

Masonic Etiquette

**THE LODGE SYSTEM OF
MASONIC EDUCATION**



Prepared by The Grand Lodge of Florida through
the Masonic Education Committee in cooperation
with the Committee on Work for use by
the Particular Lodges and their members
per Article IX, Section 2 (2) and Regulation 13.19 (4)

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The Lodge System of Masonic Education

IMPORTANT

This Booklet is complete within itself and may be used by anyone for information and enlightenment in Masonic Etiquette. Questions on Masonic Etiquette should be referred to the proper Chairman, questions concerning ritual and ceremony should be referred to the Committee on Work, all others should be referred to the Masonic Education Committee.

MASONIC ETIQUETTE

FOREWORD

Freemasonry solicits no man to join it; it permits no man to make innovation in its body of principles and Landmarks; its Candidates come of their own free will and because they have heard good reports of its reputation and formed a favorable opinion of its work, and by all means throughout its entire system, and through all its bodies and Degrees whatever, by tradition, Landmarks, usage, custom, law, rule, Edict, Regulation, and Constitution, it is in every way secured that a Mason shall stand to it in an attitude of reverence and respect. Of that reverence and respect, etiquette is one of the forms.

In principle, Masonic Etiquette belongs to the empire of good manners, that code by which gentlemen the world over govern their conduct; but this principle with us is found to apply in two directions: on the one hand it becomes a manifested respect for the Craft as a whole; on the other hand it is a form of courtesy to the individual.

Long ago Lodges of Freemasons discovered the grave necessity of decorum; among the Old Charges to which every Candidate was required to acknowledge obedience, they gave the most prominent place to the sections under the general head of "Behaviour." Among the oldest of our records, the "Regius MS., written in 1390 A.D., emphasizes the necessity for paying due respect to the Craft. In the Constitution of 1723, published by our Grand Lodge in its Book of Constitutions, it is specified, "A Mason is obliged by his Tenure, to obey the moral law . . . A Mason is a peaceable subject to the Civil Powers . . . The Persons admitted members of a Lodge must be good and true men . . . You are not to hold private Committees (in defiance of the Lodge), or separate conversation, without leave from the Master, nor to talk of anything impertinent or unseemly nor interrupt the Masters or Wardens, or any Brother speaking to the Master, nor behave yourself ludicrously or jestingly while the LODGE is engaged in what is serious or solemn; but to pay due respect to your Master, Wardens, Fellows and put them to worship" – that is, pay them the respect due them.

The materials in this revised booklet are not to be taken as laws, regulations, or edicts adopted by Grand Lodge. If the reader of these introductory paragraphs shall have been led to exclaim, "But what, after all, is this etiquette? What does it cover?" we refer him to the pages that follow, where Masonic etiquette explains itself through the presentation of its practices for various occasions. The pages are arranged in Sections, the subjects of the Sections being arranged alphabetically like a dictionary, for convenience in rapid reference.

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ADDRESSING THE CHAIR

The rules of order in Freemasonry do not permit side discussions, during a Communication, among members. The member who has anything to say to the Lodge, whether it be to enter discussion or to make or second a motion, must rise to his feet, wait to be recognized by and then address the Worshipful Master.

AGED AND INFIRM

Members of a Lodge who, because of age or infirmity, find it either difficult or impossible to attend at the assemblies of their Brethren stand in need of special consideration at the hand of their Lodge; and because of their condition, no others are so peculiarly appreciative of the kindness or courtesies that may be shown them. A Lodge will maintain its contacts with them unbroken; will see that they are visited; will send them messages on special occasions, and perhaps encourage its members to remember them now and again with appropriate gifts or other reminders. Some Lodges follow the admirable custom of setting aside once each year a "Patriarch's Night" in honor of its aged members; others make it a practice at certain intervals to send a vehicle for such as are physically able to attend Lodge, but have not the means.

ALTAR

Our customs and traditions prohibit any Brother from passing between the Altar and the Worshipful Master while a Lodge is open. From ancient times the precinct between the Altar and the East has been deemed sacred ground, not to be trodden under foot; there should be no obstruction between the East and the Three Great Lights; and since the Great Lights and the Charter of the Lodge are the particular responsibility of the Worshipful Master, no Brother should ever obscure his view of them. The fact that during the exemplification of the Work Candidates are

sometimes placed there, does not mitigate against the interpretation, but rather supports it; for if the ground between the Altar and East is otherwise held sacred, the fact will make all the more impressive those initiation ceremonies which require that a Candidate be placed there.

The ballot box should never rest upon the Bible but by its side or on a little stand at the Altar.

The Altar must not be covered or decorated by the national or any other flag. Any embroidery, sign, or any other indications of any individual or any organization other than the Lodge itself or Grand Lodge is strictly forbidden.

ANTE-ROOM ETIQUETTE

(TYLER TO ENFORCE)

As soon as a Brother enters a Masonic Hall to attend a Communication; he comes under the sway of Masonic Etiquette. If he is late he should not indulge in loud talking that may be heard in the Lodge and his demeanor toward other Brethren he may meet there should be courteous and respectful — there, no more than elsewhere, does Masonry give any man license to take personal liberties with another! This is especially true if any Candidates are present waiting their call to the Preparation Room; to give them the impression that vulgar conduct, levity, practical joking or other forms of disrespect are countenanced by the Craft is a misrepresentation of the Lodge and peculiarly a discourtesy to the Worshipful Master, who stands to all Candidates, among his many other functions, as a host in the name of his Lodge.

The Tyler has it especially in charge to see that the Ante-Room, his own particular quarters, observes the same decorum as all other precincts of the Temple; and while the principal purpose of his sword is to be a symbol of his duty to keep out Cowan's and

eavesdroppers, it is scarcely a lesser meaning of it that he hold authority to maintain order at the doors, and to see that the portals are not profaned by disrespect. Moreover, the Tyler, if he rightly understands his own art, will see that the Ante-Room is kept clean and in order, the aprons neatly piled, books, newspapers and litter not left scattered about, a fitting place, in short, through which to make entrance into a Masonic Lodge.

