212542 - Ruling on not praying in congregation because of work circumstances

the question

We live in the West and we do our best to pray in ccongregation in our time, because its obligated. However because this is an unbelieving (Kaafir) land and we aren't allowed to go to the congregation when we are at school or when we are working we pray the obligatory prayers alone. I have read your fatwas about leaving the congregation when working, but those fatwas aren't specified for the people in the West. What is the ruling on leaving the congregation when we are working or going to school in this Kaafir land. Please note that we aren't capable of migrating because the lack of money or because our parents don't allow us.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The basic principle concerning the obligatory prayers for men is that they should be offered in congregation in the mosque; this was the practice of the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

Imam Muslim narrated in his Saheeh (654) that Abu’l-Ahwas said: ‘Abdullah said: I remember when no one stayed away from the prayer except a hypocrite who was known for his hypocrisy, or one who was sick. But even a sick person would walk between two men and come to prayer. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught us the Sunnahs of guidance, and one of the Sunnahs of guidance is praying in the mosque in which the call to prayer is given.

The Islamic texts enjoin that, such as the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah who said: A blind man came to the Prophet (sa) and said: O Messenger of Allah, I do not have any guide to take me to the mosque. And he asked the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to grant him a dispensation allowing him to pray in his house, and he allowed him that. When he turned to

leave, he called him back and said: “Can you hear the call to prayer?” He said: Yes. He said: “Then answer it.”

Narrated by Muslim, 653

Hence anyone who can hear the adhaan is enjoined to respond to the call and pray in the mosque, so long as he does not have an excuse. For more information, please see fatwas no. 21969 and 20655

But if you try hard to join the congregation, but are not able to do so because of the situation you mentioned, and you cannot find suitable work or study, which will allow you to pray in congregation, there is nothing wrong with you completing your work or your studies that you cannot do without, then catch up with the prayer before the time for it ends, either individually or together in congregation with one another, if you are able to do that.

It says in Mataalib Ooli’n-Nuha fi Sharh Ghaayat al-Muntaha (1/702), discussing excuses which make it permissible not to pray in congregation: if he fears harm to his livelihood which he needs, he is excused (for not praying in congregation). End quote.

For more information, please see fatwas no. 72895 and 9455

And Allah knows best.