

2006/1517

Brethren, tonight I have been invited to talk about Masonic Etiquette, so where should we begin:- An old Post-Master writes "Freemasonry" conveys its own meaning and scope; but 'Etiquette' is intended to be understood, not only in its somewhat restricted signification - namely, 'the social observances of good breeding' - but also in its wider and more comprehensive meaning, as 'regulations as to behaviour, dress, etc. to be observed by particular persons on particular occasions; forms which are observed in particular places.

In accordance with its wider interpretation of the word 'Etiquette', many duties and details not provided for in the Book of

Constitutions, as in the Ritual will be considered.

Let us first look at prospective members.

Who are fit and proper persons to be made Masons

This is a very important question, and should

be carefully considered before the ~~admission~~

Initiation of the candidate, as it is too late

to discuss it afterwards. The excellent

tests to be applied to the proposed

candidate one whom we would unhesitatingly

admit to our own home, and introduce to

our family circle with confidence.

There is no ambiguity about necessary qualifications,

the answer to the question is just upright & free

men of mature age, sound judgement and

strict morals; and at the time of the

Initiation every candidate should be in

respectable circumstances. He should earnestly hold, a sincere belief in the great truths and secrets of the Universe.

A Lodge of Free masons is a family and ~~it~~ should be ruled as such, the Master being at its Head. In this manner as a family we must have discipline, as without it there will be no happiness just chaos, those of us who have experienced this know it to be true. A Lodge is not a business and every member in respect of position has a part to play. Let us go back to our Forefather, it is his purpose & we as who should construct and guide him. He should be told it is etiquette to come to Lodge properly dressed as per the traditions of this Lodge. Why I say this because is

because there is nothing laid down regarding
dress other than that Brethren may only
wear regalia & jewels appertaining to Craft
and Royal Arch. There is actually no
official regulation regarding black tie
and dark dress. Up to the early 1800s
Brevets of various colours were worn, and
in the 1800s this changed to evening dress
with white waistcoat & tie. Later this
changed to striped trousers, cut away tail
coat, black waistcoat & black tie. It
is evident that over black tie came &
survived the wearing of dinner jackets in
the early 20th century. I hedge vestually
describes it's own dress, such as old school
badges wearing school tie and service badges
uniform. This however does not alter the

fact that no other jewels should be worn other than those authorized, this necessary follows that no other badges of societies should be worn in lodge. The Junior Warden and Discreet Master should request brethren so improperly dressed to remove such badges at the meeting.

The candidate should not be left alone, even on arrival he should be introduced and made at home. As I have said we are a family and as such our lodge should mean a great deal to us, something not to be taken lightly. The Master & also the lodge appoint Officers to assist in running the lodge, each Officer should carry out his office to the best of his ability, if he asks for

it should be forthcoming, in the same way
any other Officer has no right to tell another
how he should do his job. Hence the
Treasurer is responsible to the Lodge for its
finances, the Secretary is responsible
to the Master in carrying out the correspondence
of the Lodge, and making its official
returns and has no further control over the
Lodge. The Director of Ceremonies has full
control of the Ceremonial of both the Lodge
and Feeding Board of held, and no one
has a right to question him while doing
his duty of with in the Regulations of
Grand Lodge & by laws of the Lodge. He and
his assistant along with the S. W. should
be early at Lodge, dressed and ready
to escort visitors etc into the Lodge

and seat them in their proper place. No P.M. should invite a visitor to sit on the P.M.'s side of the lodge. If there is going to be room then the D.C. should request a visiting P.M. to cross the floor of the lodge prior to the opening. The T.W. should be available to meet ^{or receive} visitors and if necessary prove them. It is not etiquette for the W.M. or his Wardens to enter the lodge prior to proceeding in for the opening. The precepts of the lodge of Instruction and his word there should be had, it is not etiquette for any one to question the precepts.

The lodge committee can only discuss those items put to it by the lodge, and nothing can be approved in committee, but must come back into the lodge for approval. The

minutes book of a lodge committee only records
the business taken place and recommendations
to the lodge. It is the lodge Minutes which
confirm decisions made. The exceptions
being personal details of Candidates and
Petitioners, but the final outcome of these
must be confirmed in open lodge.

