

## To Assist the Worshipful Master

The duties of the Wardens are well defined in our Ritual and the practical application of these duties can help create consistent success at your regular stated communications. In the days before and even during the gathering time prior to a Lodge meeting there are often many that need to speak with the Master of the Lodge. This is a time when the Master can demonstrate the care and consideration due to each Lodge Brother as he engages in vital communication with the Brethren. The skill by which the Wardens perform their duties will allow the Master to focus on the needs of the Brethren without worry that the stated communication will proceed in due form.

The word Warden is derived from the Anglo-Saxon to “gardein” which is to guard. This is applied to the concept of protecting interests and supervising under a set of guidelines. This concept of the Wardens guarding over the Lodge extends to watching over the Master, not to shield or insulate, but to allow the Master to perform his unique duties or tasks while the interests for the business of the Craft is under the guard of the Junior and Senior Wardens.

Because the Lodge is at rest when the Brethren arrive at the Temple, the Junior Warden is charged to supervise their conduct and refreshment up to the time when the Lodge is at Labor. The Junior Warden’s duties of ensuring that all refreshment is in good order for the arriving Brethren without use to intemperance or excess serves to lessen any distraction for the Master. Guests from other Lodges are frequently first encountered by the Junior Warden during this refreshment at which time the Junior Warden can make the proper introductions to the Master for his disposition as to investigation or examination.

While the Lodge is at rest the Senior Warden is preparing for the Labor of the Lodge. A proposed agenda for the meeting can then be reviewed with the Master, after which the Senior Warden is able to confirm the business of the Craft for the stated communication and charge others in the Lodge to prepare the physical needs for furniture arrangements and so on. The Senior Warden can then review the business of the Secretary and the Treasurer, any committee reports, any old business, written motions for new business, any other business to be brought before the floor, education programs, and that all the candidates are being properly prepared.

Surprise business on the floor does not usually make for good business, so establishing a pattern of having the Senior Warden place all business on the agenda will allow the Master to be better organized and to make proper preparation for the meeting. In reviewing the business for the agenda, it is also quite possible that some items only need to be referred to committee or otherwise dispatched through other means; it is often found that many of these items do not need to be addressed during the communication.

The coordination of the Wardens and the Master in preparing for a communication also has the benefit of training the Wardens to prepare for the East. The Wardens will have a clearer understanding of how to structure and organize a meeting agenda, and a deeper appreciation for the amount of time the successful Master invests outside of the meeting. As an added benefit this active mentoring format will have the Wardens well prepared to run the meeting in the outside chance that the current Master is absent which allows the interest of the Craft to be fulfilled without disruption. To run the Lodge efficiently even in the absence of the Master is a tribute to his attention to the Craft.