

131252 - The Best Time for Walimah

the question

I am going to get married, in sha Allah, and I want to follow the Sunnah of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) by offering a wedding feast (Walimah). My question is: when is the right time to do it? What is the number of people to be invited? Please note that in our country the invitation and offering food is done before the marriage contract is done. Is this regarded as a Walimah and will this duty then be waived if one does that?

Summary of answer

- -The best time for Walimah is after the consummation of marriage, following the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). However, scholars allow flexibility, permitting it before consummation or after the marriage contract, based on cultural customs and financial capacity.
- -There is no set number of guests to be invited for the Walimah; rather that depends on what a person can afford.

Detailed answer

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The Recommended Timing for Walimah

It is best to do the wedding feast (Walimah) after the marriage is consummated, following the example of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). But if that is not possible, then there is nothing wrong with doing it before the marriage is consummated, or when the marriage contract is done, or after that.

The matter is broad in scope, but it is better to pay attention to what is usually done in your country, because there is no Shar`i text to indicate that it is obligatory or recommended to do it at a certain time.

Scholarly Opinions on Walimah Timing

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Salaf differed concerning the time (for the wedding feast): should it be at the time of the marriage contract, or after it, or just before the [consummation of the marriage](#), or after that; it could be at any time from when the marriage contract is first done until after the marriage is consummated. There are several scholarly opinions. (End quote from Fat-h Al-Bari, 9/230)

As-San`ani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Mawardi (may Allah have mercy on him), one of the Shafi`is, stated that the [Walimah](#) should be just before the consummation of the marriage.

As-Subki (may Allah have mercy on him) said: What has been narrated concerning the action of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is that it comes after the consummation of the marriage.

It is as if he was referring to the story of the marriage of Zaynab bint Jahsh, because Anas said: When the day dawned, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was a bridegroom to Zaynab, and he invited the people (to a meal).

Al-Bayhaqi (may Allah have mercy on him) included this Hadith under the heading: Chapter: [The time of the Walimah](#). (End quote from Subul As-Salam, 1/154)

The Hadith of Anas was narrated by Al-Bukhari (4793) and Muslim (1428) as follows: When the day dawned the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was a bridegroom to Zaynab bint Jahsh, whom he married in Madinah, and he invited the people to eat in the forenoon.

According to a version narrated by Al-Bukhari (5166): When the day dawned, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was a bridegroom to her, then he invited the people and they had some food.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The time and description of the Walimah in the Hadith of Zaynab indicate that it followed the consummation of the marriage. (End quote from Al-Ikhtiyarat Al-`Ilmiyyah, p. 346)

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Hadith of Anas clearly indicates that it came after consummation, because he said: “When the day dawned, he was a bridegroom to Zaynab and he invited the people ...”

Some of the Malikis regarded it as recommended for it to be just before consummation, which should come after it, and this is what people do nowadays. (End quote from Fat-h Al-Bari, 9/231)

Al-Mardawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is better to say that the recommended time is flexible; it may be at any time from when the marriage contract is done until [the end of the days of the wedding](#) .

That is because there is a report to support that, and because joy is greatest after consummation. But the custom nowadays is to do it shortly before consummation. (End quote from Al-Insaf, 8/317)

Al-Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Chapter on the duty to accept invitations to [wedding feasts](#) ; the one who gives a Walimah for seven days and the like; the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not specify that it should be for one or two days.

Al-Hafidh (may Allah have mercy on him) said: i.e., he did not set a specific time for the Walimah or say that it is obligatory or recommended; that may be understood from the general meaning of the Hadith.

Ad-Damiri (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The jurists did not set a specific time for the wedding feast, but the correct view is that it should be after the consummation of the marriage. The Shaykh (i.e., As-Subki) said: It is permissible to do it before or after; the matter is flexible

and it may be done at any time after the marriage contract is done, as was stated by Al-Baghawi.
(End quote from Al-Najm Al-Wahhaj, 7/393)

Ibn Tulun (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The more correct view is that one should refer to what is customary. (End quote from Fass Al-Khawatim fima qila fil-Wala'im, p. 44)

Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan (may Allah preserve him) said: The time for giving the wedding feast is flexible, starting from the time of the marriage contract until the end of the days of the wedding.
(End quote from Al-Mulakhkhas Al-Fiqhi, 2/364)

Number of Walimah Guests: Is There a Set Limit?

There is no set number of guests to be invited for the Walimah; rather that depends on what a person can afford.

Ibn Battal (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Walimah (wedding feast) is obligatory, according to one's means. There is no minimum number of people that must be invited. (End quote from Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari, 13/283)

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said:

The more you add (to the number of guests) at the wedding feast the better, because that helps to announce the marriage more widely and increases the supplications for blessing of one's family and wealth. (End quote from Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari, 13/282)

And Allah knows best.