No person is to be admitted into a Masonic Lodge unless by permission of the Worshipful Master. When a would-be visitor appears, it is the duty of the Tyler to notify the Worshipful Master of the presence of the visitor. The Worshipful Master may appoint a Committee to examine the visitor and report to the Master concerning the visitor's qualifications. If his documents are in order and if he has convinced the examining Committee that he is a Mason, then in all probability the Worshipful Master will grant him permission to enter.

If a Brother is late, he does not enter the Lodge until permission is obtained from the Master through the Tyler and the Junior Deacon for him to do so; before entering he should see that his Apron and other regalia are already properly in place. He should enter through the Outer Door only, and in a manner to attract as little attention, and to avoid as much confusion as possible.

If necessary, the Inner Door should be kept locked except when the preparation room is in use, to prevent Brethren entering and retiring through it, and this applies to Past Masters and Grand Lodge Officers as well as any other Brother. It is for use by Candidates only, and to permit it to be used otherwise is a disturbance or dislocation of the entire system of the ritual. It is the Tyler's duty to see that this rule is rigidly enforced.

APRON

Is an emblem of innocence, it should be clean

and white in color. It is also the badge of a Mason and should be worn with pride and honor to the Fraternity. Officers should wear the apron assigned to the office they were installed into for that year. Past Masters should wear their Past Masters Apron which can be any design except Gold accents should never be used except for Grand Lodge Aprons. The apron is to be worn under the coat unless you are wearing a double-breasted coat or an overcoat.

BALLOT

The ballot is both secret and inviolable. When it is taken the act is fateful for the Candidate and momentous for the Lodge. It is Etiquette for the Lodge Room to be in complete silence, the Officers should remain at their stations and places in silence and dignity. The Grand Lodge Constitutions make discussion of the ballot, on conviction thereof, a Masonic offense. Except the Holy Bible, the ballot is the most sacred thing in the Lodge. Every Mason owes to his Lodge the duty of protecting it against poor material and every Mason owes to every petitioner a fair ballot – the only protection a petitioner has against unfair discrimination and unreasonable prejudice. The upright man and Mason, true to the tradition of the Craft, will never allow personal spite or prejudice to influence his behavior at the ballot box.

BIBLE PRESENTATION

Our regulations prescribe that the Bible used in the Lodge Room should be the unadorned Holy Bible. It is not believed that this prohibits the presentation to a new Brother of a Bible bearing the Square and Compasses on the front, the remainder of the covering being plain and of a solid color, nor does it prohibit the use of a Bible having a page in the front for recording the presentation.

It goes without saying that no one new member is to be singled out for such presentation; that if the Lodge authorizes such presentation, then a Bible should be presented to each new

member thus received.

When so presented, the officiant presenting the same should deliver a short and dignified message as to the place the Holy Bible occupies in Masonry and its significance and binding effect upon every Mason.

(See also "Presents to Candidates")

"BROTHER" IS A TITLE

In the usages of Freemasonry, "Brother" is neither a sentimental nor familiar form of address, but is a title – as much so as Worshipful, Right Honorable, Right Worshipful, or Most Worshipful, and must always be used as such. A man does not attend a Lodge Communication in his capacity as a private individual. He is not just Joe, or Bill, or John, but is there in his capacity as a Mason. For this reason one should never in open Lodge refer to "Bill B.", but always to "Brother B." in the same literal sense as any other office in the Lodge or Grand Lodge.

Always address a Grand Lodge Officer at any Communication by his correct title and he in turn must show the same courtesy to other Grand Lodge Officers present as well as to the Worshipful Master and to the Brethren of the Lodge. This rule of etiquette should be punctiliously observed, no matter what ties of family or friendship may exist.

CHAPLAIN

As an Officer of the Lodge, and while acting in that capacity, the correct place for the Chaplain to be seated during a Communication is to the left and in front of the Worshipful Master.

The prayers at the opening and closing of the Lodge may be offered by the Chaplain while kneeling at the Altar or while standing at his place, at the option of the Worshipful Master. The Scriptures assigned to the Circumambulations should be recited by the Chaplain standing in his place in the Lodge

and should not be read. The Chaplain has otherwise so little to render that the memorizations of these portions should not prove burdensome to him. Only the adopted ritual prayers as found in the Official Florida Monitor shall be used in opening, closing, and during Degree conferrals, except that the Chaplain may add some words of his own at the end of the opening and/or closing prayer in non-sectarian language and in good taste.

CORRESPONDENCE (MASONIC)

When addressing mail to a Brother Mason, do not put his title as such on the envelope. It should be addressed as:

Hon. John Doe

In the salutation of the letter the title should appear as:

R.: W.: John Doe
71 West 23rd Street
New York City, NY

Dear Brother Doe,

DISCUSSION IN LODGE

All sectarian discussion, all argument or statement pro or con as to the merits of civil politics, or any given religion or theological creed, of racial questions, or private business, or of any other non-Masonic subject by which Masons might be divided into classes, feuds, schisms, or opposed schools, is at all times forbidden. It is strictly forbidden to discuss a petitioner or for a Mason to reveal how he has voted or in any way to seek to persuade members to vote one way or another on a petitioner.

All uses of personalities, all expressions of bitterness or ill will, acrimoniousness, and all or any slurs upon the Lodge or its Officers, Grand Lodge or its Officers, and the Fraternity itself, and all flippant, unseemly, or

discourteous remarks addressed to the Lodge or to its Officers are condemned alike by the principles of common courtesy and etiquette and by the disciplinary laws of the Craft.

This is not to say that a Master Mason, particularly one who has acted as a Representative in Grand Lodge, should not inform the Craft fully and completely as to what has taken place in Grand Lodge. Such a report can be rendered truthfully and with dignity and without the use of personalities, and this rule, of course, should always be observed.

