

A Few Helpful Hints for the Newly Joined Mason.

By a P.M.

1. To-day the formality of evening dress and white gloves is in abeyance, but dark coloured clothing, white collar and black tie is expected, and black footwear. Always wear your apron *outside* a morning coat, lounge suit, or dinner jacket, but under the coat in full evening dress.

2. Don't frame your certificate (you may require it when visiting other Lodges as a stranger), and it is a form of advertisement not in good taste.

3. Don't endeavour to convey to all your friends you are a Mason, and don't respond to any casual introduction or acquaintance who, without due reason, indicates he is a Mason.

4. Should you be *approached* to propose a candidate, remember you are called upon to vouch for him as a fit and proper person, and must have an intimate knowledge of his mode of living. "A good fellow in the office" is not sufficient.

5. Should you propose a candidate who is accepted by the Lodge, remember it is your duty to coach him for the various degrees, but it is undesirable to propose anyone until you yourself have been a Mason for several years.

6. In your early Masonic career remember the motto engraved on the seal of your certificate, listen, observe and be silent, unless you are in a position to contribute something of value to the business under discussion. The "risings" are not for the purpose of turning the Lodge into a debating society.

7. If called upon to speak in Lodge, remember your comments must be addressed through the Worshipful Master; under no circumstances address him as Worshipful Sir.

8. Treat Grand Officers and Past Masters with respect and reasonable deference, but do not regard them as some form of unapproachable superior being. They don't expect it, and often when the Lodge is "at Refreshment" you can ask them about points that confuse or worry you, and you will always get helpful advice and instruction. But don't try and devise conundrums on the lines of the "Brains Trust" questions. You will not be popular if you do. Endeavour to make advancement bit by bit, but let your queries be genuine, not attempts to trap your seniors into making unconsidered replies. If they themselves don't know the answers, they will say so, and try and give you your answer at some later date, so your query has helped *both* of you to make an advancement in knowledge.

9. It is bad form to toast Grand Lodge Officers and Past Masters at the festive board, and NO Brother, of whatever rank, should toast the Master in the Chair.

10. At the festive board do not indulge in loud cross toasting. It is noisy and gives a bad impression of Masonic behaviour to others in nearby rooms. When the gavels call for silence obey the command promptly. Nothing shows bad discipline in a Lodge more than a Worshipful Master to have to sound his gavel more than once to obtain silence. Don't carry on whispered conversations during the formal toasts, even if they are long-winded and boring to you, others are probably enjoying them.

11. Don't be in a hurry to rush into other degrees until you understand all you have learnt so far. You may now be *invited* to join other degrees, hence this caution.

12. Should you wish to learn more about Masonic Charities, and perhaps qualify as a Steward, the Charities Representative, or any senior officer of the Lodge, will be only too glad to explain them.

13. Should you be a visitor at a Lodge, and be called upon to reply to the visitors' toast, don't criticise the working of the Master or his officers. "Enjoy" the ceremony (good or bad

according to your views it may be), but it will be carried out with sincerity and that is what really counts.

14. When giving Masonic salutes in Lodge, give them with precision, bearing in mind their symbolic references. Never use or *imply* any Masonic sign outside the Lodge itself, especially when toasting a Brother or at Grace.

15. Don't smoke at the festive board before the Worshipful Master's permission is granted (which normally follows the toast of our Grand Master).

16. Treat the Tyler as a Brother and an equal. He has usually had many years experience in Masonry, and can help you in many of your early problems, and he is an officer of the Lodge though personal reasons may necessitate his acceptance of paid Masonic employment. He is often a Past Master, who, owing to force of circumstances, is compelled to accept assistance but prefers to offer all he can in return.

17. If for any reason you are compelled to give up your active membership, advise the Secretary of the Lodge in writing, asking to be placed on the non-dining List, but state your reasons fully for the request, and he will place it before the Lodge for their consideration. Don't just stay away and ignore all summons and communications, because your subscriptions are mounting up against you, and you cannot join any other Lodge until you have paid all you owe and obtained a clearance certificate.

18. Never resign, if it can possibly be avoided, any Lodge you have joined, and particularly the Lodge in which you were initiated. If in later years you feel compelled to resign a Lodge for reasons best known to yourself, before taking this step consult a senior officer and place your difficulties before him, and act on his advice.

19. (a) Pay your subscription when it is due, and save the Treasurer and Secretary extra clerical work.

(b) If unable to attend a Meeting, send a written apology for your absence.

20. Join a Lodge of Instruction early in your Masonic career, so that when your turn comes for office in the Lodge you will

2006/1493

carry out your duties with confidence and credit to the Lodge and yourself.

Freemasonry will be for you largely what you make it. The more you put into it the more you will get out of it, and this is not meant in a financial but a Brotherly sense. What is required to-day is not more men in Masonry, but more Masonic ideals in men.

Copyright Worcestershire Masonic
Library and Museum Trust