

The Lodge Room

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We all know that Lodges are situated East and West or should be, also we have been told about the furniture of a Lodge, about the moveable and immovable Jewels of a Lodge, and where the Lodge should be located. But “What is a Lodge room?”

This question can have as many answers as there are Masons because the Lodge room can mean something different to each Mason. Some consider the Lodge room to be an office where the business of the Lodge is conducted. Some view it as a place to hear about the sick and distressed, and hear the petitions and applications. To some, it is a stage where the degrees are conferred, while other focus on it as the place where they took upon themselves solemn obligations. Some see it as a place to learn more about Freemasonry, and many also see it as a place to socialize.

Let us consider how each view is valid.

The Lodge room is presided over by the Worshipful Master assisted by the Secretary, Treasurer, Wardens and Deacons, like a Board meeting of a business. There we learn about the Lodge budget and its financial health, the receipt and expenditure of Lodge funds, and the status of loans the Lodge is responsible to repay. We hear about requests for contributions, and decide how much to contribute and to whom. We also learn of the plans and programs of the Lodge.

We are given committee reports on the sick and distressed, the repair and maintenance of the Lodge building, and on special projects. We also may receive status reports from some of the other committees appointed by the Worshipful Master. We are given information about the special events that the Lodge is sponsoring or participating in, and there are announcements reminding the members of meetings and other events.

Each member of the Lodge may ask questions concerning the Lodge and expect to receive an answer. However, should research be needed for an answer, the Worshipful Master should give him a specific date when he may expect that answer.

The Lodge is the place we receive petitions from candidates wishing to join the Fraternity and applications from Brethren wishing to join our Lodge. After the proper time has lapsed, and after the Investigating Committee has reported and the petition signers have made their comments, a ballot is taken on the petition. Ballots are also taken on applications, and there is a vote on the proficiency of a candidate's return of catechisms previous to advancing in the degrees.

The Lodge room also is a stage where the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason are conferred. Each member of the degree team is assigned his part to play. As with a theatre production, it should be performed from memory and in a manner that will impress upon the candidate the lessons, principles, and morals that the degree is designed to convey. Indeed, before the second section of the Degree of Master Mason, the Resolution, adopted February 14, 1968, is read

reminding us that the Lodge is to be used as a stage to enact a drama that will impress and forever change the candidate's life.

The Lodge room is the place where we took the solemn obligations that govern our conduct as Masons. Not only are we reminded of these obligations each time we see the degrees performed, but also during the opening and closing ritual at the stated communications. However, we need to carefully listen to heed these lessons. Of course, the principles of Freemasonry are not just to be practiced in the Lodge and with the Brethren; they should improve our conduct in all of our dealings outside the Lodge as well. We are reminded that our obligations extend to all, not just to the Brethren of our Fraternity, and in the charge at the altar at the closing of the Master Mason's Lodge, we are told that these principles are to extend further, every human being has a claim upon our kind offices, do good unto all, especially the household of the faithful.

The Lodge also provides an opportunity to talk with "well informed Brethren" and to learn more about the history, traditions, philosophy, and protocol of the Fraternity. No meeting should end without an educational talk so that every Brother can leave the Lodge knowing more about Masonry than when he first arrived. In addition, some Lodges have book discussion groups and others take the Masonic Leadership and Correspondence courses offered by Grand Lodge in a group setting. Lodges and Brethren can also avail themselves of the various programs and publications found on the Committee on Masonic Education section of the Grand Lodge of Virginia's website (www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org).

Also, of course, since Freemasonry is a Fraternity, the social aspects of the Lodge are quite important. We build long-term relationships with our Brethren and look forward to being with them at Lodge. Indeed, the fellowship at dinner before the meeting or at refreshment after the meeting plays an important role in bringing the Lodge together and in reinforcing the ties that bind us together as Brothers.

So to conclude, we may consider the Lodge room as a very special place where the business of the Lodge is conducted, degrees are conferred, reminders of our obligations are given, Masons learn more about Freemasonry, and fellowship is shared among the Brethren.