

LEADERSHIP HELPER

When it comes to change in the lodge, many leaders fear that change will disrupt tradition or change the ritual. Nothing of the sort is suggested. In fact, from everything we have learned, the ritual is not the problem; having allowed the ritual to become all the lodge has to offer a member - that is the problem. So where can you “safely” begin? The answer is painfully clear. Begin with the fundamentals. Good Fellowship.

However, improving great fellowship in a lodge is no different from planning for an event. You need a plan. Here is a plan for improving the levels of fellowship and friendliness in your lodge. It begins with an assessment of where you are today and uses that information to help you forge a new future.

Background

Men become Masons for many different reasons. However, research clearly shows that making new friends and enjoying the fellowship of the men they meet are high on their list of needs. When they find good fellowship and make new friends they remain active. When they do not, they leave. Good fellowship is the leader’s responsibility together with every man in the lodge.

What Does Fellowship Mean?

More correctly, what does *good* fellowship mean? Clearly, some Masons have lost the meaning because nationwide, Masons seldom give their own lodge grades higher than a C+ when it comes to this fundamental lodge behavior. Rather than focus on the DON’TS, let’s consider a few DO’S.

- Do get your officers into greeting all members.**
- Do plan your meeting elsewhere so you are available for fellowship.**
- Do make sure your newest members get acquainted with their peers.**
- Do discourage groups of the same guys telling the same stories or old jokes.**
- Do plan a mixer activity to get men speaking to one another.**
- Do let the members know what your goals for fellowship are.**
- Do ask your members about the progress you make.**
- Do ask your newest members how they feel.**

Reasons for Leaving

Among the more amazing statistics are those which show that among the 90% of new members who lose interest in their lodge inside of one year, poor fellowship and an unfriendly lodge atmosphere were the two most frequently stated reasons why they said they were not going back.

If we are going to correct this problem we need a plan of action and need to install this plan in our lodges. There are three steps you need to consider:

1. Form a lodge fellowship team and ask them to put together a plan for the lodge with the objective being 100% new member satisfaction with the way they were welcomed to the lodge.
2. Make every member aware of his role in creating a favorable, friendly and warm reception for new members.
3. Ask new members, or existing members, how well you are doing in creating a warm, friendlier climate in the lodge. Use the information you receive to revisit and revise your plan.