

## **CEREMONY**

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "It is with great pleasure that I welcome one and all to this, our Open Table Lodge to recognize our 25/50 members, Past Masters and our Henry L. Palmer Widows. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, current \_\_\_\_\_ of Henry L. Palmer Lodge #301. It is a great and humbling honor to be here."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*\*\*) "Please rise for the invocation. Chaplain, will you lead us in prayer?"

**Chaplain...** "Gracious Father of us all we thank you for letting us be together this evening. May we receive a greater portion of energy and enthusiasm as a result of our time together. May we find refreshment and joy as we fellowship and feast together."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Senior Warden, have all been seated on your left?"

**Senior Warden...** "All have been seated."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Junior Warden, have all been seated on your right?"

**Junior Warden...** "All have been seated"

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you gentlemen."

(\*) "Senior Warden, will you please explain the meaning of the single table."

**Senior Warden...** "As you entered the banquet room this evening, you may have noticed this small table set for one. Allow me to explain. Masonry is steeped in tradition and symbolism. This empty seat is our way of representing those good brothers that have gone before us. It is draped in white to signify the purity of their intentions in taking up our working tools. The rose in this vase represents the love of those he left behind. The slice of lemon on the plate indicates the bitterness of our loss. The salt is symbolic of the tears shed by those who mourn. His glass is inverted, for he cannot toast with us tonight. The chair is empty for he is not here. Let us pause in remembrance of our departed brethren."

**Worshipful Master** \*\*\* Brothers and friends, please join me in a moment a moment of silent tribute.

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you. Brothers and friends at the table, it is a great pleasure to have you here with us this evening. This evening is intended to provide you with pleasure as well as enjoyment. It is also an evening set-aside for us to remember your greatly valued friendship, your loyalty and your love, without which we would never reach our goals."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, would you please inform our guests as to the history of the Open Table Lodge."

**Brother** \_\_\_\_\_ (MC) - " From time immemorial, Freemasons have enjoyed meeting about a "Festive Board" loaded with the fruits of their labor. Special emphasis was placed on the Summer and Winter Solstice, late in June and and December, which were, and are, St. John the Baptist (June 24th)

and St. John the Evangelist (December 27th). The twentieth century has found Masonry ignoring, and often ignorant of, both the "Festive Board" and the Festivals. Is this as it should be? The answer may be partially revealed in the following recount of the history of the Table Lodge.

Man has been continually seeking some noble purpose to pursue even centuries ago, when life was perhaps more perilous and severe, feasting became a major diversion, as much for social desires as to satisfy the needs of the inner-man.

The feasts which are probably the oldest of all Fraternal repasts were those of the "Mysteries" of ancient Egypt, the so-called "Sons of Light." The oldest of Masonic origin, of which we have any reliable record, were the feasts upon being "Entered" and "Passed" to a Fellow of the Craft. These go back far beyond the records of organized Masonry.

The Masonic desirability of a social dinner is as old as the Freemasonry we know. In 1717, when the mother Grand Lodge was formed to revitalize the Lodges in and around London, one of the reasons given was to revive the Quarterly Communication and to hold the Annual Feast. Many historians claim this annual banquet was the most important move made by the new body. A short time later, the Grand Master directed there be installed the old, regular and peculiar toasts and health's of Freemasons.

Lawrence Dermott, the author of the first "Ahiman Rezon" (*Constitutions of Masonry*), remarked about the Table Lodge: *"It was expedient to abolish the old custom of studying Geometry in the Lodge, and some younger Brethren made it appear that a good knife and fork, in the hands of a dexterous Brother, over proper Materials (food), would give great satisfaction and add more to the conviviality of the Lodge than the best Scale and Compasses in Europe."*

From the idea of the feast, and the desire to promote a greater degree of fellowship and kinship in Masonry, was born the Table Lodge. Both the affection of friends and the love for the Fraternity flourished within its walls. Its Communications were more like a reunion than a Regular Lodge meeting, and it became a center of relaxation, celebration and inspiration of Freemasonry.

The Table Lodge had a most unusual pattern. Its meeting was conducted around the table, and the helpings of food and beverage were served in such a way they did not interfere with the other concerns of the Lodge. There were many toasts and the lusty voices of the Masons rang out with Masonic songs. The Table Lodge was traditionally a tiled Entered Apprentice Lodge, followed by the peculiar ritual used only in a Table Lodge, so all Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts could participate in the fellowship of the Lodge. As all business is usually conducted in the Master Mason Degree, then called to refreshment, at which time all Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts could be admitted and the Table Lodge opened, using the suggested ceremony provided by the Committee on Work.

