



PROTOCOL & ETIQUETTE ESSENTIALS

Prepared by the Grand Lodge P. & E. Committee
Issue No. 13 – June 2011

Greetings from Your P. & E. Committee

Welcome to the latest issue of "*P&E Essentials*". It is anticipated that these informative and easy-to-read newsletters will be published several times a year.

"*P&E Essentials*" is intended to be an interactive instrument, designed to help you make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. 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.

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Committee Members

The current Protocol & Etiquette Committee members are:

Gordon Crutcher (*Chairman*); William Elliott; Dennis Hawman; Terry Hornibrook; Jacques Lacourse Jr.; George McCowan (*Secretary*); Bryan Middleton; Jack Mittleholtz; Richard Morreau; James Pearson; Garnet Schenk (*Editor of P&E Essentials*); Brian Seaborn; David Stevens; and Terrance Van Horne.

With appropriate advance notice – and subject to travel constraints – any member of the Committee would be happy to make a presentation about P&E in your Lodge, or at a District Meeting.

A new step-by-step guide for THE MASONIC MEMORIAL SERVICE

The importance of the Masonic Memorial Service to the Craft cannot be overemphasized. For many people, it is the first and only time they will see a Masonic Lodge in action and experience our Masonic principles in practice.

- If you are one of the dozen or so brethren who will be CONDUCTING a service, do you know where to stand?
- Do you know that all brethren move counter-clockwise at the conclusion of the service?

- If you are simply ATTENDING the service, do you know where you should stand (or sit)?
- Indeed, should you be sit at all?
- If seated, do you know the different points when you must rise during the service?
- Do you know how to give the Funeral Honours?
- Do you know how to deposit the sprig of acacia?
- Do you know what evergreen is usually used in place of acacia, in Ontario?

All these questions – and many more – are answered in a **new educational guide** that has been created by the P&E Committee. You can download a copy of this 22 page guide to the Masonic Memorial Services from several District web sites, including:

1. The Toronto East District web site at:
<http://www.torontoeastdistrict.com/resources/committees/protocol.html>
2. The Toronto West District web site at:
<http://www.torontowestmasons.com/publications.htm>
3. The Ottawa 1 District web site at:
<http://www.ottawadistrict1masons.ca/publications.aspx>
4. The Ottawa 2 District web site at:
<http://www.district2.ottawamasons.ca/10.html>
5. The Hamilton A District web site at:
<http://hamiltondistrictamasons.org/publications/P&E/protocol.htm>

WHY BOTHER TO ATTEND A MASONIC MEMORIAL SERVICE?

The following comments were first published in **The Missouri Freemason**. The author is R. W. Bro. Phil Elam, a member of the Grand Lodge of Missouri A.F. & A.M. (*Editor's Note: R.W. Bro. Elam's stirring observations have been slightly modified to conform to the protocol followed in our Jurisdiction.*)

The only occasion when Freemasons perform ritual in public, dressed in regalia and without dispensation, is for a Masonic Memorial Service. It is at this time that most non-Masons are introduced to Freemasonry – perhaps for the very first time. It is at and during that somber service that most people present will form their opinion and

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

perception of our Fraternity. Not being members of our Ancient Craft, and generally knowing very little about Freemasonry, they are often very curious as to who we are, what we stand for, and what is it that we believe in as an organization.

Conducting Masonic Memorial Services is as old as the Fraternity itself. In the days of Operative Masonry, stonemasons buried their own with great solemnity and reverence. The deceased Brother was a man they had worked with side-by-side for years – perhaps even their entire lives. They extolled his virtues and the contributions he had made to the Craft's work. They spoke of the Eternal Life after death, and the need to perform "good work" toward all humanity throughout the course of a man's life. The entire guild and all of their families turned out in force to mourn their Brother's passing, and to express their sympathies to the Brother's family. This tradition has been carried forward for centuries to our present day Speculative Masonry.

The first thing any non-Mason will observe is the size of the turnout. If it is small, they may conclude that his Lodge did not hold the deceased Brother in very high esteem. Or, even worse, that Freemasons are much too busy with their own private lives and interests to practice the tenets of Charity and Brotherly Love of which we so loudly boast. In other words, they may conclude that we do not practice what we preach. If the turnout is large, the non-Mason is likely to come away with a very different impression of both the Fraternity and the deceased Brother.

Always remember that a Masonic Memorial Service is the final tribute we can pay to our fallen Brother. That it is the appropriate time to thank the Brother's family for allowing him to share his time on Earth with our Fraternity. No, you may not have known the Brother that well personally, but if he was a member of your Lodge, he certainly deserves your presence at his Memorial Service. If he was a Brother, then he is entitled to all of the "rights and benefits" of being a Freemason – and that certainly includes a well-attended Masonic Memorial Service. Attending these services are, in many ways, just as important as attending Lodge meetings – perhaps, even more so, because, as we can do nothing more for our Brother, the Memorial Service is really for the benefit of the deceased Brother's family and friends, and it exhibits our genuine care and concern for one of our own.

For those that may have forgotten, the Masonic Memorial Service is one of the most beautiful pieces of literature ever written. Simple, honest, and straight-forward, it offers each of us an opportunity to reflect upon our own

mortality, and to reaffirm our individual faith in the Great Architect of the Universe. It draws forth its inspiration and words of comfort not only from our Volume of the Sacred Law, but also from many of the world's greatest literary geniuses. No one can listen to our service and not be impacted by the gentle, yet powerful, words that touch the heart of every person present – both Mason and non-Mason alike.

One day, and we know not when, each one of us will be that Brother who has passed from sight. One day, each one of us will have ended our journey in this life. As your then cold and lifeless body is commended to the grave eternal, will you want your Masonic Brethren to be present and among those that mourn you, and to offer comfort and consolation to your loved ones?

As stated in our Memorial service, you can do nothing more of a material nature for the departed Brother. Nevertheless, you can cherish his memory, and offer the tribute of respect and love to the late Brother's memory. Of even greater importance, you can be there to extend our fraternal sympathy to our Brother's deeply afflicted and sorrowing family in their bereavement. We must tell his loved ones, and demonstrate it by our physical presence, that our promises to be true to them are not hollow or empty words. We owe our Brother something, and this may be the very last opportunity we will ever have to repay that debt.

Brethren, if you receive a call from your Lodge or see a Masonic Memorial Notice in your local newspaper, take the 20 or 30 minutes out of your busy lives to make this final act of respect and tribute. No, you may not have personally known the Brother, **but he was your Brother** and that alone is enough to justify making the effort to attend and to demonstrate to the world that we Freemasons do, in fact, sincerely care about each other – both in life and in death.

Each of us will one day cross death's threshold. After spending years in the Masonic Fraternity, how would you feel if most of the brethren of your Lodge were too occupied with their own self-interests to attend your Masonic Memorial Service? How will your loved ones feel about the organization you belonged to for so many years if it cannot even muster more than a small handful of members to stand around your casket?

This is one obligation and commitment that each of us should earnestly strive to fulfill even if we cannot always attend Lodge meetings. Let us demonstrate before the world that we are men who practice Brotherly Love – all the way to the grave's edge.

You can request a direct e-mail subscription to *P. & E. Essentials* from: Gordon@Crutcher.ca