A Brother wishing to participate in a discussion in open Lodge should always rise and address the Worshipful Master. He should speak on the subject at issue in the fewest possible words, not using his privilege of the floor as an opportunity to deliver a speech merely for its own sake.

(See also “Speeches”)

DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

The District Deputy Grand Master is the personal representative of the Grand Master and when visiting a Lodge, whether it be formally or informally, he should be accorded all respect. He should never be addressed by his first name during any part of Lodge ceremonies. Such conduct demeans his office.

The District Deputy Grand Master should be received in accordance with provisions adopted at the 180th Grand Lodge in 2010 (Revised-Reception of District Deputy Grand Master).

(See Grand Lodge Officers in this booklet)
A District Deputy Grand Master is required by our Constitutional Law to officially visit every Lodge in his District at least once during his term. He comes there to perform certain specific duties required by Grand Lodge and to

give the Brethren the message of the Grand Master. This message contains matters of importance concerning which the Grand Master, in his wisdom, deems it necessary to inform the Craft. The remarks of the Deputy then are of supreme importance. It is his evening. No programs or speeches other than his should be allowed. What he has to say should stand out — nothing must detract from it.

The Constitution also requires that the District Deputy inspect the records and accounts of the Lodges and see that the same are in proper order (Article VI, Section 11). There have been instances where Lodges have gotten into difficulties because of irregularities which such an inspection would have disclosed, but were not discovered until too late, because this Constitutional requirement had not been complied with. This being a duty imposed upon the District Deputy, by our Constitution, the Master should formally tender the Lodge records to the District Deputy, before such an official visitation, and preferably at a time convenient to the District Deputy to examine the same, so that a conscientious District Deputy will not be put to the embarrassment of asking for the records.

When making an official visit to a Lodge in his District, the District Deputy shall be formally received with Grand Honors. (See “Grand Honors” for those entitled to receive the same.) On such occasions, all guests who are not entitled to Grand Honors, but whom it is desired to honor by a special introduction at the Altar, should be received first. Thereafter, the District Deputy may prefer to be received alone, ahead of the others entitled to Grand Honors, in order that he may himself preside at the reception and the rendering of Grand Honors to such other guests, or he may desire to enter with such other distinguished guests, in which case, it being his official visitation, where in the absence of the Grand Master, he is directly exercising his function as the personal representative of the Grand Master,

he will head the procession and be introduced first.

Following the introduction, welcoming and rendition of Grand Honors at the Altar, the District Deputy is first escorted to the East, then the other distinguished guests are escorted to seats in the East. If there be more of them than can be seated in the East, then seats should be reserved for them as close to the East as possible. The District Deputy may, if he desires, retain the gavel and preside over such meeting, in which case he will be covered and the Worshipful Master will uncover, but the District Deputy will not wear his hat when entering the Lodge Room, as our law provides that a Worshipful Master is required to uncover only for the Grand Master in person. The District Deputy will be covered when presiding, for the same reason that anyone presiding in the East, whether by right or at the request, or with the consent of the Worshipful Master is covered, the Worshipful Master remaining uncovered while such a person presides. It is the usual practice for the District Deputy to return the gavel to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge, when his status is that of principal guest of honor, but, as before stated, he may preside if he so desires.

At such official visitations of a District Deputy, the Worshipful Master should consult with the District Deputy in advance, as to arrangements, and his wishes should be scrupulously followed. If there are other speakers, the District Deputy will, as the most honored guest, speak last, unless the Grand Master should be present.

When a Grand Master makes his official visitation to a District, the District Deputy is in full charge of and is responsible for the proper handling of all the details incident to such a meeting.

(See “Grand Masters Visitation”)

(See also “Speeches”)

DRESS

Shall a Lodge require of its Officers that they wear formal dress? The wisdom of so doing depends entirely upon circumstances and is a point which it is the prerogative of each constituent Lodge to decide, though much may be said in favor of formal dress — “cutaway coat,” tuxedo, or full evening dress, since it is a mark of respect to the Fraternity.

In any event, one thing is certain: if any of the Officers are required to wear formal attire all the Officers should wear it without exception; and if he and his colleagues wear it, the Worshipful Master should use a hat to correspond not a soft hat, straw hat, or a cap. The members will dress according to private taste and it is proper that they enter the Lodge Room with apron properly arranged beforehand, and any other regalia, jewels, etc., in due order.

The custom prevails in some Lodges of having the Worshipful Master wear one type of dress (clothing) while the other Officers wear different styles of dress. The harmony of good taste will be better served if all dress alike.

There is a philosophy in dress as in so many other things, and the dress proper to Masonic occasion is no exception. Its principle is good taste; its practice is to wear such attire as shows respect to the Brotherhood and expresses the dignity of Masonry.

ELECTION TO OFFICE

The subject of election to Lodge Office falls naturally in the field of jurisprudence, but in some of its aspects is so closely related to decorum and to all else that seeks to preserve harmony, that it may be considered briefly here.

The point at issue has to do with the “advancement” of an Officer at the time of the

annual election or with his appointment if he be an Appointed Officer. In the majority of cases this custom may work to the advantage of the Lodge if fitness is manifest; however, there is neither law nor tradition which gives any Officer of the Lodge a “right” to be advanced.

While there is no advancement by right, an Officer should not be dropped from the line for light or frivolous reasons; however, if the Officer should not be advanced, neither he nor his friends should take offense. A Brother may be unqualified to hold any Masonic office for any number of reasons, all of them creditable to himself; such a thing could be said of many excellent Masons. They are not cast for office-holding, and will themselves be happier and their Lodge be the gainer if they use other opportunities for service. If a Lodge cannot “drop from the line” any incumbent of proved unfitness without engendering ill feelings thereby, it needs to instill in its members a clearer conception of the Masonic System and a feeling of greater loyalty to its welfare.

