

The Call of the Muezzin

Friday Prayer Focus

Across the entire Islamic World specially-appointed men (*muezzin*) call the faithful to prayer five times each day: at dawn (*fajr*), noon (*dhuhr*), in the afternoon (*asr*), at sunset (*maghrib*) and nightfall (*isha'a*). On Fridays all male Muslims are supposed to attend the noon time prayers which are usually accompanied by a sermon. So today, Friday August 13, 2010 literally hundreds of thousands of muezzin are calling the faithful to prayer. Millions of Muslim men will go to the mosque. Below are the words which are repeated day after day (Shiite Muslims use slightly different phrases for some lines).

In most places the call to prayer is given by loud speakers located on a minaret attached to the mosque. Sometimes recordings are

The Call to Prayer:

- Say two times: Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest)
 Say two times: I bear witness that there is no deity except God
 Say two times: I bear witness that Mohammed is the Messenger of God
 Say two times: Make haste towards worship
 Say two times: Come to the true success
 Say two times: Prayer is better than sleep (said only at dawn)
 Say two times: Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest)
 Say two times: There is no deity except God

used but most people prefer a live voice. Some muezzin have become very famous for the dignity, professionalism and the beautiful vocal and musical quality of their calls to prayer. Recently a documentary film by Sebastian Brameshuber named "Muezzin" was released about individual expression and competition between muezzin in Turkey (www.muezzindocumentary.com). One muezzin says in the film "The more people I can attract to the mosque with my voice, the more successful I am."

In Western and non-Islamic countries muezzin often cannot make the call to prayer except on the radio or in the courtyards of local mosques because of laws restricting loud and intrusive noises. In Africa Christian preachers sometimes give the Muezzin competition early in the morning using their own loud speakers to preach while the Islamic call to prayer is given. Whatever our reaction to the call to prayer, God calls us to love the muezzin.

Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for the muezzin in your own country.
- ▶ Pray for the hundreds of thousands of muezzin around the world. Pray that many of them will encounter the living God through Jesus.
- ▶ Sometimes muezzin become very centered on their role in society. As with any public figures, like pastors and politicians, some muezzin are tempted to place their own honor and prestige very high on their list of priorities. Pray that all muezzin would be brought to humility before God and truly confounded by His majesty in order that they may truly say "God is great."



The poster from the film "Muezzin"

Below: The famous minaret in Switzerland which inspired a national referendum in 2009

