

DISCOURSE

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“Masonic Etiquette, is it contagious?”

Dear Brothers:

Is this a new way to wear our ring, apron or badges, not really although it may have something to do with it. Etiquette whether Masonic or Societal has certain requirements we as members must use in order to conform with the character of our surrounding.

Etiquette is define as – “rules of acceptable behavior,” “the rules and conventions governing correct or polite behavior in society in general or in a specific social or professional group or situation.” Sounds like etiquette can apply to us as Masons, you know you are right thus the expression **Masonic Etiquette**.

As the title says, “Masonic Etiquette, is it contagious?” Is not, but I sure wish it was. Can you possibly imagine if we all practice Masonic Etiquette and that each and every one of us govern ourselves in a correct and polite behavior according to what a gentlemen’s standard but more importantly as a Brother Mason.

I can imagine things like that and I am sure you can too if you can do two things act as such and dream. Hope that your faith in your Brothers will carry the day with proper education of what is expected of a Mason. Where can we start? Well remember before anything that you belong to a society of gentlemen engage in a noble undertaking in that we are a Brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God.

Let us start with how we dress for a Lodge Communication, because this in itself says a lot about our Lodges and our Fraternity. I know that we say that “is the internal and not the external qualifications of a man” this is what we look at and it speaks about the morality and character of each individual and is entirely true, but is not applicable to our appearance and dress habits.

Back to dress, they way we dress expresses a degree of importance that is place on whatever we are attending, whether it is a department store, hardware, doctor, beach, work, place of worship or Lodge. I know some of us have placed no importance on this matter and maybe they have not put much thought on it. Maybe they like to push the envelope to get attention. Maybe they think is pretentious. Maybe no one has sat down and explained to them the proper decorum that should be the constant care of every mason in a Lodge.

Well Masonic Etiquette calls for us do look, dress and act like gentlemen at all times, it elevates our Lodges, it attracts men of similar thinking, it teaches others how to dress and act like gentlemen since not all of us have received former training in that aspect, but we can learn by emulating those Brothers. For one I am impress when someone speaks of a Brothers and says “he is a Mason and gentleman,” he epitomizes what a Mason should be” or “if you look up Mason and gentleman you will see his pictures.” It would be wonderful if that were said of every one of us. Remember we as Masons are constantly striving for perfection and this one item is equally as important.

So, how do we go about it, changing attitudes is one of the hardest things we have to do, more especially when we have to change ours. Well my Brothers, we have to talk about it, in Masonic Education, passing bylaws in our Lodges, prohibiting Brothers who are members or visitors from participating in the proceedings if they are not properly attire. I know you are already saying that is terrible, we don’t have enough sideliners and we are going to turn someone away. Well my Brother you post the dress code requirements where everyone can see it, you advertize it on the Trestle Board, on your web site. You explain it to the Brother in the most tactful form. “Dress code” is nothing new to our Fraternity it still exists in many places around the world to the point where nothing but Formal Dress or cut away coats are used. We have gotten so sloppy it has detracted from everything we do, from the way we dress, the way we do our ritual, conduct our business, you see that pervasive attitude that infiltrates all we do and we cannot see the tree for the forest. Stand back my Brothers and look in “DO NOT SETTLE FOR LESS” and you will get the best.

Here is another way that a Lodge can assist its members in achieving this goal. No rocket science here, just another inner tube solution. Look at your local Salvation Army, Goodwill, and Consignment Stores, here you will be able to find suits or sports coats for practically nothing and you can have a few sizes in a coat closet and lend them to the visitor to wear while he visits the Lodge. Much like restaurants, which require coats in their dining room, and do not want to turn the customer away. Another way this can be achieved is by asking Brothers to donate these items to the Lodge, or to another Brother in the Lodge. The possibilities are endless like in so many of our situations we find ourselves in, if we just stop and think for a minute or two.

