

ASK THE RABBI

Question: I know that services start at 9:00 A.M. on Shabbat, but what time do I really have to show up?

Answer: Certain questions Rabbis savor and cherish, others....

In truth, you should ideally be there at 8:45 A.M. By showing up 15 minutes early you have time to settle your mind and start to say the parts of the siddur that the Chazzan might skip assuming you have already said it. These prayers were designed to be said by the individual in his or her home.

That being said, at times it is hard to get to Shul on time. The main goal should be to say the prayers that can only be said, or are better said with a minyan with the congregation. The first of these prayers is “barchu”(pg. 406 in the Artscroll siddur). After “barchu” we should strive to say Shemoneh Esrie (pg. 420) with the congregation. There are prayers that must be said before Shemoneh Esrie, so showing up just in time for Shemoneh Esrie just doesn’t cut it.

To answer your question I would say ideally one should be there at 8:45 A.M. If you can’t make it that early, shoot for on time at 9:00 A.M. At the latest I would arrive at 9:20 A.M.

Keep in mind we must say Shema by the third hour of the day, and Shemoneh Esrie by the fourth. If one habitually arrives late to services, they will be missing these times.