

Masonic Minutes—June Two

Masonic Hosting

One of the hallmarks of our Fraternity is the manner in which Freemasons treat one another and how they regard the world at large. As members of the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God, Masons are particularly admonished to treat one another with dignity, respect, and generosity. What better way is there to display our grasp of this Masonic principle than by practicing the art of being a good host at our Lodges? Several steps can be taken to help your Lodge operate in a manner that will make your membership proud.

First, assign a member of the Lodge to watch for and alert the Worshipful Master prior to the meeting when a guest is present. This could be the Senior Deacon who is charged with the task of introducing visiting brethren. Having the Senior Deacon work in conjunction with the Senior Warden, Junior Deacon and Tiler to identify and inquire of visitors prior to the meeting can prepare the Lodge in advance for properly introducing and honoring visitors and dignitaries. It also provides the Worshipful Master an opportunity to speak with the visitor before opening the Lodge. Brethren from visiting jurisdictions not officially representing Grand Lodges can be afforded several niceties:

1. Being escorted to the altar for formal introduction by the Senior Deacon.
2. Presentation of a Lodge specific button or coin.
3. An opportunity to speak to the Lodge as to what brought the brother to the meeting.
4. An offer to provide an official stamp or the signature of the Secretary on a Masonic Passport.

If someone is a dignitary from a valid visiting jurisdiction, this same list of items can be observed, but it is within the prerogative of the Master to also receive these dignitaries in the East and allow them to speak from a place of honor.

When plans are being made in advance for a Grand Master to visit a Lodge, it would be good to have a parking space reserved for him, and there should be a designated escort prepared to meet the Grand Master when he arrives at the door and then remain with the Grand Master the entire time. This might be the first time a Grand Master has visited your Lodge building and he might appreciate a tour of the Lodge, especially if your Lodge building is large and/or historic. At the meeting, the Worshipful Master should take care to have all Lodge business and other comments completed before the Grand Master is officially received, escorted to the East and provided the opportunity to speak. No one should be recognized or allowed to speak once the Grand Master has officially addressed the Lodge. Once the Grand Master makes his remarks closing the Lodge is the next and last order of business. In some Lodges it is a tradition to ask the Grand Master if he would like to close the Lodge.

The same etiquettes provided for the Grand Master are to be extended to the District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) on his Official Visits. While in the capacity of the official visit, the DDGM is the personal representative of the Grand Master; it is as if the Grand Master is there in person. Proper deference to the DDGM includes offering him to be seated in the East and allowing him to make "final comments" just as you would for the Grand Master.

Practicing the art of hosting and recognizing the honor due to an individual by virtue of the office he holds in the Fraternity or the sense of brotherhood he displays by visiting your Lodge will enrich the time spent within the Lodge. Perhaps even more importantly, it will accentuate the teachings of our Fraternity which admonish us to respect and honor those who are faithful to the larger brotherhood of man, and it will encourage us to practice gracious living throughout all aspects of our journey.