EMBLEMS AND SYMBOLS

While the design and disposition of the emblems, symbols, and other Lodge Room Appurtenances necessary to the adequate exemplification of the Degrees does not, in any strict sense, belong to Masonic Etiquette, the underlying principle is nevertheless the same. The symbolical system of the Craft is what that term indicates. A system, which means that each part or detail belongs to a whole, and if any one is omitted or misused it affects the whole. And the symbolical system itself is absolutely essential to Freemasonry; it is the Craft’s one method of teaching its principles to its members; without that method it is dumb; and if that method is mutilated, its teaching suffers. For these reasons it is of the utmost importance that a Lodge takes great pains to see that the emblems and symbols are of a correct design, are well cared for, and are placed at the correct positions.

The Altar should be in the center of the room, its sides square with the sides of the room. The Three Great Lights should be placed at the center of the Altar and should never rest on top of the Holy Bible when it is closed. The Square and Compasses should be silver and in good working order. The Great Pillars should be of adequate height and correct design and placed one on each side of the Inner Door if the Lodge building allows, the Pillar bearing the Celestial Globe to stand at the Candidate’s right as he enters. The Ashlars, if used, should be on the Master’s platform, or on one of its steps, one at either side, the Perfect Ashlar near the Southeast corner, the Rough Ashlar toward the Northeast.

The Letter “G” should be prominently displayed in the East, and be of tasteful design. The appurtenances used in the Middle Chamber Lecture of the Second Degree should be adequate in size, dignified in appearance, correct in design, and replaced when become worn from use. The Holy Bible should be handled with care and reverence and should any of its pages become soiled or torn they should be cleaned or replaced. Jewels, regalia, rods, and aprons should be kept in good order, never suffered to grow shabby or be handled carelessly or in a manner showing neglect.

No individual who has private theories concerning the emblems and symbols should be permitted to violate the requirements and usages of the Craft. Freemasonry is no man’s private property. It lies with no man to impose his private notions upon anything appertaining to the Ritual. And by the same token it is the height of impropriety for a Lodge to permit any member’s name to be engraved upon the Ashlars, embroidered or painted on the dressings of the Altar, stamped or embossed upon the Holy Bible, or otherwise displayed in, or on, anything belonging to the Ritual and its exemplification.

FLAG

The National Flag should be on a standard placed in the East, in the corner to the Master's right. It is improper to use the Flag as a drapery for the Altar, as bunting, or for decoration purposes, or in lieu of upholstery or as drapery on, or in, any of the chairs, seats, or stations of the Lodge Room. The Flag should be given precedence over a Lodge Banner, or any other banner, emblem, or device used for a similar purpose in the Lodge Room, in public processions, or when displayed on a Masonic building. If a Lodge Banner is used it should never be placed in the East-on or next to the Master's dais — but behind either the Treasurer's or the Secretary's desk, preferably the latter.

FUNERALS

At a Masonic Funeral, including the procession to the cemetery and the rites of interment, the requirements of Masonic Etiquette are unusually strict. In the procession the same decorum should be observed as in the Lodge Room; no smoking, no laughter, no loud talking, and Brethren should neither join nor leave the lines without permission from the Worshipful Master. The general directions for the proper observance of these ceremonies are found in the Florida Monitor; they are the code of etiquette proper to the occasion and should be strictly observed. The proper clothing for a Masonic funeral is black hat, black or dark suit, black neck tie, white gloves, and plain white Apron, a band of black crepe around the left arm, above the elbow, and a sprig of evergreen on the coat pocket breast.

At the death of a Brother, the Worshipful Master *may* order the Lodge to be in mourning for a period of thirty days. The Worshipful Master may have the Altar draped before opening the Lodge or using the procedure contained in the Adopted Floorwork. The Charter may be draped; the Worshipful Master's gavel, the Warden's columns, the Deacon's and Steward's rods, the Tyler's

sword and the Marshal's baton should be trimmed in black crepe, neatly tied with white ribbon, the Bible maybe covered with black crepe. The Grand Master, at his discretion, may also order drapings at the death of any distinguished Brother.

The Worshipful Master, and other Brethren having parts assigned by him, should make sure in advance that they have the ceremonies well learned; for them to halt and stumble, or mumble their words, is painful to the bereaved and sets the Craft in an unfavorable light before the public. Therefore, the service should not be read by the Chaplain, but recited by the Worshipful Master or acting Worshipful Master.

Not all Masters are gifted in the art of public speech. It is an art not easily acquired. To read or recite well requires time, patience, thought, and practice; therefore, the Master not so gifted would do well to choose from among his Brethren an officiant capable of rendering the Masonic Funeral Service in a manner which will be a source of comfort to those bereaved. If rendered in such a manner, the Masonic Funeral Services are impressive to all who hear them.

Every Worshipful Master should read and carefully study the printed directions just before the Funeral Services in the latest edition of the Official Florida Monitor. These ceremonies are of great importance and there is no need to elaborate on them here, other than to emphasize their significance. You will observe that both the Monitor and the Digest indicate that white gloves **and** white aprons should be worn at Masonic Funerals. This requirement should include, present and past; Grand Lodge Officers; District Deputy Grand Masters; District Instructors; Worshipful Masters; Lodge Officers; etc.

When the funeral is under the jurisdiction of a Particular Lodge, **all** Masons uniting in the

procession or standing with the Lodge members, shall wear WHITE APRONS and GLOVES, regardless of present or former rank or position. If the funeral is being conducted by other Masonic Bodies, at the request of the deceased Brother and his family, they, of course, will prescribe the uniform or dress. In this case, aprons will not be worn except as appropriate for the individual members of that organization.

We are engaged in the simple and dignified ceremony of burying our dead, and the white apron and gloves are simply symbols of the equality within the Craft and that death is the leveler of all men.

