery, there were cells for each monk to do daily prayer alone from Monday to Friday.

The monastery's daily prayer was celebrated twice a day, at dawn and night. Each prayer focused on reading 12 chapters of the Psalms, followed by personal and collective prayer. They gathered for communal prayer on Saturday and Sunday, received the Eucharist, and enjoyed the Agape Supper.<sup>32</sup> A monk was chosen to recite the psalm in these communal prayers while the other monks listened contemplatively. After that, all participants stood making the sign of the cross on their foreheads, prostrated, and prayed silently.<sup>33</sup> The most important aspect of monastic prayer was persistent prayer. Although there were only two prayer times a day, the monks prayed

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<sup>25</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 34.

<sup>26</sup> Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church*, 75. In Egypt and Cappadocia, the teaching of the Word was the central element of daily prayer.

<sup>27</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 32.

<sup>28</sup> Taft, 38.

<sup>29</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw, ed., *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM Press, 2013), 141.

<sup>30</sup> Rachman, *Pembimbing Ke Dalam Sejarah Liturgi*, 63.

<sup>31</sup> W. Jardine Grisbrooke, "The Formative Period Cathedral and Monastic Offices," in *The Study of Liturgy*, ed. Cheslyn Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 359.

<sup>32</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 61.

<sup>33</sup> Taft, 64.

all day besides these two prayer hours.<sup>34</sup> One can say that the totality of a monk's life was prayer.<sup>35</sup>

In later developments, monasteries began to stand near residential areas. There was contact between the cathedral's daily prayer with the monastery. This mix became known as the "hybrid urban monastic office".<sup>36</sup> According to Egeria's *Diary*, the monastic-cathedral hybridity was most evident in the Jerusalem church in the 4th century. A Psalm recitation led by monks precedes the morning and evening prayers.<sup>37</sup> After it, the priests and bishops present to lead hymns, intercessions, blessings to catechumens, public prayers and commissions. The deacons and elders led the early morning prayer at the church gates on Sunday. They sang hymns and antiphons, interspersed with prayers, followed by vigils. When the bishop arrived, the church doors opened, and the people were allowed to enter. After that, people sang three psalms interspersed with prayer. Then the bishop reads the gospel about the resurrection. Gospel readings were greeted with hymns and psalms. Worship ends with a commission and a blessing. However, after the bishop returned, the people remained in the church singing psalms and antiphons until noon, led by monks.<sup>38</sup>

Not only in the East but monasteries also mushroomed in the West. One of the pioneers was Benedict of Nursia. To regulate life in the monastery, he compiled a rule, later known as the Rule of Saint Benedict. It contained all the rules in the monastic life of the cenobites, including the set of daily prayers.<sup>39</sup> There were eight fixed times of daily prayer in the Rule of Benedict. Vespers at the end of the working day, the closing prayer (compline) before bed, watch prayer or prayer all night, morning praise (laudes) at dawn, reading service (prime) after dawn, the third hour (terce) around 9 am, the

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<sup>34</sup> Taft, 71.

<sup>35</sup> Grisbrooke, "The Formative Period Cathedral and Monastic Offices," 360.

<sup>36</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 76.

<sup>37</sup> White, *Pengantar Ibadah Kristen*, 121.

<sup>38</sup> Grisbrooke, "The Formative Period Cathedral and Monastic Offices," 360–64.

<sup>39</sup> Anselm Grün, *Benedict of Nursia: His Message for Today* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006), 14.



midday prayer at noon, and afternoon prayer around 3 pm.<sup>40</sup> Benedict's Rule greatly impacted the lifestyle and spirituality of European society.<sup>41</sup>

Nowadays, not many churches practice daily prayer, especially in Indonesia. Catholic Churches have six daily prayer times but are mainly required for the clergy and nuns.<sup>42</sup> They are opening prayer (invitatorium), reading service (matutinum), morning prayer (laudes), afternoon prayer, evening prayer (vespers), and closing prayer (completarium). The prayers are observed to remember the death and resurrection of Christ and praising His presence all times.<sup>43</sup> In Southeastern France, there is a community called Taizè, which is famous for its daily prayer. There are three fixed times for Taizè's daily prayer: morning, afternoon, and evening. Each worship celebrated in 40 minutes by emphasising contemplation.<sup>44</sup>

