O Banu Salimah, stay in your neighborhood, your footsteps are recorded for you; stay in your neighborhood, your footsteps are recorded for you

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The tribe of Banu Salimah wanted to move nearer to the mosque. On learning this, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to them: "I was told that you intend to move nearer to the mosque." They said: "That is true, O Messenger of Allah, we want to." He said: "O Banu Salimah, stay in your neighborhood, your footsteps (to the mosque) are recorded for you; stay in your neighborhood, your footsteps (to the mosque) are recorded for you." Another narration reads: "Every footstep (towards the mosque) merits one higher rank."

[Authentic hadith] [Al-Bukhari with a similar wording - Narrated by Muslim]

Hadīth explanation: The tribe of Banu Salimah wanted to move from their neighborhood, which was far from the mosque, to a place closer to the mosque. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) disliked that a part of Madīnah be depopulated (as stated in Al-Bukhāri's version of the Hadīth). He rather wished that Madīnah be expanded so that the hypocrites and polytheists see the increasing number of Muslims. He then asked them: "I heard that you all wish to move closer to the mosque?" They replied in the affirmative, so he said to them twice: "Stay in your neighborhood; your footsteps (to the mosque) are recorded for you." He also clarified that for every step they take to the mosque, they will receive a reward or one higher rank. In a relevant report, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The ones with the most reward amongst you are the ones who live farthest away (from the mosque)." He was asked: "Why is that, O Abu Hurayrah?" He answered: "Because of the many steps (taken to the mosque)." [Narrated by Mālik in al-Muwatta’, no. 33] The farther the house is from the mosque, the more chances of reward one can receive and the more of one’s sins will be erased. Such reward can be realized if one makes ablution at home, perfecting his ablution, then walks to the mosque, not rides, whether it is a short or a long distance. For every step he takes, two things are written for him: he is raised one rank and one sin is erased from his record of deeds. One of the noble Companions reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "If one of you makes ablution in the best manner, then goes out for the prayer, every time he lifts his right foot, Allah records one good deed for him, and every time he puts down his left foot, Allah erases one sin from his record of bad deeds. So live near or live far" [Abu Dāwud; classified as Sahīh by Al-Albāni]. In another Hadīth, Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "My Lord came to me tonight in the best image - I think he meant in his sleep - and He said to me: 'O Muhammad, do you know what the Higher Assembly (in the heavens) argue about?' I said: 'Yes, they argue about expiation for sins and the raising of ranks.' He asked: 'And what are the

expiation of sins and the raising of ranks?' I said: 'Staying in the mosque after the prayers, walking on foot to the congregational prayers, and making ablution when it is difficult.'" [Ahmad; classified as Sahīh by Al-Albāni] This Hadīth indicates that receiving higher ranks is realized by the following: 1. Going to the mosque in the state of ablution. 2. Intending to go to the mosque to receive reward; in accordance with the Hadīth: "Actions are rewarded by intentions, and every person will be rewarded for what he intended." [Al-Bukhāri and Muslim] 3. Leaving one's home with the sole intention of going to the mosque. 4. Walking on foot, not riding, except for someone who has a valid excuse. If a person has a valid excuse, then he may go by car. One full rotation of the car wheel is equivalent to one footstep, since it resembles lifting the foot off the ground then putting it down again. This is yet another benefit of walking to mosques, that every time one goes and returns, his footsteps are rewarded.

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