In the event the deceased was in the Military Service, the following rule is to be observed: the apron is to be placed on top of the coffin and the Flag placed over both the coffin and the Apron.

The white apron is to be laid upon the casket, as near the center as possible, not tied upon the body. The apron is the badge of a Mason at labor, and the deceased Brother has finished his labor and entered into Eternal Refreshment.

The Funeral Service should be given with dignity and expression to bring out the meaning. In this Service are many words difficult of pronunciation and many phrases not easy of rendition. This requires thought and care and study on the part of the person who is to render the Service, in order to bring out the warmth and comfort of those bereaved.

GRAND HONORS

Grand Honors are a mark of respect, in a form inherited from the past, accorded to Grand Lodge Officers and, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, TO WORSHIPFUL MASTERS AND 50 YEAR (or greater) MEMBERS. In a Grand Communication they are given to the Grand Master and to visiting Grand Masters and Past Grand Masters. In a

Lodge Communication they are given to Grand Lodge Elective Line Officers, Past Grand Masters of our own or another Grand Jurisdiction, and to District Deputies in their own Districts. Grand Honors shall be given to Worshipful Masters in recognition of their installation into office, but only in a tyled Lodge. No Grand Honors, either Public or Private are to be given in an open installation ceremony. A Brother receiving a 50 Year Membership Certificate or greater at a tyled Lodge Communication shall be accorded Grand Honors in accordance with Reg. 26.12 (a). It is contrary to law to pay Grand Honors to any other persons.

A Grand Master's visitation is always official, unless he indicates otherwise and declines a formal reception with Grand Honors. When a Grand Lodge Elected Officer, or a Past Grand Master of this or another Grand Jurisdiction visits a Lodge on other than official occasions, the Worshipful Master should inquire if they desire to be formally received with Grand Honors and be governed by their wishes.

Grand Honors must always be led by the Master in Lodge Meetings. No Brother is to be formally received and given Grand Honors after the reception of the Grand Master.

Grand Honors are to be given by all Present and Past Grand Lodge Officers present except when they themselves, are being thus received, either alone or in company with the Grand Master or others.

Worshipful Masters who are uncertain as to the correct manner in which Grand Honors should be given, may call upon the Committee on Work or District Instructor for an explanation and an exemplification. If a Worshipful Master is installed in an open installation, he may be given Grand Honors when the Lodge is again tyled after the installation, or at the next Stated Communication to conform with the Monitor on open Installations. After Grand Honors are given there should never be any applause as

this demeans the honor of the Grand Honors.

GRAND LODGE

Grand Lodge is the great source of power in the Craft. It has legislative, administrative, and executive jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to the Fraternity. Our Masonic traditions are in its keeping. It is only right that our respect for its Officers be shown by adhering to certain rules of etiquette necessary to maintain that respect and this etiquette must be punctiliously observed. Grand Honors are symbols of that honor and respect.

Talking, promiscuous moving about the room, failure to address the Grand Master, or to use his proper title when speaking, are all violations of common courtesy and gentlemanly conduct. In an assemblage numbering hundreds, it is essential that these rules be strictly adhered to in order that business coming before Grand Lodge be dispatched with promptness and in a dignified manner. Not only are all these rules relating to decorum applicable to Grand Lodge, but they might well be taken seriously by our Lodges, in which decorum is sometimes conspicuous by its absence.

GRAND LODGE OFFICERS

Rules for receiving all Grand Officers are determined by the Grand Master each year and are provided to his District Deputy Grand Masters and must be followed.

GRAND MARSHAL

The Grand Marshal is the major domo of Grand Lodge. He conducts the Grand Lodge in all Grand Lodge processions and ceremonies. He has similar duties at special Ceremonials, such as Cornerstone Layings, Dedications, etc.

When the Grand Master consents to conduct a Cornerstone Laying, Dedication, etc., for a

Lodge or otherwise, the ceremony, from the moment of the arrival of the Grand Lodge party, becomes a Grand Lodge Ceremony, and is under the control of Grand Lodge; therefore, all matters appertaining to the functions of a Marshal, arrangements of processions, ordering and arrangement according to precedence, and all similar details and arrangements are exclusively in the Grand Marshal's care, and should be left to him or arranged according to his instructions.

GRAND MASTER'S VISITATION

It is our practice, in Florida, for the Grand Master to make an official visit to each Masonic District at least once during his term of office. The Grand Master also makes numerous other visits to special meetings. The District Deputy is in full charge of and is responsible for the proper handling of all details incident to the Grand Master's official visit to his District.

The District Deputy, after consultation with the Worshipful Master, will designate the Host Lodge when notifying the Lodges of the date of meeting. He will issue, or cause to be issued, invitations to Grand Lodge Officers and any others whom he may elect to invite. (Ordinarily invitations are extended to all Grand Lodge Officers, Elective and Appointive, all Past Grand Masters, Committeemen in the local and adjacent areas, and at least the District Deputies of nearby Districts. The Grand Master, at his discretion, may specify others to also be invited.) Other arrangements are determined by the Grand Master and must be followed.

JEWELS

According to the custom of this Grand Jurisdiction, the "jewels of the Officers of Lodges shall be of silver or white metal." Gold is reserved for Grand Lodge jewels and should never be used by the constituent Lodges. Cases have been observed of Lodges accepting and

using solid gold jewels as a present from some outside organization; this is improper.

The jewels of Grand Lodge Officers are gold or the color of gold (yellow, not white) and should always be worn at Grand Lodge functions.

Officers' jewels are a part of the official and necessary insignia of office, and are bestowed as such at the time of installation and should always be worn and respected as such, never as personal or private adornment.

MARSHAL

The duties of the Marshal are set forth in his installation ceremony in the Official Florida Monitor: "The good order of the Lodge in its general assemblies and processions depends upon your skill, care and assiduity (diligence). You should always be near to execute the orders of the Worshipful Master."