Brothers coming from work, not a problem, he may be able to change at work, or at the Lodge, he can leave a set of clothes at the Lodge for him to change into, or simply bring it the night of the meeting, not too much to ask.

Conduct in the Lodge, wishing to speak, not a problem. Arise unto your feet and wait to be recognized by the Worshipful Master. NEVER speak from your seat is not only improper is highly disrespectful. Another Brother using the floor no problem either wait until he is finish and than stand, or simply stand and wait until he is finish and recognized by the Master. Never address another Brother in the Lodge without permission of the Master, all conversation in the Lodge must be directed through the Master. No loud talking or shouting, no bad language, no disrespect of any kind. After all we are gentlemen and more importantly Masons.

Wearing of the Apron. In Florida, we wear our aprons on the inside of a normal coat; if we are using a double-breasted coat, we use them on the outside. Do not correct visiting Brothers; they are wearing their aprons, as it is their practice in their jurisdiction. Past Masters in Florida, although there is no specific design for a Past Masters Apron in our jurisdiction, two things are clear. One is the Gold trimmings on the Apron or Jewels are reserved for Grand Lodge Elected and Appointed Officers and Past Grand Masters and two is that the apron be in good taste to compliment your station, humility and proper decorum should be your dictates in that selection.

The Masters Hat, this like the apron leaves wiggle room and many times it seems to be pushing the envelope as previously stated reasons explained the situations. So lets use a little common sense. Masonic Etiquette tells us about no straw hat or ball cap, and for those that like to push the envelope this may mean anything goes, but my Brothers remember the usages and customs of our Fraternity, which go back nearly four centuries, so good taste, not wild themes should be the order of the day. Also the funeral services call for a black hat, therefore if you are Worshipful Master and need a hat obtain one that is Black, this way you can use it both in Lodge and in Funeral Services if called upon. No style of cap whatsoever is proper to be worn and always let good taste and manners serve as your rule and guide. Most commonly used coverings are Fedora's, Top hats and Derby's as well as a nice Stetson.

As everything done in good taste, points you out as a mark of distinction. It is not just what you wear but how you wear it that makes a difference. Is not the expensive suit that makes the man, is how he wears it? If he is an untidy and messy dresser no matter how expensive, the suit is he will be just that untidy and messy, but a gentlemen can simply dress smart and neat in any type of suit or sports coat regardless of the cost of the garment.

Decorations and adornments on the clothing of badges and pins should also be use with extreme moderation, the fewer the better to avoid looking gaudy and detract from your clothing and appearance. If your wear an American Flag on your lapel it should be on your left side closest to your heart, this is proper etiquette for wearing the national emblem.

Well good manners or proper etiquette as Masonic Etiquette are long subjects and takes time to learn about them and understand the proper conduct among society and different aspects of clubs or institutions more especially ours.

I hope this has peak your curiosity and causes you to get better informed as well as informing those Brothers close to you. Remember all we are trying to do is improve ourselves in Masonry, be the very best Mason and gentlemen you can be, and help bring others along with you. Let us take the inspiration of raising those less informed in the social practices of proper manners and decorum.

In our politically correct society of today we tend to bring things down to meet those less informed, less educated, less fortunate, dummifying our society down. I say let us take the approach that made this country great and that is to teach those who are willing to invest time by lifting them up to a higher level, where they are better informed, better educated, more fortunate and society as a whole will be better serve when we are smarter, sharper and more productive, and not the other way around.

Respectfully and Fraternaly Submitted, I remain your most humble servant

Jorge L. Aladro
Senior Grand Warden

If you would like to receive, these newsletters make request at email below if you would like to forward to your list of friends you have my permission and thank you in advance.

“My Brothers, the newsletters are intended to be thought provoking, to get you to think creatively, to get you thinking what if?, to dare you to improve yourself and your Lodge.”

Note: If you would, like to have any of these presentations made at your Lodge or District Associations feel free to call.

“Masons always rise to the occasion”

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