

**Talking points on Freemasonry by W.B Jed Hejda, Grand Tyler**  
expanded by Ed Halpaus, Grand Lodge Education Officer

**Freemasonry is the largest and oldest fraternity in the world. Masonry exists openly in most free countries, encompassing all races and most religions.**

Many of the words used in degree work are old, archaic English. The meaning of these words will become clear as you study and become acquainted with Masonry and its history.

The Three degrees are: Entered Apprentice (first degree = 1°), Fellow Craft (second degree = 2°), and Master Mason (third degree = 3°).

The Lodge room is ritually a representation of King Solomon's Temple. Directions often referred to in Lodge are East, West, and South. These are the Stations where the principal officers of the Lodge sit. The directions are not always true points of the compass, but represent the directions ritually inside the Lodge Room.

**The Master** – Sits in the East, and is referred to as “Worshipful Master.” The term “Worshipful” comes from Old English, meaning honored, or greatly respected. The Jewell of his office is the Square. Three steps lead to the place his chair is positioned, and is called his “Station.” The Master wears a hat – the only person permitted to do so in Lodge, because it is an emblem of authority.

**The Senior Warden** – Sits in the West. The Jewell of his office is the Level. Two steps lead to his station. He is second in line in the Lodge, and acts as Master when the Worshipful Master is absent.

**The Junior Warden** – Sits in the south. The Jewell of his office is the Plumb, or more correctly the “Plumb Rule.” One step leads to his station in Lodge.

**The Apron is a symbol of Freemasonry.** The White Leather Apron received by the newly admitted Mason, while he may choose to wear it during his lifetime, will be worn again after his death. Aprons are worn at all Lodge Communications, and always worn outside of a person's coat or jacket. The Apron is also worn at certain other functions such as Masonic Funerals, and Corner Stone Layings. A Mason's Masonic Lodge will have aprons available for the members of the Lodge to wear at Masonic functions.

**Knocks of the gavel:** The ritual of Speculative Masonry uses One, two, and three knocks to indicate times to stand, or to sit for the officers and members.

**One knock** – Seats all Brothers. During opening and closing it is the indication for the Deacons to rise. It is also the Masters way of getting silence, and closing discussion, or indicating finality of anything taking place.

**Two knocks** – The primary officers of the Lodge rise.

**Three knocks** – All members in Lodge rise.

**Signs and signals** – The Due Guard and Sign are used in opening and closing the Lodge. When standing to address the Master, the Sign is given before you speak. The Sign is symbolic of Masonry's ancient symbolic penalties. When in Lodge, you always walk in straight lines, and use square corners when turning.

**Attitude of Prayer** – When Masons Pray they place their left arm over the right, with fingers extended, touching the shoulders, head slightly bowed. This is called the sign of the good shepherd.

**Labor and Refreshment** – When the Lodge is at “Labor,” the Bible is open and the Lesser Lights are on. When at Labor no one passes between the Altar and the Master. At “Refreshment,” the Bible is closed and the Three Lesser Lights are out. When the Master orders the Lodge to be closed, or to refreshment, remain silent and unmoving until the Bible is closed, and the Lesser Lights turned off.

**Masonry is not a secret society** – It is a fraternal society, which keeps some things private, much the same as other organizations as well as families. There are very few “Secrets of Masonry.” The few that it has, relate to Signs and Words of recognition, and certain portions of the Ritual Work, Voting on candidates, and the business that is conducted within the Lodge. Most Fraternities, and other organizations, have things similar to these, which they want to keep private.

**Don’t be afraid to ask questions about something you don’t understand. Nothing in a Masonic Lodge is said or done to embarrass anyone. Don’t be afraid to discuss Masonry with Friends or Family or with Brothers at Lodge or elsewhere.**

**Be proud of being a Mason and of Masonry.**

If a Man you know asks about, and is interested in Masonry, assist him with his questions to the best of your ability. Remember, that quality of character are of great importance to the Fraternity, and should be to you. Before signing a petition for a Man, be sure that you would be proud to call him **Brother**.