

**T.F.S.**  
**Three, five, and seven**  
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By Ed Halpaus, Grand Lodge Education Officer.  
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**“You will find that Masonry is dignified and inspirational in its manifestation to you who will soon knock at the inner door of the Lodge. It should, and will, play a vital part in all your future life, if you will but open your heart and mind, and let it.”**

Quest Book #1 – Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota

There have been times when I've been asked about how a Mason should be attired for Lodge; recently a Brother asked if I would send out an article I had written on the subject. Well, I couldn't find it, so I thought I'd have some comments on that subject here. In doing a bit of research to refresh my thinking on the subject I found some other things you might also be interested in, so time and space permitting I may include those too.

Which attire to wear deemed as proper when attending Lodge, is a hot topic in many Lodges. Being a hot topic it has caused stress to some Brothers. There are times when one Brother thinks another isn't dressed properly for Lodge, and says so to him or others. (“Once words have been voiced it's not possible to retrieve them.”) Stress isn't a good thing: it can cause real problems from strained relations to illness.

Looking for actual instructions on how a Mason ought to be dressed is tough to find in Grand Lodge Regulations. In my jurisdiction, however, a hint on what to do when dressing for Lodge can be found. In Quest Book #1,<sup>i</sup> which is the very first instructions the newly elected petitioner for the degrees receives from the Master and the Lodge. The instructions on how to dress are good for a candidate to know, and, I think, also good for all Masons to keep in mind as they prepare to attend Lodge, here they are, the emphasis is mine:

“Lustration, or the washing with water, was a rite practiced by our ancient Brethren, before any act of devotion. It symbolized the dissolution of past error and transgression, in preparation for the beginning of a new life phase.” “As you bathe, cleansing your body before you come to your initiation, think of the laving water as a symbol of such purification. Put on your freshest linen. Come as a suppliant.”

“Search your heart before you go to your investiture. Is there aught of hate, envy, meanness of spirit there? If so, do all that lies within your power to be rid of it. If you have any misunderstanding with any man, which can be corrected, do what you can to set this aright before you enter the Lodge.”

There is much to think about and learn in those two short paragraphs. To me it seems reasonable to do our best to come to Lodge with a clean heart and body, to come with a pleasant outlook eager and happy to spend time with our Lodge Brothers, to do our best to leave the work-a-day world outside of the Lodge building, and certainly outside of the Lodge

Room. Also we should be dressed in our freshest linen. “Freshest Linen” is what a Mason should wear to Lodge. <sup>ii</sup>

Freemasonry does not dictate a certain kind of clothes to wear. As illustrated in Quest Book #1 it simply says we should wear our freshest linen. There are some Lodges where the custom, or possibly the Lodge by-laws, will dictate that members and visitors dress according to a certain ‘dress code’; if that’s the case that’s just fine. I personally know of only one Lodge in my jurisdiction where there is a custom or a certain ‘dress code’. I like attending that Lodge; I have such a fine time there; it’s a Traditional Observance Lodge, and everyone attending wears either a Tux or a dark suit. All visitors are informed of the dress code before they arrive, so it’s not a surprise to anyone.

In the other Lodges I’m familiar with Masons come dressed as they prefer. Most Lodges are eclectic in attire, as is the male population, so it’s natural to see the Masons wearing a variety of clothing when they attend their Lodges. Getting back to Fresh Linen, the natural question to ask ourselves is, how fresh is the linen (clothing) I’m intending to wear to Lodge?

One of the complaints I have heard voiced quite a bit is that there are Masons who come to Lodge still wearing their work clothes. Some ‘work clothes’ are easier to spot than others. Some men don’t own a suit or a tux, or if they have them, they prefer not to wear that kind of clothing, and do it only when they must.

One Mason who, as a result of an illness, could no longer wear his ‘good’ clothes, so he came to Lodge in clean bib overalls with a clean shirt: Contrast this with another Mason; One who did not have the same physical problem, and wore a suit and a tie to Lodge, but who wore suit and a tie everyday in business, and who would be working right up to the time he got into the car to drive to Lodge: When these Brothers show up at Lodge if comments were made on how each of them were attired, who would the favorable or unfavorable comments likely be about? A question may come to your mind, ‘irrespective of the other things mentioned in the quoted paragraphs above, who wore the freshest linen’?

As I mentioned above, some Masons commenting,(verbally and non-verbally,) on their opinion on how another Mason should dress for Lodge is something that can cause stress; stress is not a good thing, and a Mason should not experience stress when he attends his Lodge. Another thing mentioned in Quest Book #1 is, “To a Mason his Lodge is his Masonic home.” Being his home and the home of his Brothers he and they should all dress in their freshest linen, and come into the Lodge with an open accepting mind to enjoy the fellowship afforded by Masons assembling for enjoyment and for the learning that can and ought to be a part of every Masonic Communication.

**“Do not be ashamed to have a quiet period in the privacy of your own room, before you leave home. In your own way, ask God's blessing on this undertaking into which you are about to enter. Thank Him for this privilege, which is Yours – a free man in a free land. Ask that He may grant you understanding and perception, that in your new association you may experience a true rebirth of all those high ideals, which mark a good man and a useful citizen.”** Quest Book #1 – Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota

**Words to live by:** “Language is the apparel in which your thoughts parade before the public. Never clothe them in vulgar or shoddy attire.” George W. Crane

**From the Great Light of Masonry:** "Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity, and clothe yourself with honor and majesty." Job 40:10

Please remember: if you would like to participate in the latest Masonic Monday Question, please go to <http://www.lodgebuilder.org> and click on the Lodge Education forum. When you have an answer send it to [masonicmonday@gmail.com](mailto:masonicmonday@gmail.com) the Masonic Monday Question for the week of 11/22/10 is: ***What is regarded as the most important word in Freemasonry?***

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**"If you will so approach Freemasonry, you will find it everything that you have anticipated – and more."** Quest Book #1 – Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota

A new Education Video has been uploaded to You Tube, it can be viewed at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/glmned>

T.F.S. & Masonic Matters can also be read on Ed's Face Book page;  
<http://www.facebook.com/ed.halpaus> - <http://halpaus.blogspot.com> - <http://www.mn-masons.org> - <http://sites.google.com/site/edsmasonicmatters/>

With "Brotherly Love",  
Ed Halpaus  
Grand Lodge Education Officer

**Seek to mentor a Brother Mason:  
It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!**

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.mn-masons.org/sites/mn-masons.org/files/3572.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> There are a couple of places where one can get dress clothes that can be washed as opposed to going the Dry Cleaners: One is Covington Brand Clothing sold at Sears, and the other are some of the Dress Chinos from L.L. Bean