

Taking Care of a Brother in Need

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Masonry teaches us to be charitable not only to a Brother but to all people that need our help. This is reflected in the charge at the closing the Lodge, "Every human being has a claim upon our kind offices".

But, before we get to that point in our Masonic profession, we start as Apprentices and we are taught in our first lessons, when we are admonished to be ever ready and willing to relieve a creature in like destitute condition.

We can follow along on our Masonic journey to when we are taken from the Apprentice to the journeyman Mason as a Fellow of the Craft to "help, aid, and assist". These are striking lessons when we start our journey and when we test to be the master craftsman and make our "Master's Piece" proving we are the artisan Mason, we again pledge to help aid and assist, while adding widows and orphans.

Coming full circle to the first instance, we close each Master Mason's Lodge charging each other to aid each other and the whole of human kind.

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As stated, we should be charitable as we often hear in the charge, "Faith, Hope, and Charity, but more especially that Charity which is the bond of peace and the perfection of every virtue."

Taking the above, we need to look at our *Virginia Methodical Digest*. We should help a Brother but we are allowed some leeway especially if that Brother in need is contagious. In our Methodical digest we have the following:

"A member of a Lodge cannot be required by the Lodge or by the Master to attend upon a sick Brother, but should be always prompt to render such service voluntarily whenever occasion requires, so far as may be in his power."

We should also look at the Book of Constitutions for Masonry for guidance because it provides the foundations to many of the reasoning that was used in the Methodical Digest. Though we will cover matters that extend beyond helping a Brother in need, it is important to clarify actions toward another Brother.

Though we have often heard all Masons meet on the level and all are equal, we must also be mindful of stations outside the Lodge as well as inside the Lodge. Though we are made from the same stock, and our blood is from the same God, we have distinctions. We should be mindful of those inside the Lodge as well as outside the Lodge, We can look at the following passage from Chapter 2, section 4, subsection 1. *When a number of Brethren happen to meet, without any Strangers among them, and not in a formal Lodge.*

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"No Brother shall derogate from the respect due to another, were he not a Mason. For though all Masons, as Brothers, are upon the level, yet Masonry divests no man of the honors due to him before, or that may become due after he was made a Mason."

Treating each other on the level is meant to treat each other with the same level of respect and not with disdain. Inside the Lodge room we are allowed, withing due process, to speak freely and discuss among each other as intelligent beings, but we should still show respect for the position the Brother has in the community.

In keeping with the point of being on the level, and the charge at our raising on the five points, and in the Obligation, we should we should help a Brother by not slandering him when he needs our counsel by whisper good council in his ear. The Constitutions say the following in Chapter 2, section 4, subsection 5 – *Of Behavior behind a Brother's back as well as before his face.*

"Free and Accepted Masons have ever been charged to avoid all manner of slandering and backbiting of true and faithful Brethren, with all malice and unjust resentment, or talking disrespectfully of a Brother's person or performance. Nor must they suffer any others to spread unjust reproaches or calumnies against a Brother behind his back, nor to injure him in his fortune, occupation, or character; but they shall defend such a Brother, and give him notice of any danger or injury were with he may be threatened, to enable him to escape the same, as far as is consistent with honor, prudence, and the safety of religion, morality, and the state, but no further."

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As good Masons, we should continue to be informed by continually improving ourselves and to be informed, we can start by looking at the Constitutions for guidance and the Methodical Digest that the Master of a Lodge is to uphold. A good way to learn is by taking the Leadership Correspondence Courses. If you start now, you can be assured you will be ready when you seek the signature of the District Education Officer who signs your recommendation to be a District Deputy Grand Master by either taking the Course or being examined verbally.

Bibliography

Dove, J., Read, J. K., Nicholson, T., & Henderson, J. (2010). *Virginia Methodical Digest* (Thirty-Sixth). Grand Lodge of Virginia.