#### *Five Times Salat*

The emergence of Islam was marked by the birth of Muhammad in the early seventh century in Arabia. During that time, Mecca had become a developing city of trade. However, the trade progress has undermined life values of the Quraysh people. In order to be wealthy, they sacrificed others. Muhammad was very concerned about that social condition, and then he often visited the cave at the top of Mount Hira every Ramadan to pray for it. There he also fasted and gave alms to the poor. During that time, Judaism and Christianity were already known to the Arabs. Many followed these religions because it was considered better than the tribal religions. However, many of them also wonder why there were no Arab prophets in these two religions. It raised a sense of inferiority.<sup>45</sup>

On the night of the 17th of Ramadan, Muhammad awoke and felt possessed by a presence that squeezed him tightly until he

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<sup>40</sup> White, *Pengantar Ibadah Kristen*, 123–24.

<sup>41</sup> Rachman, *Pembimbing Ke Dalam Sejarah Liturgi*, 99.

<sup>42</sup> Martasudjita, *Pengantar Liturgi: Makna, Sejarah Dan Teologi Liturgi*, 208.

<sup>43</sup> Martasudjita, 197.

<sup>44</sup> Andar Ismail, *Selamat Melayani Tuhan: 33 Renungan Tentang Pelayanan* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2009), 27.

<sup>45</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 3.

heard the first words of the Qur'an flowed from his lips.<sup>46</sup> For the first two years, Muhammad did not tell anyone about his experiences except his wife Khadija and his cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal, a Christian. They both believed that these revelations came from God. In 612 A.D., Muhammad felt compelled to preach. Gradually he acquired followers, first his young cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib, his friend Abu Bakr, and a young merchant Usman ibn Affan from the Umayyad family. Many of the new followers came from the poor Quraysh, and the rest were people who hated the injustices in Mecca.<sup>47</sup>

There was no new doctrine that the prophet Muhammad taught his followers about God. Like the Jews and Christians of that time, the Quraysh already believed that Allah was the Creator of the universe and that Allah would judge mankind on the last day. Prophet Muhammad did not think he founded a new religion other than just bringing the old faith [believe in One God] to the Arabs. The prophet Muhammad did not come to overturn the older religions or contradict their prophets.<sup>48</sup>

Prophet Muhammad warned the Quraysh to improve their way of life. People who liked to collect personal wealth were warned to share and respect the weak. Otherwise, Arab society will collapse.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, social justice is an essential value of Islam. The first task given to Muslims was to build a community (ummah) that promotes practical compassion. Within the ummah, wealth is distributed justly. This teaching was initially considered more critical than the doctrinal teaching about God. A prosperous community is a sign that Muslims live under God's will. The experience of living in a community becomes a way for Muslims to meet the Transcendent.<sup>50</sup>

Later on, Islam developed into a sizeable institutional religion by prioritizing five pillars: the *shahada*, *salat*, *zakat*, fasting, and *Hajj*.<sup>51</sup> Yaseen Ibrahim al-Sheikh argues that *salat* is a sign of a believer and

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<sup>46</sup> Armstrong, 3–4.

<sup>47</sup> Armstrong, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Armstrong, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Armstrong, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Armstrong, 6.