A Marshal who understands the conducting of processions will greatly enhance the dignity, orderliness, and beauty of processions of the Lodge. If processions are conducted slovenly, or degenerate into a straggle, the effectiveness of the ceremony as a whole is lessened.

MASTER'S HAT

The wearing of a hat while presiding in the East is not optional, including during open installation of Lodge Officers. Our Regulations state that the Worshipful Master is required to remove his hat only for the Grand Master in person, during prayer and at certain times during ceremonies.

The hat is a distinguishing mark by which the importance of the Master's Office is signalized, a visible and conspicuous sign of his position as presiding Officer and titular head of the Lodge. In Grand Lodge Communications, of course, only the Grand Master remains covered.

The hat should always be removed during prayer as a sign of respect to the Great Architect of the Universe. It should be removed when giving the obligations, as a token to their authority. If a funeral is held in church, or in a chapel, it should be removed as a sign of reverence. The proper hat for funerals is a black hat according to the Florida Monitor. At graveside funerals it should be removed when prayer is **first** offered and not worn during the remainder of the service. The Worshipful Master and Brethren may wear headpieces at the funeral of a deceased Brother whose religion requires such.

The kind of hat a Master should wear is determined wholly by good taste. A cap or stiff straw hat is always inappropriate. The only governing principle is good taste, and in deference to that, a Master will never wish to wear any style of hat that will attract attention out of oddity or will derogate from the dignity of his office.

OFFICE

An Office in Lodge or Grand Lodge exists quite independently of the Brother who may at any given moment chance to occupy it. Its duties and functions are permanently established, defined and regulated by law. No office is the private property of the man who holds it; it belongs, not to him, but to the Craft. The office is not to conform to him; he is to conform to the office. Nor are the dignity and decorum which accompany any Masonic Office to be neglected.

ORDER IN LODGE ROOM

By order in Lodge is meant that all members present behave in a seemly manner, the discussion and conduct of business is carried on in accordance with the laws of Grand Lodge, the Lodge By-Laws, and the will of the Worshipful Master. Ceremonies are conducted in due form. All the gestures of courtesy and

respect are given, no loud talking, jesting, or unnecessary moving about are permitted, and harmony and dignity prevail. The responsibility for maintaining order rests with the Worshipful Master.

PAST GRAND MASTER

A Past Grand Master should be received in accordance with “Grand Visitations” as found in the Official Florida Monitor. Past Grand Masters may close a Lodge in “Ample Form.”

PRAYER

Every Mason has been in attendance at Communications where prayer has been called for or offered in an off-hand or grudging manner as if religion were an alien and intrusive thing and the art of worship a formality done for the sake of appearance and, therefore, to be hurriedly finished as though there could be more important matters. Such behavior betrays a lack of understanding of the most elementary character of the Craft. Religion is an essence, not an accident, of Masonry. It stands at the heart of the Fraternity, as the Altar stands at the center of the Lodge Room, as a symbol of the religious character of Freemasonry. The Master should call upon the Chaplain to perform his duty and the Chaplain himself should perform it with deliberateness; not with haste, but with earnestness and sincerity, and in a dignified manner expressive of the genuinely religious character of the Craft.

The Worshipful Master and Lodge members should not consult any memorandum during prayer; the Secretary should discontinue his work; all should rise and keep absolute silence while it is being offered. The prayer itself, if not in words prescribed by the Ritual, should be consonant with the faith of Masonry, never an expression of peculiar sectarian views or dogmatic creeds; on the other hand if a Chaplain, especially if he be a Clergyman or Rabbi, should chance to give expression to

sectarian beliefs out of habit or through inadvertence, it is unfitting, and in spirit un-Masonic, for offense to be taken or for any Brother to dwell upon the fact, either during or after the close of the Communication.

PREPARATION ROOM

If there is any one place in all the precincts of the Temple where a wise Worshipful Master will use every possible precaution to see that good taste, courtesy, and thoughtful kindness are displayed to the utmost, it is in the Preparation Room where all Degrees begin. Here a Candidate receives his earliest first hand impressions of the Craft; he comes a total stranger to all the practices and requirements of the Lodge; and often is nervous, apprehensive, ill at ease, not knowing what to expect, and fearful lest he cut for himself a sorry figure in whatever may follow.

If he finds a Preparation Room littered, full of smoke, with joking (especially off-color joking) going on, he must form an erroneous impression of Freemasonry that may remain with him for years. The best way to teach him in this time of beginning, that the Lodge is worthy of respect, is for the Lodge to show respect to him.

Clothing him in ritualistic garb should be done with tact, by Brethren of considerate spirit who realize that entrance into Masonry is no mere formality, but a serious and fateful experience. When he is led through the Inner Door he should not be stifled by tobacco smoke nor be surprised by a hum of conversation, and each Officer should be already at his place, ready and alert to perform his part lest the impression be conveyed that Initiation is a hastily improvised ceremony.

The Inner Door — the one leading from the Preparation Room into the Lodge Room — should never be opened except for the purpose of admitting or returning Candidates. Any other door, or doors, leading from the

Preparation Room to some place other than the Lodge Room, should be kept locked during the preparation of Candidates. Candidates are prepared by the Stewards, and no one else should ever be present with them except when the Senior Deacon or the Master, or someone delegated by him, appears.

The Preparation Room should be kept clean at all times, and the decorum should be maintained by the senior Officer present. The Stewards are told during their installation that they “are to assist the Deacons and other Officers in performing their respective duties.” During conferral of our Degrees, the Stewards are responsible for preparing the candidates for reception by the Senior Deacon. The Candidates are, therefore, then in their charge in the Preparation Room and its cleanliness and decorum are their particular responsibilities.

By a proper attitude toward the Candidate in the Preparation Room, his respect for the Institution may be tremendously increased or it may be shattered for all time by an improper attitude and lack of respect for his feelings.