Every Bro. is subject to the laws, Regulations of
the Craft as well as the by-laws. When
we are accepted into Masonry we should realize
we are privileged people, and as such a great
debt to the Society which has accepted us,
and should abide by its precepts and Etiquette.
If you cannot attend a meeting you should inform
the Secretary with your reason, and if
an officer the D.C. should be informed.
If you wish to invite a guest you don't just

bring him along, you request the Secretary
to visit him or them on your behalf, and you
should state if you have or have not sat
with him in lodge. If you ignore these formalities
what does your lodge & Treasurership mean to
you? During your Initiation you took an
obligation and you were told certain things.

On your entry we prayed that you might become a
true and faithful brother serving us and that
he may unfold the beauties of his godliness, to
the honour & glory of his most Holy Name. You
swore yourself that you voluntarily offered yourself
for God, and were not influenced by necessity or
other unworthy motives. You made known a sincere
wish to make yourself more extensively serviceable
to your fellow creatures, and that after your
Initiation you would afterwards abide by

the ancient usages and established customs
of the Order.

You were then informed that your progress
in Masonry was according to merit and ability,
no one has right of promotion. A Master settles
his affairs with the exception of the Treasurer
and Secretary only. If an Officer has
any question with reference to his office, he
should see the W.M. his superior official. An
Officer or Bro. has no right to go over the Master's
head to the Secretary to bring a matter up
at committee. The Master will if he thinks
proper mention the subject house of his case
to the court chamber as Officer to appointed
without bringing the case before lodge. If
an Officer is irregular etc, this may be
brought to the attention of the next Master

who may feel he should not go on as stand
still for one year. Likewise although the
Wardens & Past Wardens are eligible to be voted
to the chair, All P.M.'s & Wardens are in the
Ballot, and it is a majority ballot. It is
accepted for the W.M. to say the Bro. is
willing to serve if elected.

As we go through Masses of our obligations
to see that we do not want transgress, and
what are we worth when we do such things,
we have to use our best thought it is contrary
to Grand Lodge. Brethren we are violating
our obligations, don't forget the Warrant of
the Lodge is the property of Grand Lodge they
can demand its return.

Officers of the Lodge should be properly
dressed and this includes wearing an

Officers collar, which is plain blue, is a respect of the rank of the person wearing it. The exception is the master may wear a chain on his collar bearing the names of his predecessors. We have in his badge several of these collars to be changed. In addressing Officers in his badge it is Bro. Secretary, Bro. Stephen etc. But when addressing the person it is Bro. & or W. Bro. etc. The Worshipful Master is only addressed as Worshipful when connected with his Office, and when he visits another lodge (other than Provincial) he should not wear his collar.

It is Masonic etiquette that the only persons who take off their gloves are the Candidates or a Master elect when taking his obligation.

unless the Master requests "All Brethren
present to remove their gloves".

When balloting with a ballot box, with
black & white balls, each Brother should take
one ball of each colour and after the ballot
the box should be taken round again to
collect up the balls. It is a Masonic
offence to show how you ballot.

During any business only one person should
prompt, and if a situation is allowed only that person
should have it. There should be no other

situations on the lodge.

When visiting and signing in
your Office in a lodge is that of your
rank. You are a E.P.; F.C.; M.M.;
W.M.; P.M.; or Prov or Grand RANK.

I have said Masonry is a Society
with discipline, where there are Festive Boards
formality is carried through. It is the D.C.'s
job to see that this is done. Behaviour at
the Festive Board must be in accordance

with the regulations of the Craft. The Wardens
of W.M. chair should never be vacated. The Wardens
should only stand with the Master, he should
sit when he sits. It is not etiquette for
anyone to call the Wardens to stand or sit
other than the Master. Conversation should
be had by all, with conversation with one
another. After coffee has been served it is
not etiquette for a brother to have
the tray and coffee table left on the table. The
Brethren of this Lodge must of course set the
standard of behaviour at the Festive
Board, and here we must look to our
Junior Warden to set such a standard in
his host to the visitors, if he lets
slip, then we must expect visitors to
respond in the same manner, as a result
we have at best a less unbecoming

of a Festive Board, we are not at a club or
stag night we are Brethren at a Masonic
Banquet, and as such our speeches and responses
should be in keeping with the same, but
forget we are dealing with Masonic events.

Copyright Worcestershire Masonic
Library and Museum Trust