<sup>51</sup> John D. Hannah, *Charts of Ancient and Medieval Church History* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2001), 109.

an obligation that every Muslim cannot avoid for salvation in the afterlife. Yahiya Emerick defines salat as a physical routine of bowing and prostrating, reciting short verses and sentences to praise God. Salat is also a way for people to present themselves before God and say, "Here I am, the obedient servant."<sup>52</sup>

Initially, there were only two daily times of salat: the salat from the sun's slipping until dark and the tahajjud salat at night. Salat then grew to five times a day, and all of them were obligatory. They are the morning prayer (*Salat As-sub*) just before sunrise, the midday prayer (*Salat Az-zuhr*) between noon and evening, the afternoon prayer (*Salat Al-Asr*) between the afternoon and before sunset, the sunset prayer (*Salat Al-Maghrib*) between sunset and night, and the night prayer (*Salat Al-Isha*) at night. Salat Al-Maghrib is the first prayer every day because the beginning of the day is counted from sunset. Every believer, male and female, whose mind and body are in good health, is obliged to pray five times a day. If a person is sick and cannot pray, he can pray on other days. Prayers are recommended to be performed communally led by an imam.<sup>53</sup>

#### D. Comparing Theological Meaning

The diversity of forms and the number of daily prayers in Christianity cause difficulties in interpreting this practice. As a representative, I chose the daily prayer of Hippolytus in his book *Apostolic Tradition*. He wrote that Christians should pray seven times a day. First, the dawn prayer is performed immediately after waking up at dawn. Both male and female believers must wash their hands immediately after waking up and praying to God. However, if there is a teaching of the Word [in the church], they must go there, remembering that it is God they hear in the teaching. Hearing the Word and praying in the morning can help the believer avoid all evil during the day.<sup>54</sup> Second, third-hour prayer. Hippolytus recommends

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<sup>52</sup> Yahiya Emerick, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam* (Indianapolis, IN: Alpha, 2002), 125.

<sup>53</sup> Gordon D. Newby, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2004), 190.

<sup>54</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw et al., *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 94–96.

praying to God in the third hour to contemplate Christ nailed on the cross.<sup>55</sup> Third, the sixth hour to remember the day's incident turned dark when Christ was nailed on the cross. As Christ cried out, this sixth-hour prayer must also be said aloud so that all creation may be made dark to unbelievers.<sup>56</sup>

Fourth, the ninth-hour prayer to remember Christ, who was pierced in the side. Fifth, prayer before sleep. Sixth, midnight prayer. According to Hippolytus, every creature paused for a moment to praise God at this hour. The stars and the trees and all the water were silent for a moment. All the angels serving him and the souls of the righteous praised God. That is why all believers need to pray at this hour.<sup>57</sup> Seventh, prayer at the time of cock-crow, remembering the children of Israel who rejected Christ at this hour and the hope of faith in eternal light in the resurrection of the dead.

Hippolytus taught that the seven hours of prayer help the believer not be tempted or perish because Christ is always on their mind.<sup>58</sup> Apostolic Traditions spread to various regions outside Rome, mainly to Syria and North Africa, and were adapted according to their respective patterns and languages. The most frequently referenced and well-preserved copies are Arabic and Ethiopian.<sup>59</sup>

The daily prayer practice described by Hippolytus in his book *Apostolic Tradition* serves as a means of maintaining a deep connection with God throughout the day. The seven times of prayer, including prayers at specific hours such as dawn, third hour, sixth hour, ninth hour, before sleep, midnight, and at the time of cock-crow, are seen as opportunities for believers to consciously remember and contemplate on various aspects of Christ's life and teachings. This practice is believed to help believers avoid temptation, stay focused on Christ, and align their hearts and minds with God's will. The emphasis on the different events in Christ's life during each prayer hour, such as his crucifixion, piercing in the side, and resurrection, serves as a reminder of the central themes of

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<sup>55</sup> Bradshaw et al., 196.

<sup>56</sup> Bradshaw et al., 196.

<sup>57</sup> Bradshaw et al., 199–200.

<sup>58</sup> Bradshaw et al., 200–201.

<sup>59</sup> Bradshaw et al., xvii.

Christian faith and the sacrifice of Christ for humanity's salvation. This daily prayer practice, according to Hippolytus, also fosters a sense of unity among believers, as they join in prayer at the same designated hours, regardless of their geographical location.