In the Preparation Room, care should be taken to prepare the mind of the Candidate for that which is to follow. The ritualistic garb of the work is a symbol; therefore, it is important that the atmosphere of the room be such as to inspire in the mind of the Candidate a respect for that which is to come.

PRESENTS TO CANDIDATES

The custom of giving presents to Candidates at the end of a Degree *should be discouraged*, except when they are given to all Candidates by the Lodge itself. There seems to be a growing custom of presenting Candidates (often only one Candidate), and usually at the end of the Master Mason Degree, with gifts from those outside the Lodge and/or from members of the Candidate’s family. This is not a recommended custom.

In deference to Candidate(s) who would not receive a gift, and the solemnity of our Degrees, that is not the best time, or necessarily the right place, for the presentation of gifts from those outside the Lodge, or from within the Lodge, unless the same or similar gift is presented to each Candidate. If there be only one Candidate, however, gifts could be presented without serious breach of etiquette.

Special gifts to an individual Candidate can be presented at a later Communication. When a gift has personal and emotional ties or family connections for a Candidate, it might be more appropriate to present it with privacy, rather than in open Lodge.

PUBLICITY

The Communications of a Lodge, with all the transactions conducted therein, and such other Lodge business as Petitions, Committee work, the names of Candidates, or any other information about the confidential affairs of a Lodge should never be given to the public. All announcements from the Secretary’s desk concerning Initiations or other Lodge business should be sent out over the Lodge Seal.

PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is, as a lawyer would phrase it, of the essence of the contract wherein a Mason stands to his Lodge. For a Lodge, its Officers, or its members not to be punctual is a discourtesy and it is difficult to charge one group with a greater discourtesy than the others. If the Officers are absent, there is nobody present with authority to open Lodge, and the members, whose time presumably is valuable, must wait; and where both members and Officers fall into the habit of unpunctuality, a vicious circle is set up — the members delay because the Officers are expected to be late, the Officers tend to be late

because they expect the members to be, one group blames the other, and opportunity for friction is offered.

The Worshipful Master is charged with the responsibility to break this circle by insisting that his Officers be on time, a thing that falls within his authority; and he should insist that his Officers notify him in advance if they expect to be tardy or absent in order that he may make provisions to have their stations or places filled.

If he will Open his Lodge at the time prescribed by the By-Laws and when the constitutionally required number of Officers and members are present, and make a practice of doing so, he will find that his members will reciprocate in kind by *also* developing the habit of being on time.

RITUAL

Mirth has no place whatever in the exemplification of any one of the Three Degrees of Masonry, more particularly in the Third. The Letter "G" in the East, the Altar, the Holy Bible — where such as these play so prominent a part, surely there is no place for laughter!

Nor for applause! To break into applause because a Ritualist has performed some part well destroys the illusion and reduces the Ritual to the level of a play; nor should applause be given when a Candidate has been Raised. A Brother does not take a part in his own name or perform it in his own proper person; his individuality should be sunk out of sight, both to himself and to his Lodge, lest he intrude himself between the Candidate and the Ritual.

The Brother Raised has done nothing to merit applause. Offering himself as a Candidate to Masonry is done of his own free will and accord. Why applaud? If we wish to express our pleasure at seeing him one of us,

congratulate him quietly by a hand-clasp when the Lodge is called to refreshment.

The Ritual is designed to be effective in the inner life of the Candidate, a genuine moral and spiritual experience by which he enters a new kind of life wherein he will stand obligated to perform duties and make self sacrifices; the obligations he will take will be morally and Masonically binding on him and his vows must be genuine or he will be led into harmful hypocrisy. On any other interpretation of it, the Ritual degenerates into play, into an empty ceremony, self-falsified and without meaning, and the whole structure of Freemasonry is shattered. A Lodge that holds fast to this truth will no more permit levity to ruin the effect of its work than it would permit its Treasurer to falsify a check.

The Third Degree, especially, is of the highest possible seriousness, not a drama, not a play, but a genuine spiritual experience. It is for this reason that Grand Lodge forbids any substitution of its parts by a costumed play. Theatricality strikes a false note. And if Degree Teams insist on wearing costumes they should be in good taste, correct and accurately historical and not obviously for stage effect.

It is improper to discuss the Ritual in public, or to advertise it, or to publish pictures of it, in any way by which the secrets of Masonry may be unlawfully revealed to the profane world, a principle expressed in the Book of Constitutions. Only the written FORMS and CEREMONIES authorized by Article XV of the Constitution may be referred to, used or taught by the Committee on Work, District Instructors, or Lodges of this Grand Jurisdiction.

SIGNS

Signs belong to the inner essence and esoteric life of the Craft; accordingly, they should always be given with careful accuracy and with full decorum. Under no circumstances

should the Master, Wardens, or any Brother remain seated while giving a Sign. No Brother should ever leave the Lodge Room without properly saluting. If the Worshipful Master so instructs, it is proper to salute the West upon entering or retiring from the Lodge while at labor.

SPEAKERS

An invited speaker is a guest of the Lodge. He should be received in accordance with the provisions of “Grand Visitations” as found in the Official Florida Monitor if he is a Grand Lodge Officer, D.D.G.M. in his District, or Past Grand Master, if not he should be conducted to the East and there introduced, and in introducing him the Master should give his name clearly, address him by title, name his home Lodge, give such other information about him as will enable the audience to identify him, and his subject should be announced plainly so that all can hear; also the occasion that called for him should be clearly explained for the sake of giving his address its necessary background. At the time of the introduction the Lodge will be quiet, without talk or moving about, and the Secretary will not continue writing or rattling papers during the address. A proper introduction is half the speaker’s battle and, especially if he has come from a distance and without a fee, is a courtesy to which he is entitled.

