



Ensuring the Timeless Vitality of Freemasonry in Ontario

PROTOCOL & ETIQUETTE ESSENTIALS

Prepared by the Grand Lodge P. & E. Committee
Issue No. 33 – January 2015

Greetings from Your P. & E. Committee

Welcome to the first issue of “*P&E Essentials*” for 2015. It is anticipated that these informative and easy-to-read newsletters will be published three or four times a year, normally between January and June.

“*P&E Essentials*” is intended to be an interactive instrument, designed to help you make an advancement in Masonic knowledge. It will hopefully also assist you to achieve high quality in the delivery, comprehension and insight of the lessons communicated on the floor of the lodge. The Committee welcomes questions and/or suggestions for topics that could be addressed in future issues. Questions or suggestions not related to Protocol and Etiquette will be forwarded to the appropriate Grand Lodge Committee for response.

THE PAST MASTER

“Fortunate the lodge which has many

“The rank of Past Master is usually honored by the brethren. Generally it is considered as second in importance only to that of the presiding Master. And he is a wise and good Master who sees to it that the brethren of his lodge understand that “Past Master” is no empty title, but carries with it certain rights and privileges, certain duties and responsibilities, all set forth in the general body of Masonic Law, although differing in some respects in different Jurisdictions.”

- Short Talk Bulletin – Vol. IX January, 1931

In this edition of P&E Essentials, let us reflect upon the protocols and privileges which accrue to the Past Masters in this Grand Jurisdiction.

- In many societies, an office holder reverts to the same status at the END of his term which he enjoyed prior to his term.
- Not so in Freemasonry.

- A lodge member who has held the highest office in the lodge has – for life – a Masonic position of his own.
- It has its own identity and special recognition.
- It carries with it the title of “Past Master”.
- Past Masters have a standing in our Masonic Law and also as conferred by our Constitution.
- Certain duties may be assigned to them.
- In etiquette they are entitled to a deference which is associated with the position they once held.
- In protocol they are entitled to a certain order of precedence.
- However, Past Masters must observe the same rules of etiquette and behaviour toward the W.M. as all other members of the lodge.

PRIVILEGES CONFERRED BY THE CONSTITUTION

Under our Constitution, provided they retain a valid membership in a lodge working under warrant of our Grand Lodge, Past Masters are entitled:

- To the rank of “Worshipful Brother” and the title of “Past Master”.
- To wear the apron of an Installed Master and the jewel of a Past Master.
- While they have no inherent right of membership in Grand Lodge, our Constitution specifically provides they shall indeed remain a full voting member of Grand Lodge after their term as Worshipful Master has ended.
- By resolution of their lodge, to carry the proxy of their lodge to vote in place of the WM and Wardens at any meeting of Grand Lodge.
- To be elected to the office of Worshipful Master, without again serving as Warden.
- To hold the office of Master or Warden in a research lodge.
- With the permission of the Worshipful Master:
 - To rule a lodge – and to do so from the WM’s chair in the East;
 - To deliver obligations;
 - To act as the Installing Master at Installations.

Please share this newsletter with other members of your Lodge – and your Masonic friends

- To be eligible to receive the Grand Honours.
- To attend the entire Ceremony of Installation.
- To deliver any part of the Ceremony of Installation.
- To fulfill the office of Immediate Past Master.
- To be eligible for office in Grand Lodge.
- To be a candidate for District Deputy Grand Master.

WITH THESE PRIVILEGES COME RESPONSIBILITIES

This would be a most appropriate time to remind Past Masters of their responsibilities. In the words of our own Grand Master:

“Our Role as a Past Master: We are naturally proud to have served as Master of a Lodge – a fact which further brings home the responsibilities a member owes to the Craft as a whole and to his Lodge in particular. As a Past Master, we must set the example, especially in the area of the Mechanics of the Work and our Ritual. If we fail to set the example, why should you expect Lodge Officers to do any better? Everything you do and say should be the best possible example of the way the ritual must be done. When you set the example, you help facilitate the results our Work demands. Setting the proper example is one way members will learn to be better officers on their journey towards the East. While a very simple competency on the face of it, none is more important. Setting an example is one way a Past Master can influence the progress of Freemasonry in his Lodge.

“Your lodge, your District and even Grand Lodge needs your extensive experience.

“Past Masters should be training junior members. And Junior members should not be training new members.

“We also need our Past Masters to be the future leaders at the Grand Lodge level.

“Past Masters, it’s critical that you step up and lead, to mentor and educate our newest members and certainly our Lodge officers!”

- M.W. Bro. Donald A. Campbell, Grand Master

SOME SUGGESTED PROTOCOLS FOR PAST MASTERS TO OBSERVE IN LODGE

1. Correcting mistakes in ritual:

A PM needs to be very circumspect when he notices irregularities during any of our degrees and ceremonies. You do not want to negatively impact a newer member’s willingness and enthusiasm for participating in ritual. What matters more than **WHAT** you have to say, is **WHEN** and **HOW** to say it. Offer any suggestions in the

same manner as you yourself would like someone to share them with you.

And remember that it is the WM’s responsibility to “employ and instruct the brethren in Masonry”. Never publicly reproach anyone for a mistake in ritual or protocol. Instead, do so in private, preferably with the WM, after the meeting and in a constructive manner.

2. Mentoring:

Be alert for opportunities to mentor new members. Instead of waiting for them to ask you, why not volunteer your services.

3. Assimilation:

Welcome the newer members into lodge. They must be made to feel they belong, especially if they don’t know more than one or two other members. Follow the exceptional example of the late V.W. Bro. Iain Mackenzie of Georgina Lodge. When a new Entered Apprentice came into the lodge room, perhaps looking around and uncertain what to do, Bro. Mackenzie was known to say to him: “Come sit here beside me. You are at home now, brother.”

4. Lead by example:

Past Masters are “rabboni”, or teachers. You should be aware that newer masons are watching you in lodge and will follow your example. Observe our established codes of dress and deportment. Wear your apron properly. Conduct yourself admirably. And give the various signs and salutes correctly.

5. Prayers:

As Past Masters often serve as Lodge Chaplains, please remember that prayers at lodge functions should be scrupulously in keeping with Masonic teachings. Never should they be an expression of particular sectarian views or dogmatic creeds. It is a matter of courtesy that all prayers, speeches and discussions at Masonic affairs avoid sectarian, controversial or political tones. (This admonition also applies to Lodge Chaplains who are not Past Masters.)

6. Committees:

Committees enable a lodge to function effectively. When a Past Master is invited to lead – or serve – on a committee, he should regard it as an opportunity to further serve his lodge by contributing his experience and expertise – as well as assisting with the development of other committee members.

7. Private Conversations in Lodge:

No brother, especially a Past Master, should ever engage in private conversations or discussions on the sidelines in the lodge, particularly during a Degree. It is rude, disrespectful, irritating and disruptive.

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office@grandlodge.on.ca