The seven hours of prayer as outlined by Hippolytus in the Apostolic Tradition also highlight the significance of incorporating both physical and spiritual elements in Christian worship. The act of washing hands upon waking up before the dawn prayer underscores the importance of physical cleanliness as a means of preparing oneself for communion with God. This practice reflects the Christian belief in the sacredness of the human body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the specific actions and gestures associated with each prayer hour, such as contemplating the crucifixion during the third and sixth hour prayers or remembering the piercing in the side during the ninth-hour prayer, convey the embodied nature of Christian worship. The physical postures and actions involved in the daily prayer practice serve as a tangible expression of the believer's faith and devotion to God, involving their entire being - body, mind, and soul. This holistic approach to prayer underscores the integrative nature of Christian theology, which recognizes the importance of both the physical and spiritual aspects of human existence in the worship of God.

In Islam, the plenty of verses of the Qur'an concerning prayer (approximately ninety verses) shows how important the practice of prayer hours is for its followers.<sup>60</sup> One verse in the Quran is used as the basis for "establishing prayer" (a typical term in the Koran) Al-Isra's verses 78 and 79. Suhaimi translates it into Indonesian as follows:

Dirikanlah shalat dari sesudah matahari tergelincir sampai gelap malam dan (dirikanlah pula shalat) subuh. Sesungguhnya shalat subuh itu disaksikan (oleh malaikat). Dan pada sebahagian malam hari bersembahyang tahajudlah kamu

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<sup>60</sup> Yaseen Ibrahim al-Sheikh, *The Five Pillars of Islam* (El-Mansoura, Egypt: Dar Al-Manarah, 2006), 48.

sebagai suatu ibadah tambahan bagimu; Mudah-mudahan Tuhan-mu mengangkat kamu ke tempat yang Terpuji.<sup>61</sup>

(Establish salat from after the sun goes down until the dark of night and [also establish salat] at dawn. Verily, the dawn prayer was witnessed [by the angels]. And at night pray tahajjud as an additional prayer for you; may your Lord raise you to a Praised place.

Suhaimi explained that the order of salat was addressed to the prophet Muhammad when he faced many obstacles from those who did not like his teachings.<sup>62</sup> Allah SWT gave a solution to the prophet with the command to worship Him and ask for His help.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, salat is a way for Muslims to humble themselves before Allah with body, mind and heart. People who do not pray are considered soulless and live aimlessly. On the other hand, those who pray humbly will be given the honour of an angel.<sup>64</sup>

There are two main benefits of salat; first, as a reminder that we are servants of Allah throughout the day. It is symbolized by the position of prostration in prayer, which is very typical in Islamic prayer practices.<sup>65</sup> Second, God may forgive some of our sins every time we pray. If the prayer is not regular, the risk is great on the day of judgment. When later good and bad deeds are weighed, prayer is seen first. If they are full of flaws, God will not consider the good deeds done.<sup>66</sup> The five times salat help a Muslim become a better person. Muslims would always be aware that they prayed a few hours ago and would pray again soon. It keeps their mind aware of their duty to God, making them very unlikely to violate it.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Suhaimi Suhaimi, "Historisitas Dan Disyari'atkannya Perintah Shalat (Refleksi Tentang Tafsir Ayat Perintah Shalat)," *El-Furqania: Jurnal Ushuluddin Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 4, no. 01 (February 28, 2018): 5, <https://doi.org/10.54625/elfurqania.v4i01.3124>.

<sup>62</sup> Suhaimi, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Suhaimi, 5.

<sup>64</sup> al-Sheikh, *The Five Pillars of Islam*, 53.

<sup>65</sup> M Ashraf Al Haq et al., "Islamic Prayer, Spirituality and Productivity: An Exploratory Conceptual Analysis," *Al-Iqtishad: Journal of Islamic Economics* 8, no. 2 (July 9, 2016): 280, <https://doi.org/10.15408/aiq.v8i2.3160>.

<sup>66</sup> Emerick, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam*, 126.

<sup>67</sup> Emerick, 126.

