

Guarding the East Gate

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We always talk about guarding the West Gate, but we never talk about guarding the East. I am not saying the Brother taking the chair of Worshipful Master is of bad report. Nevertheless, do we know him? Is he truly ready to lead the Lodge and understands his duties as Master and the Law of our Grand Jurisdiction? Can he make the calls or visits to the Brethren or families of the sick or when they move to the Celestial Lodge above? These are crucial and consequential duties. With Annual Stated meetings coming in the next couple of months, these concerns should be acknowledged by the Brethren and the incoming Worshipful Master. In the Installation, the Brother to become the Leader of the Lodge obligates himself to ancient charges and regulations, but there is more to the position.

Before becoming a Worshipful Master, the Mason must be well prepared. It is necessary to be well-informed of all duties pertaining to the chair to enable him to be exceptional in the distinguished office he wants to attain. To be confident of one's abilities and carry out the responsibilities prescribed without issue. The Worshipful Master is carefully selected for the role and is groomed for the chair during his tenure as Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and other Masonic positions.

Not every Freemason will attain the title of Worshipful Master. Those who choose to work hard and are found and deemed worthy will come to the office. The Worshipful Master

knows to assume the "servant of the Lodge" position, not to assume that he is to be served by the Lodge. The Worshipful Master is the Lodge's Leader, Teacher, and Mentor. The following are the duties of the Worshipful Master:

1. Represents the Lodge at the Grand Lodge
2. Is responsible for scheduling Lodge functions
3. Performs Degree and Ritual work
4. Updates the Lodge By-Laws as necessary
5. Oversees the financial issues of the Lodge as necessary
6. Takes time to learn various Masonic allegories and symbols, and he shares his knowledge with others as necessary
7. Educates the Brethren
8. Delegates' duties to Lodge committees
9. Is responsible for the Trestleboard communication
10. Oversees the maintenance of Lodge regalia

The exemplary Worshipful Master exhibits the following during his tenure:

A living force: The exemplary Worshipful Master must live an honorable Masonic life so that the Brethren see him as a strong living force and figurehead that all can see as a role model.

The Master's Hat: The exemplary Worshipful Master must be humble. He must realize that the honor belongs to the hat, not the person wearing the hat. He must never think of himself alone and of honorable duty to the brethren alone.

Dignity and respect: The exemplary Worshipful Master brings dignity and respect to the office.

Honorable person: The exemplary Worshipful Master is an honorable person that takes delight in behaving with honor when discharging his duties.

Knowledgeable person: He gains knowledge of Masonic literature and recommends the right books for Brothers in the Lodge.

Tireless worker: The exemplary Worshipful Master serves the Lodge tirelessly. When the Lodge calls, the Worshipful Master gives no thought to his rest, personal engagements, recreation, or social engagements. The Worshipful Master puts the need of the Lodge above his needs. He puts the Lodge above all other things apart from his God, family, and work.

Punctual person: The exemplary Worshipful Master is always punctual and never late to meetings in any circumstance. He is not someone that wastes the time of other Brothers. He values time the same way he values the Lodge's money.

Peaceful person: He promotes peace and harmony in the Lodge. The exemplary Worshipful Master relieves tension in the Lodge and brings together Brothers that have issues with each other. The ideal Worshipful Master avoids having issues with any member as he is a friend to every Brother, officer, and Past Master in the Lodge.

Finances: He promotes the financial well-being of the Lodge. He ensures that the Lodge is better financially than when he met it. He maintains the Lodge so that he spends less money and gets optimal value for every penny spent. He understands the Lodge's financial status and account balance well, and he keeps good records.

Grand Lodge Liaison: The ideal Worshipful Master is a liaison with the Grand Lodge. He pays attention to his duties in the Grand Lodge. He attends Grand Lodge meetings, votes, participates actively in deliberations, and does all he can to see the Jurisdiction progress.

Exciting and relevant meetings: The exemplary Worshipful Master holds interesting Lodge Meetings. He works hard to organize events and arrange exciting programs that benefit everyone in the Lodge. He understands that the primary ritual degree is interesting, and he provides education and instruction to his brethren.

Masonic education: The exemplary Worshipful Master provides sound instruction and education to the Lodge. He ensures that no brethren leave Lodge meetings without having gained a better understanding of Freemasonry through his words, acts and conduct.

Preparation for leadership: The exemplary Worshipful Master prepares other Brethren in the Lodge for when they ascend the east. He helps them learn as much as possible about Freemasonry.

Comfort: The exemplary Worshipful Master plays a considerable role in comforting members of the Lodge who are going through one thing or the other. He tends to the ill and the ones going through moments of sorrow.

A person of balance: The exemplary Worshipful Master is a person of balance. He is fair to all and acts as a balance wheel.

Masonic ritual: The exemplary Worshipful Master carries out well-thought-out degrees and rituals. He teaches candidates about ritual work and what they mean. In doing so, he ensures that they become faithful and well-enlightened brethren.

A fair person: The exemplary Worshipful Master is a fair person. He rules impartially and justly. He understands that justice must be tempered with kindness and mercy.

Acknowledge his limitations: The exemplary Worshipful Master must acknowledge his limitations and work within them.

Seek counsel: The exemplary Worshipful Master must seek counsel and advice where necessary.

Policies ahead of details: The exemplary Worshipful Master must be focused on policies ahead of details.

Suggestions: The exemplary Worshipful Master must be ready to listen to suggestions and wise enough to follow only those suggestions that are appropriate.

Enthusiastic person: The exemplary Worshipful Master must be an enthusiastic person. He must be enthusiastic about his duties.

Skilled delegator: The exemplary Worshipful Master must be skilled at delegating tasks. He must realize that he cannot do everything on his own. Must delegate details to committees and request reports at meetings. He requests their issues, findings, and determinations for him and the other Brothers. Delegation is necessary for his job to become manageable. If he does not delegate well, his job will be unmanageable, and he will be tired, overburdened, and unhappy.

Our leaders must possess imagination and leadership standards. The Lodge needs to know what to expect from those who guide them. The membership has a right to know what the leaders are thinking.

Ask:

What are their goals and objectives?

What do they want to accomplish while in office?

What are their ideas?

Are they just carbon copies of those who have gone before them, or do they possess the abilities necessary to move our Fraternity forward?

A Master's leadership means being able to move men's hearts and make them proud of their Masonic membership. It is being able to motivate men to action and getting Masons to stand proudly and demonstrate their enthusiasm for the Fraternity.