

Welcome to the World of Freemasonry – To a Mason’s Family

LOST IN AWE AND WONDER ...

“What happened? What was it like? What did you do?”

These are questions that are often asked by a man’s family when he returns home after his Initiation into Freemasonry. Most new Masons are uncertain just how much of the unique experience they should share with non-Masons. *“How much should I tell? What may I say? What should I say?”* This brief explanation is provided to introduce a Mason’s family to the world of Freemasonry. To benefit fully from all that Freemasonry offers, understanding, support and encouragement from his family will greatly enhance his enjoyment of membership. Every Entered Apprentice Mason should share this information his family.

Initiation is ‘a once-in-a-lifetime’ event.

When a man becomes a Mason, something very special happens and a new dimension is added to his life. The ancient rite of Initiation binds Masons together in a way that cannot be described or explained in words. To be understood and appreciated Freemasonry must be experienced. For many, the centuries old ceremony is perplexing and the complex ritual bewildering. So much information is imparted during the Initiation, that the experience can be overwhelming in its intensity. So how can the new Mason answer the questions that he will inevitably be asked?

Private, but not secret

Masonry has no secrets to come between a man and his wife or family. Yes, there were serious promises made and solemn vows taken to respect the privacy of a few matters pertaining to traditional words and gestures exchanged between members of the Brotherhood to identify each other as members of the fraternity. If your husband, son, or brother disappears into a secluded room in the house, he is not hiding any deep dark ‘Masonic secret’ from you; he is quietly learning some assigned ‘memory work’ required for advancement to the next stage or Degree. Be assured, there is no secret about what Masons are or what Masons do that cannot be freely discussed and shared with those nearest and dearest to us at home, or with friends, neighbours, professional colleagues, and business associates, if genuine interest is expressed or serious inquiry is made.

Accepted for who he is, not what he is

When a man is admitted into Masonry he is accepted into an intimate circle of new friends where he is regarded with genuine affection and trusted as a Brother. He will be treated as an equal regardless of age, occupation, race, creed, or socio-economic status.

Freemasonry is not a religion

Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world. Millions of men in every country in the free world are joined together in the pursuit of universal brotherhood – recognizing The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. All Masons acknowledge a ‘higher authority’ – a Supreme Being that imposes order in the universe. Masonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion. A Mason respects every Brother’s right to choose and practise his own religion, and encourages him to follow his chosen path to Truth.

Masonry is a philosophy for life

In simple terms, Masonry is primarily an educational institution teaching a moral way of life and an ethical code of behaviour based on the Golden Rule: ‘always do to others what you would have

others do to you.’ Through a disciplined and systematic course of self-improvement a Mason endeavours to become a ‘better man’ by self-exploration, self-discovery, self-analysis, self-realization, self-fulfillment.

Masonry caters to the intellectual and spiritual needs of the individual by pointing a man in the right direction, and then guiding his way in his quest for greater knowledge, deeper insight, and fuller understanding.

The symbolism of stone

Why do members of a gentleman’s society choose to be known as ‘*Masons?*’ Why does a school of philosophy adopt the terms and adapt the tools of the stonemason’s art to illustrate and symbolize principles of morality and virtue? Stone is the oldest, most durable and enduring natural building material known to man. Stone is worked, refined and polished by removing the excess to reveal the inner beauty of the material. The perfect male figure ‘David’ was revealed within the rough block of marble by the skilful hand of the great Michelangelo. Freemasons, as builders of character, work on the inner man to polish and refine the raw material, go within to discover and bring out the best in each of us.

A lodge is a quiet place conducive to reflection and introspection. The lectures and charges of the several degrees are intended to assist a man to contemplate the deeper meaning of life and to ponder his place and purpose in it – to think seriously about the eternal *Why? Where did I come from? What am I doing here? Where do I go from here?* Discussion of partisan politics or sectarian religion is prohibited. Meetings are serious in nature, but equal time is given to fellowship and congeniality at the festive board, which is a feature of most meetings.

A Mason is a law-abiding citizen. Masonry teaches the duties a man owes to God, to his neighbour, and to himself. A Mason willingly accepts responsibilities and cheerfully assumes duties as a good citizen – in the home, in the workplace, in the community. A Mason will always be a faithful husband and considerate father. In Masonry he will have many opportunities to support his community by contributing to projects and charities.

Masons always have taken responsibility for benevolence to a Brother Mason’s dependents in times of need. If such unfortunate circumstances arise, please contact the lodge and be assured that we are prepared to fulfill our obligation to a brother, his spouse, and his children.

A Lodge is not a building; it is the Men that form it

The lodge is the basic unit in Masonry. A man becomes a Mason by joining a lodge to which he pays annual dues to maintain good standing. Lodges are located in every city, most towns, and many villages throughout Ontario. Most lodges meet once a month on a stated day, and take a recess during the summer months, although there are exceptions. Meetings are conducted in private to which members only are admitted. However, Masonry is a family affair and there are many social events, special occasions, and ‘open house’ presentations when family, friends and the public are invited. Many lodges hold annual ladies’ nights, BBQs, and picnics. Any of the senior members of the lodge will be happy to answer any further questions you might have and would welcome the opportunity to explain the history and philosophy of our fraternity.

Each lodge works under the authority of the Grand Lodge Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario, presided over by the Grand Master. Lodges in Ontario are organized geographically into Districts, each of which is supervised by a District Deputy Grand Master acting as the personal representative of the Grand Master.

Actions speak louder than words

Every Mason is someone's idea of Freemasonry. In summary, Freemasonry teaches a man to be honest, truthful and trustworthy, to be courteous, considerate and respectful to others. When a man puts the timeless precepts and time-honoured principles of Freemasonry into practice, the world will indeed be a better place. *Welcome to the World of Freemasonry.*

Raymond S.J. Daniels

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