Furthermore, in Islamic theology, salat is not only seen as a form of worship and obedience to Allah, but also as a means of purification for the soul.<sup>68</sup> Through the physical movements and recitations performed during prayer, Muslims believe that their hearts and minds are cleansed from impurities and sins. The act of prostration, where the worshipper places their forehead on the ground in submission to Allah, is considered as a moment of humbleness and humility, acknowledging the greatness and power of Allah over everything. This act of humility in prayer serves as a reminder to Muslims of their status as servants of Allah and reinforces their faith in His supreme authority.

Moreover, salat is not limited to a mere ritualistic practice, but it is meant to have a transformative effect on the believer's life. Muslims are encouraged to incorporate the lessons learned from prayer into their daily lives, reflecting the values of patience, gratitude, and compassion in their interactions with others. The regular performance of salat helps Muslims develop discipline, self-control, and mindfulness, as they strive to maintain the prescribed times and conditions of prayer despite their worldly obligations. This discipline and mindfulness acquired through salat can extend to other aspects of their lives, leading to self-improvement and moral upliftment.<sup>69</sup>

In addition, salat is also seen as a means of seeking closeness to Allah and attaining spiritual fulfillment. Muslims believe that during prayer, they are in direct communication with Allah, expressing their deepest thoughts, concerns, and gratitude to Him. This intimate connection with Allah nurtures their spirituality and strengthens their faith, providing them with comfort, solace, and guidance in times of difficulty and uncertainty. Muslims view salat as a source of inner peace, tranquility, and spiritual nourishment that

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<sup>68</sup> Qurotul Uyun, Irwan Nuryana Kurniawan, and Nahdhata Jaufalaily, "Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness: The Effects of Spiritual Therapy Based on Islamic Tenets to Improve Mental Health," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 22, no. 2 (February 7, 2019): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2018.1514593>.

<sup>69</sup> Gita Ajeng Kinanti and Mavianti Mavianti, "Teknik Pengenalan Bacaan Dan Gerakan Shalat Pada Anak," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 3 (February 6, 2023): 7407, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i3.1531>.

rejuvenates their souls and helps them navigate the challenges of life with resilience and conviction.

In conclusion, salat holds immense theological significance in Islam, serving as a vital pillar of faith and a means of spiritual growth and purification. It is not merely a ritualistic practice, but a comprehensive form of worship that encompasses the body, mind, and heart of the believer. Through salat, Muslims express their devotion to Allah, humble themselves before Him, seek His forgiveness, and strive for self-improvement and closeness to Him.<sup>70</sup> The regular performance of salat is seen as a constant reminder of one's duty to Allah and a source of spiritual fulfillment, providing Muslims with guidance, strength, and inner peace in their journey of faith.

Before praying, Muslims need to do some requirements. Prayers must be performed on time, wash hands, face and feet with water to be pure, and wear clean clothes. A clean place to pray must be available. Prayer can be done in the mosque or elsewhere. Everyone should wear long pants, a shirt, or a cape to cover themselves. Women add scarves or veils to their hair to remind them that God does not judge by appearance or beauty but by sincerity.<sup>71</sup>

Each prayer consists of required parts, each part consisting of two, three, or four cycles (*rakaat*). Each *rakaat* consists of fixed movements (standing, bowing, prostrating, kneeling) and recitation of the Quran and other formulas. The first chapter of the Quran, *Al-Fatihah*, is always recited as part of every *rakaat*; the verses are known as the "seven often repeated". To help Muslims perform the five daily prayers regularly, a muezzin will sound a call from the mosque's minaret to nearby Muslims, telling them that the time for one of the five prayer times is about to start. This call to prayer is called *azan*. Nowadays, *azan* has been broadcast on radio, television, and computer programs.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to the physical requirements, there are also spiritual and mental preparations that Muslims undertake before

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<sup>70</sup> Kinanti and Mavianti, 7407.

<sup>71</sup> Emerick, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam*, 127.

