

To the Family of a Mason

A man in your family is now a member of the Masonic Fraternity. This will undoubtedly raise some questions in your mind, and we hope the following will be helpful in answering those questions.

You are now part of a Mason's family, and we take this opportunity to extend our first greeting to you. While you personally have not joined our organization, there are certain things that may be helpful for you to know in the future. At the same time, there are matters of general interest about your Mason and his new organization.

When & Where did it Begin?

The Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons is the oldest, largest and most widely-known fraternal organization in the world. It has its roots in antiquity, and is directly descended from the association of "operative masons," the cathedral builders of the Middle Ages who traveled through Europe employing the secrets and skills of their crafts. The organization, as we know it today, began in 1717 in England when cathedral building was on the decline and the "operative masons" or "free masons," as the known, started to accept as members those who were not members of the masons' craft, calling them "speculative masons" or "accepted masons".

Freemasonry was brought to the North America by our early settlers, and Benjamin Franklin, in an early newspaper published by him, referred to a Lodge of Freemasons being in existence in Philadelphia in 1730. Throughout the world, there are approximately 5 million Masons, with over 3 million of them being in the United States alone as members of Lodges under the jurisdiction of 50 Grand Lodges. Canada has Grand Lodge Jurisdictions in most Provinces and Territories (B.C. is governed by The Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon)

Masonry is not, contrary to common belief, a "secret society," but rather a "society with secrets." If it were a secret society, Masons would not wear Masonic jewellery or publicly mark their many Halls. Masonry does have many traditions and customs which, of course, are known only to its members.

What Does Freemasonry Mean to a Member?

It would be difficult to summarize in a brief space all that a Mason learns through his membership. But briefly, Freemasonry encourages a member to apply to his daily living the broad, general principles of morality. Membership is limited to adult males who can meet the recognized qualifications and standards of character and reputation. Freemasonry does not interfere with duties that a man owes to God, his country, his neighbour, his family, or himself; but rather, by learning to understand, to live o practice the fundamental precepts of the organization, he has an opportunity for self-improvement. It helps a good man become a better man, a better father, husband, brother or son.

The Apron

During the ceremonies of his initiation, each Mason is presented with a white leather apron. It is, to him, an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. It has, in all ages, been cherished by the rich, the poor, the high and the low. It is his for life. He will never receive another one and has, therefore, been cautioned to take it home and instructed in its care. While perfectly satisfactory for him to do so if he desires, he need not bring it to Lodge, as linen aprons are provided for his use in meetings.

It is to be placed upon his waist at his death if he or his nearest living relative so chooses. Its moral application is explained to a Mason during its presentation. Its physical usage is now revealed to you.

Masonic Funeral

Any member who was in good standing at the time of his death is entitled to a Masonic funeral if he or his family requests it. Such a request should be made to the Master of his Lodge who will make the necessary arrangements with the family, the mortuary, and the minister.

A service is authorized by the jurisdiction in which you are located, and consists of participation at the mortuary, the beginning at the mortuary and the closing at the graveside, or graveside only. Pallbearers will be furnished at the request of the family.

In general, the Lodge will do as much or as little as the nearest relative wishes it to do.

Let Us Know



Contacting the Lodge is not a difficult matter. The Lodge Secretary's name appears on all dues cards. If you are unable to contact the Secretary when needed, a call or letter to the Grand Secretary will provide the information.

B.C. info is:

Grand Secretary's Office: 1495 West Eighth Avenue Vancouver, British Columbia V6H 1C9
Canada. t: +1-604-736-8941, f: +1-604-736-5097,

e: grand_secretary@freemasonry.bcy.ca, w: <http://www.freemasonry.bcy.ca>

Illness

In the event our member becomes ill, we want to know. Again, the same method of notifying us can be used as explained above. In the past, members have fallen ill without our knowing it and their loved ones have been displeased with us for a seeming act of disregard, then in fact we have been unaware of the problem. Your Mason has joined an organization who wants to assist him when in need, and we need your help to do it.

Meetings

Lodges meet in regular monthly sessions and on such other days as are necessary to conduct its business and ritualistic work. While every Mason's attendance is solicited, it is not intended that a Lodge should interfere with one's regular vocation or duty to family, God or country.

Your Mason has invested time and money in joining our order and for years to come will be paying annual dues. He can best receive all that is his by frequently participating in deliberations and events.

We hope that you will approve and encourage him to attend regularly, and we hope that you will join us whenever possible.

Title

In the years to come, it is reasonable to assume that at some time while you are accompanying your Mason, someone will address him as "Brother." Brother is neither a sentimental nor familiar form of address, but is a title, a distinction and an honour, indicating that he has been recognized by another Mason.

Brother is a title dating back to ancient times and is used in place of Mister or a similar title to which one is entitled by virtue of his station in life. In Masonry, all men are equal, as no man is regarded for his worldly wealth or honour, and all distinctions are cast away.

Are There Masonic-Oriented Organizations Which Members of the Family May Join?

There are several groups to which ladies related to Master Masons may apply for membership if they desire. But this is entirely optional. If there are children in the family, they may find interests in Masonic-oriented youth groups whose teachings of patriotism and love of family will, we are sure, be pleasing to you.

Masonic Assistance

Across the nation is a network of Masonic Service Association Officers. If, while traveling, dire need of aid should arise, consult the telephone directory of a major city for the number. If none is listed, a local Lodge will be able to make connections for you.

Blood Bank (United States)

The Grand Lodge has established a blood bank and you and your Mason are protected, should the need arise. You are both encouraged to support this program whenever possible. The gift of blood is called the gift of life.

Conclusion

We hope you have found this information helpful, and that it will assist you in better understanding your Mason's role in life. We urge you to save it as a reference whenever questions arise.