

# FREEMASONRY



**Does It  
Concern Me?**

Issued by  
IOWA COMMITTEE ON MASONIC  
EDUCATION, GRAND LODGE OF  
IOWA, A.F. & A.M.

## TO THE FAMILY OF THE NEW ENTERED APPRENTICE MASON

The man of your family has now received his First Degree in the Masonic Order. This will undoubtedly develop some questions in your mind. We hope the following will be helpful.

Sincerely,

(Master) \_\_\_\_\_

(Lodge) \_\_\_\_\_

### YOU MAY ASK . . .

#### DOES FREEMASONRY CONCERN ME?

NO—not directly . . . it's a men's organization, although you may take part in some of its social activities.

YES—indirectly . . . because the new Mason in your family is involved. What affects him is of concern to you!

#### WHEN AND WHERE DID IT BEGIN?

Freemasonry is the world's oldest and largest fraternal organization. Although it has its roots in antiquity, the organization as we know it today began in 1717 in England and was brought to the United States by the early settlers. The first Lodges in the United States were organized in the early days of the founding of our country.

Throughout the world there are approximately six million Masons, over four million in the United States and some 80,000 of them in the jurisdiction of Iowa. There are more

than 500 Lodges in Iowa similar to the one he is joining.

Unlike some other fraternal groups, Freemasonry is not an insurance benefit society but it has many charities. Its charitable functions are not restricted to Masons alone and, although there are many additional facets to its practical charity, our homes and hospitals for the aged, the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, and the Shriners' Hospitals are obvious examples.

## **WHAT DOES FREEMASONRY DO FOR A MEMBER?**

It does far more than can be summarized here. In short, through its teachings, it encourages a Mason to apply to his daily living the principles of brotherly love, relief, truth, temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice.

It does not interfere with duties he owes to God, his country, his neighbor, his family or himself. But rather, by learning to understand, to live and to practice these fundamental precepts, he has an opportunity for self-improvement. It helps a good man become a better man — a better father, husband, brother or son. Many men prominent in local, national and world affairs are Masons.

## **IS FREEMASONRY A RELIGION?**

Masonry is religious in character but it is not a religion.

A book of "Holy Writings" is always open in the center of every Lodge room whenever the Lodge is functioning. (In some countries it may be other than the Bible.) There is no specific religious qualification or restriction for membership in the Masonic Order. An applicant must have a belief in the existence of

God, but Masonry offers no definition of the Supreme Being. No atheist can become a Mason.

Some faiths are opposed to the existence of the Fraternity because they think it is a religion, or because it possesses some "secrets" that cannot be shared, or because they believe that it competes with the church or synagogue. On the contrary, Masonry is not opposed to any religious faith but encourages and strengthens its members' beliefs and participation in their own religions. Many religious leaders are active Masons.

### **"SECRECY?"**

Our new Mason may feel embarrassed that he cannot explain, and you may be disappointed that he cannot share with you, everything about his Masonic experience.

The ritual of the degree work itself, certain modes of recognition and the private concerns of the Lodge are really the only "secrets" of Masonry.

Anything that is printed about Freemasonry may be discussed freely. In your public library are many books about the subject—some are authentic and others imaginative.

Some social functions of Lodges in Iowa are "open" to non-Masons. Attendance with him on these occasions may prove enlightening to you and therefore helpful to him. We hope you will join with us on these occasions.

### **WHAT DOES HE HAVE TO DO?**

The work of Masonry is not frivolous, but serious. The First Degree (Entered Apprentice) has now been conferred upon him. He must be coached in order to become proficient in certain memory work and then will be examined in Lodge on what he has learned. He will not be able to discuss some of this



with you. However, it is permissible for you to help him with that which he will be required to learn from printed materials. The Second Degree (Fellow Craft) is then conferred. Following similar coaching and examination for this degree, the Third Degree (Master Mason) will be conferred and coaching will follow. These three degrees contain all of the fundamental principles of Masonry. Following conferral of the Third Degree he will be eligible to wear Masonic emblems and jewelry.

Participation in other Masonically related groups, such as the Scottish Rite, the York Rite, the Shrine or others, is entirely optional after a certain period of time. Such possible additional activities will be explained to him later.

### HIS ABSENCE FROM HOME

In order for him to progress in the three degrees of Masonry he must learn by word of mouth a certain amount of the ritualistic portion of each degree. Parts of the ritual are never written. He will, therefore, need to spend some time with another member of the Lodge to obtain instruction in the required memory work.

When he finally becomes a Master Mason it is desirable, but not required, that he attend

*Lodge meetings at his time and desires permit.*

*We hope you will encourage him to come*  
the more frequently he attends the more readily he will make good friends whom you enjoy knowing and the more Masonry mean to him. As he learns and lives Masonry, he builds the character and dependability of good citizenship taught Masons.

Most Lodges in Iowa meet once a week. of these meetings each month is a business meeting.

If he does "coaching work" or becomes officer of his Lodge, more time will be requ

of him, however we believe you will enjoy the associations which will come from this work. But whether a member, a "coach" or an officer, a Mason's first responsibility is to his family.

## **AM I SUPPOSED TO JOIN SOMETHING?**

NO—not unless you want to.

YES—if you wish to make application!

There are several groups to which ladies related to Master Masons may apply for membership if they desire. This is entirely optional. If there are children in your family they may find interests in Masonically oriented youth groups whose teachings of patriotism and love of family will please you.

## **HOW CAN I HELP?**

The significance and impact of Freemasonry upon a Mason's life differ for each member of the fraternity. Each one applies its teachings and principles on an individual basis. Masonic fundamentals have survived unchanged over the years and are as appropriate today as they were centuries ago. They are active, applicable, vital and current! Patriotism, good citizenship and love of family never go out of style!

The fraternity welcomes good men into its membership and we believe our new Brother is such a man. His continuing participation in the affairs of the Lodge, coupled with your love, understanding and support, will have real meaning for him. We know that through his association with the fraternity you also will come to feel the warmth of its benefits.

**YES . . .**

## **FREEMASONRY DOES CONCERN YOU!**

Permission to reproduce this pamphlet has been issued to us by the Grand Lodge of California. We gratefully acknowledge their Courtesy.