<sup>72</sup> Kecia Ali and Oliver Leaman, *Islam: The Key Concepts* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008), 100–101.



performing their prayers. Muslims are encouraged to be in a state of wudu, or ritual purity, before praying. Wudu involves washing the hands, face, and feet with water, and it is seen as a way of purifying oneself not only physically, but also spiritually.<sup>73</sup> It is a symbolic act of cleansing oneself from sins and distractions, and preparing the mind and heart to focus solely on the worship of Allah during prayer.

Furthermore, Muslims are encouraged to engage in a state of mental presence and concentration during prayer. This means clearing one's mind from worldly thoughts and distractions, and focusing solely on the words and actions of the prayer. Muslims are taught to recite the Quranic verses and other formulas of the prayer with attentiveness and reverence, understanding their meanings and reflecting on their significance. Prayer is seen as a form of communication and connection with Allah, and Muslims strive to establish a deep spiritual connection during their prayers by being mindful and fully present in the moment.

The call to prayer, known as *azan*, also holds a significant role in the preparation for prayer. The *muezzin*, who is responsible for giving the call to prayer, recites specific phrases that announce the start of the prayer time and invite Muslims to come together for worship. The *azan* serves as a reminder for Muslims to pause from their daily activities and turn their attention towards Allah, preparing themselves mentally and spiritually for the upcoming prayer. The *azan* is considered a beautiful and melodic call that is deeply ingrained in the Islamic culture and holds a special place in the hearts of Muslims as a symbol of the importance of prayer in their daily lives.<sup>74</sup>

In conclusion, performing the Islamic prayer involves not only physical preparations such as ritual purity and appropriate attire, but also spiritual and mental preparations that aim to create a state of mindfulness, reverence, and connection with Allah. The call to

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<sup>73</sup> Umma Farida and Chusnul Warda Rahmah, "Wudhu According to the Qur'an Hadith and Its Therapic Implementation for Schizophrenia Patients at the Jalma Sehat Kudus Rehabilitation Center," *MAGHZAZA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 7, no. 1 (August 5, 2022): 121, <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v7i1.5710>.

<sup>74</sup> E. S. Ayyad, "The 'House of the Prophet' or the 'Mosque of the Prophet?'," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 24, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 182, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/ett053>.

prayer, or azan, serves as a reminder for Muslims to pause and redirect their focus towards prayer. Together, these preparations help Muslims to approach their prayers with humility, devotion, and a deep sense of presence, making their prayers a meaningful and spiritually enriching experience.

## E. Conclusion

Looking back at historical comparisons, we can see that daily prayer was always changing and evolving. From the beginning of the church's history to the present day, the number of hours of daily prayer varies from two to eight. The church recognized two forms of daily prayer: cathedral daily prayer and daily monastic prayer. Monastic daily prayer was dominated by the recitation of psalms and non-stop prayer. The order of worship in Cathedral prayer was more than the monastic and was characterized by various symbols in its rites, such as light and incense.

Because of the importance of daily prayer in the past, church and monastery leaders included it in the Church Order or Monastery Rules. However, today, even the term "daily prayer" is no longer familiar to Christians, especially in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Islam is maintaining the five times salat very well. The general Islamic view, that prayer is part of *fiqh*,<sup>75</sup> influences this consistency. A religious rule that cannot be changed. On the contrary, the Church — especially Protestants — are very permissive to any liturgical reform.

The final step in comparative theology is to look back at one's tradition in the light of other traditions. Without intending to blame Christian liturgical practices today, the church can take Islam's consistency in performing its salat as inspiration. The first inspiring aspect is the fixed number prayer. Throughout the world, the number of Islamic daily prayers is the same. Second is the primacy of salat in Islam. Moreover, it was designated as one of the five pillars

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<sup>75</sup> *Fiqh* is a religious rule that cannot be changed Syamsul Rijal, "Friday Prayer and An Indonesian Islamic Identity In Canberra, Australia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 3, no. 1 (June 1, 2009): 148, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2009.3.1.148-167>.

of Islam. Because its main, Muslims usually leave their activities when the prayer time is about to begin.

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