In inviting a speaker, the Master should take great care to give him all necessary instructions; under what circumstances he is to speak, on what subject, for how long, and for what purpose. Arrangements should be made for his entertainment, he should be given complete information about commercial carrier service to your area, and the Master or his representatives should meet him at the airport, terminal, or the hotel. If a fee is not to be paid, strict care should be taken promptly to reimburse him for his expenses. After he has come and gone the Lodge, or the Master in its name, should write him a letter of appreciation.

Speakers usually are busy men; if they give of their own time and energy, particularly when visiting a strange Lodge or a Lodge at a distance, it is the most elementary of courtesies to extend them every hospitality and to see that they are put to no expense.

One of the essentials of hospitality to a visiting speaker is to see that he can begin strictly on time, a courtesy he will wish to repay by making it an equal point to stop on time.

(See also “Speeches”)

SPEECHES

All speeches of a controversial, sectarian, or political nature should be prohibited, since such speeches are certain to destroy harmony and introduce discord within the Lodge. A speaker who disregards this admonition is guilty of a serious breach of etiquette and is subject to severe criticism and condemnation.

There is another point on which it is embarrassing to say anything since it involves morals as much as etiquette, but there have been occasions to suggest the propriety of mentioning it here. This has to do with the stories told by speakers. Anything of a questionable character, anything of an “off-color” nature is, under such circumstances, a triple affront — an affront to the gentlemen present; an affront to the Grand Lodge itself, if there represented; and an affront to the Grand Master, in person and to his Office, if he be present.

Also the Deity is thereby insulted. If we are Masons, we believe in God. If we believe in God, then of course, we believe that He keeps His promises. He has promised that: “Where two or three are gathered together in thy Name, Thou wilt be in their midst and bless them.” In our opening ceremonies, our Chaplain invokes the presence of Deity in his opening prayer. Then with Deity present in our midst, by our

invitation, and with His Holy Bible open upon our Altar, some thoughtless or uninformed Mason will tell “off-color” and even vulgar stories, thinking that thus they make themselves popular with the Craft when, in fact, all thinking Masons who hear them, thereafter correctly regard them as buffoons who do not understand what Masonry really means or stands for.

In the course of Masonic speeches, clean, humorous stories are not only appropriate, but usually are desirable, since they make the occasion more enjoyable. It is not necessary, nor is it good taste, to resort to “off-color” vulgar stories that affront the Craft and insult Deity Himself, who is always present as our invited Guest.

This rule of etiquette applies not only to the tyled Lodge, but to all occasions where the Craft assemble in their capacity as Masons, such as banquets or other public meetings, and especially if there be profanes or ladies present, when it is more necessary and required that dignity and perfect courtesy be observed.

TITLES

The titles belonging to all Grand Lodge Officers are described in the Book of Constitutions, as follows:

The title of the Grand Master and of Past Grand Masters is “Most Worshipful” and of the remaining Elected Grand Officers and District Deputies, is “Right Worshipful,” the title of District Instructor is “Right Honorable” unless the Brother qualifies for the titles, “Right Worshipful” or “Most Worshipful” except the Grand Chaplain, whose title is “Right Reverend.” The title of other Appointed Grand Lodge Officers and of Worshipful Masters and Past Masters is “Worshipful.” A Lodge or Grand Lodge Officer, on any Masonic occasion, should be addressed or

referred to by his proper title. Never address a Worshipful Master as “Worshipful Sir,” but as “Worshipful Master,” nor should the Grand Master be addressed in any manner other than as “Most Worshipful Grand Master” even when presiding over or closing a Particular Lodge.

VISITING MASTERS

Visiting Masters and Past Masters are usually paid the honor of a welcome by name, with their proper title of “Worshipful” (unless they hold the title of “Right Worshipful”) and the Master may invite them to a seat in the East if he wishes. The fact that they come as representing a Lodge, rather than in any private capacity, entitles them to all the courtesies and respect one regular Lodge owes another.

VISITING “TEAMS”

If a Degree “Team” visits another Lodge to confer a Degree, it stands to the Lodge it visits in the relationship of guest to host and should, therefore, be more careful to avoid any kind of unseemly conduct on the part of any of its members. And, what is of equal importance, make sure in advance that it will not introduce into its work any feature not acceptable to the host Lodge or to its Worshipful Master. This is one reason why there should be used only the Ritual as Grand Lodge prescribes it.

Lodges which have Lodge notices would do well to state therein that a Degree is to be conferred by a Lodge rather than by a team.

VISITORS

A Lodge’s sense for that which is fitting, its instinct for hospitality, its taste in the amenities, are never more clearly revealed than in its manner of receiving visitors. If, during the purging of a Lodge, a visitor’s name is announced and a Brother vouches for him with some facetious remark, or if members indulge

in levity because there is none to vouch for him, courtesy is violated and a Brother may be humiliated. If the circumstances are such that a Master desires no visitor present, or if it is believed that the visitor in question might disturb the peace and harmony of the Lodge, all the more pains should be taken to deal with him tactfully and in delicate taste, preferably before he enters the Lodge Room.

If an Examining Committee is appointed to meet him, it should deal with him in a kindly and considerate manner, remembering that it is speaking and acting for the Worshipful Master. Catch-questions, attempts to trip him up by trickery, or any attempt of the Committee to “show-off” its own knowledge in order to humiliate the visitor, are un-Masonic in spirit, violations not only of the etiquette of Masonry, but of all good manners whatsoever. The one and only duty of a Committee is to assure itself that the stranger is a Master Mason in good standing in some regular Lodge; for it to go beyond this is to exceed its authority.

If permitted to enter, the visitor should be introduced at the Altar to the Worshipful Master and Brethren. The Committee should assist the Senior Deacon to find him a seat and otherwise make him feel at home.

Delegations of Brethren sometimes visit neighboring Lodges. It is a fine custom on these occasions, practiced in many of our Lodges, for the Master to call up the Lodge as the delegation enters, necessarily so if Masters, Past Masters, or Grand Lodge Officers are in the delegation.