

Entered Apprentice Degree

As you have taken the first step in Masonry, you are now called an “Entered Apprentice.” I hope you will never forget your experience of your First Degree. A degree in Masonry is not an isolated event, but it is a continuing privilege. Your possession of the degree is complete; you can continue to enjoy it as long as you live; and the more you study it, the more it will mean to you. The word “Apprentice” means “Learner” or “Beginner,” one who is taking his first step in Mastering a Trade, an art, or a profession. In the Operative Stonemason guilds of Scotland a man worked as an apprentice until he was admitted to or “Entered” the Lodge. This title acknowledged the change of his status.

The term “Lodge” refers to a group of Masons with a Charter or Warrant legally empowering them to reinforce the principles of Freemasonry. The Lodge is the individual local organization of Freemasons. Therefore a Lodge is a certain number of Masons who meet, not the place where they meet.

There are five elected officers of a Lodge, and they are:

- The Master, who is seated in the East;
- The Senior Warden, who is seated in the West;
- The Junior Warden, who is seated in the South;
- The Treasurer, who is seated on the right of the Master;
- The Secretary, who is seated on the left of the Master;

There are eight appointed officers of a Lodge, and they are:

- The Lodge Education Officer, who is seated to the immediate left of the Master;
- The Chaplain, who is seated on the immediate right of the Master;
- The Senior Deacon, who is on the right in front of the Master;
- The Marshal, who is seated on the left in front of the Master;
- The Junior Deacon who is seated on the right of the Senior Warden;
- The Senior Steward, who is seated on the right of the Junior Warden;
- The Junior Steward, who is seated on the left of the Junior Warden;
- The Tyler, who is seated outside the door;

In December of each year an election of officers is held by secret ballot. Each elected officer is selected separately beginning with the Master, then on to the Senior Warden and so on. In order to be elected Master of a Lodge a Mason must first have served as a Senior or Junior Warden. The incoming Master then appoints the remainder of the officers.

Entering or retiring from a Lodge while it is at Labor

If you arrive at a Lodge Communication after it has opened the Tyler will announce your arrival to the Junior Deacon, who then informs the Master. You will then be instructed to go to the west of the altar facing the Master, and salute with the penal sign, and then take a seat. Of course, making square corners as you walk in the Lodge Room.

When retiring from a Lodge while it is at Labor you will, again making square corners as you walk, advance to the west of the altar and salute the Master before you leave. Also when addressing the Master in open Lodge address him with his title, salute, and then continue your statement.

Sometimes the Master, if he is busy, will direct the Brethren to advance to the Senior Wardens Station and to salute the Senior Warden when entering or Retiring from a Lodge of Masons.

Except during degree work no one is to walk between the Master and the Altar when the Lodge is at labor. The theory is that the Master receives Light from having the Three Great Lights of Masonry always within his view, so it is a courtesy to the Master not to obstruct his view of the Great Lights.

Finally there is no dress code in most Masonic Lodges, but the manner of dress should always be tasteful and respectful.

Summary of the Entered Apprentice Degree

The candidate is a voluntary applicant for membership in the Lodge. He comes of his own free will, and accord, and he knocks at the door of the Lodge to seek admission so that he may begin his search for the Light of Divine Truth. The three degrees represent Youth, in the First Degree; Manhood, in the Second Degree; and Age, in the Third Degree.

On entering a Lodge of Entered Apprentices the candidate is required to profess his "Trust in God," thus repudiating and tendency to infidelity, polytheism, or pantheism. He is peculiarly clothed in keeping with the ancient mysteries of the order into which he is about to be inducted. The term Candidate by the way comes from the Latin word Candidatus, which means clothed in white. From the color of his Robe or Toga Candida, he was called Candidatus from whence comes the word Candidate. The derivation of this term will serve to remind the Mason of the purity of conduct and character, which should distinguish all those who are candidates for admission into the order.

The entire ritual of this degree is a preliminary revelation of the internal structure of the institution, and the symbols of the degree are profoundly significant and instructive. The Candidate is told that the Lodge Room itself is a symbol representing King Solomon's Temple. He is also taught that the Lodge is supported by three great pillars, i.e. Wisdom, Strength, and beauty, which are represented by the Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens.

In properly comprehending "What was done unto him," the course of his movements around the Lodge Room, the significance of all of the symbols of this degree, and the lecture of the degree, the Entered Apprentice Mason comes to realize that he has begun a noble pursuit for Divine Truth.