

Development of the Entered Apprentice

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As a novice Master Mason, having completed my third degree only last winter, this is my third visitation (which is a most rewarding experience) and my first opportunity to speak to a lodge.

My interest in the history of Freemasonry led me to express interest in our Lodge Education Committee, and I was soon tasked with the opportunity of making this presentation.

So I set out to find a suitable subject. My Lodge brothers supplied plentiful and excellent material and I also discovered such large quantities of information on the Internet that I was initially at a loss as to where to start. Finally I decided that at this time of year it would be appropriate to focus on the Entered Apprentice and how all masons should be like the apprentice throughout our lives.

It is most important that the development of an Entered Apprentice is given a very high priority in Lodge activities.

It is not enough to bring new candidates into the Entered Apprentice degree; we must continue to nurture his development. It is at this stage that the new Mason's interest is the highest and when Masonry is still very much a bewildering mystery. At this point we can either, greatly encourage and assist his Masonic education, or we can lose him as a productive Mason through lack of interest in his development. One of the key benefits of ensuring that the new Mason is well informed is that he usually becomes an interested Mason which is necessary to help realize his potential as an active Mason rather than sitting on the sidelines.

Also remember that this is not only a great opportunity for the new apprentice to begin his development but also for all masons to participate in the education and learning process.

As a new Master Mason my initial efforts at gathering information left me amazed at how much there is yet to learn and in many ways I still feel the confusion of an Entered Apprentice.

In order for masons to continue to develop, they should always be like the Entered Apprentice in diligently seeking knowledge of Masonry to better understand and practice the meanings and teachings.

In a paper prepared by W. Bro. Byron Hams, 33rd degree, entitled "Why a Life Time Apprentice?", he describes how his travels through Freemasonry took him from an Entered Apprentice through to a Thirty-Third Degree Mason, and back to a life time Apprentice.

He tells us that when he was admitted to the 33rd Degree he experienced the surprise of his life. He was told no more lessons and no more explanations, but that he was to remember a few simple facts and to do one thing, which he stated changed his whole life.

The simple facts given him were:

1. Any man who fails in his duty to God fails mankind and himself.
2. While you live, you should work to secure for all people their rights and voice in government.
3. You must labour to enlighten and teach mankind.
4. To teach the people their power and their rights.
5. To let the enemy of mankind be your enemies.
6. Come to no terms with hem, but complete the surrender of their ways.
7. That even though I have been exalted to the 33rd Degree I would still be among my equals in every Lodge and that all "Worthy Master Masons are my Brothers."

He then goes on to say that the one thing that changed his life was that he was informed that it was not enough to just know or understand the lessons of Masonry, "but that he had to live the lessons." Believing this, he felt he truly would be a 'Life Time Apprentice.'

I would like to leave an Entered Apprentice with the following reminder of his responsibilities, for they are the basis he should use to guide his development as a Mason:

- An Entered Apprentice must keep secret everything entrusted to him.
- He must conduct himself with proper decorum.
- He must work diligently to learn his proficiency and as much about the Craft as possible.
- He should not be content with learning the words letter-perfect, but should study the meanings as well. If he cannot interpret these for himself, he should seek help from others.
- Among the most important and lasting of his responsibilities is complete faithfulness to his Obligations and implicit obedience to the Charges.

In this early stage of development you are now entering, the work is not easy to understand and you should not be content with the letter and outward form, but rather you should apply yourself with freedom and zeal to achieve the sincere understanding of Masonry and how to practice it in your everyday life.

Don't be shy about seeking assistance from your brothers as they will always be more than willing to help and in many cases they will share in the learning. Never forget that this should be an ongoing state of mind and you must truly become a Life Time Apprentice.

Masonry is not only sharing fellowship, but is a course in self-improvement. It assists us to discover where we are and to know where we want to go.

I would like to leave you with one last thought: Self-learning is an important part of a mason's development and I would encourage all masons to surf the Internet. By simply entering "Masonic education" as an entry search term, you will find it leads to numerous papers and many other sources of information.

Also, there are extensive library sources, even in small Lodges. The information is readily available; all you need is the interest and the inclination to search it out.

By: Bro. Roy Jupe, Victoria Lodge #13; Presented to Redwood Lodge #193, GRA; as required by Beaverhills District Perpetual Calendar.