From the ceremony of installation of the Master of a Lodge:
“*The book of constitutions you are to search at all times. Cause it to be read in your Lodge, that none may pretend ignorance of the excellent precepts it enjoins.*”

Q. How many communications may a Lodge hold on the same day?

The answer can be found in the Minnesota Masonic Code, 2002 revision published May 10, 2002, in section C9.18 [c]

**A.** A Lodge may hold Two (2) communications upon the same day without dispensation from the Grand Master, providing that one (1) of said communications is a special communication called for the sole purpose of examining candidates as to their proficiency in a preceding degree, or a Lodge of Sorrow, or a communication called to conduct a Masonic funeral service of a deceased Brother; otherwise no more than one (1) communication shall be held on the same date without dispensation from the Grand Master.

All applications for dispensation to hold more than one (1) communication of a Lodge upon the same day must be by a vote of the Lodge upon a motion setting forth the emergency requiring it, the degrees to be conferred at such communication, the length of time which has elapsed since conferring the preceding degree upon any candidate to be advanced at such communication and the exact number of communications to be held on the same day. This application must be signed by the Master and Secretary, under the seal of the Lodge.

The Lion’s Paw, or Strong Grip: It is a mode of recognition and so called because of the rude resemblance made by the hand and fingers to a lions paw. It refers to the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Traduce: To expose to contempt or disgrace. To speak evil of, maliciously and falsely, slander, calumniate, or malign.

**The Five Points of Fellowship**

There have been ritualistic references to the five points of fellowship in Freemasonry dating back to the early 18th Century and it is thought by Masonic Scholars that the five points of fellowship came from the pre-Grand Lodge era.

Over the nearly three centuries since the founding of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 the references to the points of fellowship have varied somewhat. There were sometimes five and sometimes six points and they were explained a bit differently as the 1700’s wore on.
For instance, in the *Edinburgh Register House, MS* of the early 1700’s is the following question and answer: [spelling as found in the manuscript]

Q. “How many points of the fellowship are ther?”
A. “Fyve viz foot to foot, knee to knee, heart to heart, hand to hand, and ear to ear.”

*A Mason’s Examination*, published in 1723 says:

Q. “How many points be there in fellowship?”
A. “Six; Foot to Foot; Knee to Knee; Hand to Hand; Ear to Ear; Tongue to Tongue; and Heart to Heart.”

There are other references, which were published as exposures of the ritual over the years, such as: *The Grand Mysteries of Freemasons discovered* – published in 1724, *The Whole Institutions of Free-Masons opened* – published at Dublin in 1725, *The Grand Mysteries Laid Open* published and circulated in 1726, and finally for our purposes here “Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected* of 1730, which in general more nearly resembles the Masonry as we know it today, and has the following questions and answers:

Q. “How was Hiram raised?”
A. “As all other Masons are, when they receive the Master’s hand.”
Q. “How is that?”
A. “By the Five Points of Fellowship.”
Q. “What are they?”
A. “Hand to Hand, Foot to Foot, Cheek to Cheek, Knee to Knee, and Hand to Back.”

In our Grand Lodge the five points are Foot to Foot, Knee to Knee, Breast to Breast, Hand to Back, Cheek to Cheek or Mouth to Ear.

The Five Points of Fellowship as explained by the Master in the third degree serve a double purpose in instructing in fraternal duties, as well as forming a mode of recognition. [The instructions according to the ritual can be referenced in the book of the esoteric work put together by the Board of Custodians, and published by the Grand Lodge of Minnesota]

Here are some additional offerings of the symbolism of the Five Points of Fellowship.

Foot to Foot: “We should never halt nor grow weary in the service of a Brother Mason. Some of the old lectures of the 1700’s & 1800’s taught that indolence should not permit the foot to halt, or wrath to turn a Masons steps away from helping a brother. A Mason should forget injuries and selfish feelings, remembering that man was born for the aid of his fellow creatures, not just for his own enjoyments. A Mason should be swift to extend mercy and benevolence to all, but more especially to a Brother Mason.

Knee to Knee: In a Mason’s devotions to the Great Architect Of The Universe he will seek forgiveness for some of his past actions, and strength for the future, whatever it may hold. The Mason is taught that in these devotions he should join his Brothers name with his own, it is his duty to do so, as it is his right to be included in the devotions of his Brother. “The knee is directed to be bent in intersession, not for ourselves alone, but for the whole household of our Brethren.”

Breast to Breast: Brother and Dr. Oliver in quoting an old ritual says; “A Mason’s breast should be a safe and sacred repository for all your just and lawful secrets.” It’s true that the secrets of a Mason, confided as such, should be as inviolate in the breast of him who
has received them as they were in his own before they were confided. Whether a secret is received from a Mason or from someone else, no man of honor is permitted to reveal a secret, which he has received under the pledge of secrecy. Brother Albert G. Mackey asserts, however, that it is absurd, and a false premise, to assert that a man, be he Mason or not, is bound by any such obligation to protect the criminal from the vindication of the law. He concludes and advises that it must be left to every man to determine by his own conscience whether he is at liberty to betray knowledge of facts with which he could not have become acquainted except under some such pledge.

Hand to Back: Freemasonry borrows symbols from many sources, thus the hand to back. In many of the ancient mysteries the hand, especially the left hand, was deemed a symbol of equity while the right hand is deemed a symbol of fidelity. From the back an important lesson is derived which is developed in the ritual of the third degree. In reference to this symbolism Brother Dr. Oliver says; “It is a duty incumbent on every Mason to support a Brother’s character in his absence equally as though he were present; not to revile him behind his back, nor suffer it to be done by others, without using every necessary attempt to prevent it.” Brother William Hutchinson also adds about this symbolism; “The most material part of that brotherly love, which should subsist among us Masons, is that of speaking well of each other to the world; more especially it is expected of every member of this fraternity that he should not traduce his Brother. Nothing can be more vile than to traduce a man behind his back; it is like the villainy of an assassin who has not virtue enough to give his adversary the means of self defense.”

Mouth to Ear: Masons are taught to whisper good counsel into the ear of a Brother and, to warn him of approaching danger. Brother Francis Bacon says; it is a rare thing except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given that is not bowed and crooked to some ends, which he hath that giveth.” It is an admirable lesson that Masonry gives to use the lips and the tongue only in service of a Brother. The ear is one of the three jewels of a Fellow Craft. In the Hebrew Language the verb shemong, signifies not only to hear but also to understand and obey. In explaining parables and allegories it is said that he who hears the recital of allegories should endeavor to discover their hidden meaning, and be obedient to their teaching. This is the true meaning of the listening ear, which admonishes the Fellow Craft not only should he receive lessons of instruction, but also that he should treasure them in his breast, and ponder over their meaning and carry out their design in his daily life.

References for T.F.S.

Coils Masonic Encyclopedia
Encyclopedia of Freemasonry – Mackey
Minnesota Masonic Code
The New Century Dictionary
Minnesota Masonic Manual

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.