In our colonial days, the Table Lodge was Freemasonry's greatest asset. It buoyed up the spirit of the colonists who were members of the Craft when they were at their lowest ebb. While the repast was undoubtedly limited and meager, the fervor and zeal were there. Once the Table Lodge was opened, the objects in the room took on a military flavor. Everything that was used changed its name:

Table... Trestleboard; Table-cloth... Standard; Napkins... Flags; Plates... Tiles; Dishes... Platforms; Spoons... Trowels; Knives... Swords; Forks... Mattocks; Bottles... Barrels; Glasses... Cannons; To

"Charge"... Fill-up; Lights... Stars; Chairs... Stalls; Food... Materials; Bread... Rough Ashlar; Red Drink... Strong Powder; Water... Weak Powder; Salt... Sand; Peper... Dust; Mustard... Paint; To Eat... Masticate; To Drink... "Fire" or Discharge Cannon

That the Table Lodge was an enjoyable experience, no one who has read the skimpy records can doubt. Dr. George Oliver, an early Masonic historian, wrote of the Table Lodge in his memoirs: *"Their song appears to have more zest than in privated company, the toast thrilled more vividly upon recollection, and the small medium of punch with which it was honored, retained a higher flavor than the potation if produced at a private board."*

Although alcoholic beverages did contribute to the festivities of the Table Lodge in days long gone, they were not a necessary adjunct. Wine was the libation, but that was changed when the 18th Amendment was adopted, so Masons would not violate the law. Although prohibition was subsequently repealed, Freemasonry did not follow suit. It retained a substitution, mainly out of respect for Brethren who practiced abstinence. Today, fruit juices and punches are used for the toasts. Actually, it is not what the glass contains, but the concept it offers.

The Table Lodge is a heritage of our past, which deserves consideration of revival. It has been stated that "The Table Lodge is the summary of Masonic Doctrine." It prescribed reverence for Divinity and the Moral Law. It strengthened the devotion that Masons held for the Lodge and Country. It increased the unity and fellowship of the Craft.

"In our present day, a Table Lodge is a special evening and dinner, set aside by the lodge. The toasts are given to those who have given of themselves to the improvement and need of others, they may be from the past or present and from any place in the world."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you, Brother \_\_\_\_\_."

(\*) "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, would you please explain the movements of the toast to our guests."

**Master of Ceremonies...** "Ladies and Gentlemen, the toasts are held in this manner: (*Sr. Warden demonstrates and explains.*)

Touch - the right hand reaches to the wine glass.

Grasp - the right hand holds the glass, but does not lift the glass from the table.

Rise to Toast - with the right hand extended, the glass is lifted to the head level of the chin.

To Cause - the glass is brought to the lips.

Taste - drink approximately 1/3 of the wine in the glass.

Sip - drink approximately 1/2 of the remaining wine in the glass.

Toast - drink all the wine that remains in your glass. Do not remove the glass from your lips.

Rotate - the glass is moved away from the lips and extended an arms length straight out to the dead level of the chin. As a group working together, with the arm extended with the glass, first move the glass and arm 45 degrees to the left and return to the center, move 45 degrees to the right then return to the center and stop.

With Honor - the glass is brought to the table with only one sound (hopefully) of the glass meeting the table."

"Worshipful Master, the guests have been instructed."

**Worshipful Master** - "Thank you Brother \_\_\_\_\_."

(\* ) "Senior Steward, cause the wine to meet the line."

**Senior Steward** - "Wine Stewards, fill the wine glasses to the Line."

*(The Steward stands and makes his statement in a loud clear voice.)*

"Those who wish to have wine for this toast, please place your card letters up next to your wine glass, those who do not wish to have wine please place your card letters down next to your wine glass and you will be served a non-alcoholic beverage."

*(The Senior Steward remains standing until all glasses are filled to the line before he answers the Master.)*

**Senior Steward** - "The wine is to the line, sir."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Senior Steward. I wish to make a toast at this time."

(\* \* \*) *(all stand)* "Ladies and Gentlemen."

"The first toast is to our great Nation the United States of America, the Land of Freedom and Democracy. Our wish is for its honor and prosperity in peace, and for its continued sovereignty, independence, and freedom. We pledge anew our undivided loyalty."

**MC...** "Touch, Grasp, Rise to Toast, To Cause, Taste, Sip, Toast, Rotate, With Honor, Please be seated."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you."

(\* ) "Senior Steward, cause the wine to meet the line."

**Senior Steward...** "Wine Stewards, fill the glasses to the line."

*(The Steward remains standing until all glasses are filled.)*

"The wine is to the line sir."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Senior Steward. The \_\_\_\_\_(Usually a GL Officer) wishes to make a toast at this time."

(\* \* \*) *(All stand)* "Ladies and Gentlemen."

**Person Toasting:** "The second toast is to the Ancient and Gentle Craft of Free and Accepted Masons, and the memory of its founders. The mystic tie unites us in a brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. To the founders of our ancient craft!"

**MC...**"Touch, Grasp, Rise to toast, To Cause, Taste, Sip, Toast, Rotate, With Honor, Please be seated.

**Worshipful Master...** "Serve the first course please!"

*(Special Note: Near the end of the first course, the junior Warden should be ready to give an explanation.)*

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) " \_\_\_\_\_ will you please give us a short explanation of our craft

**Junior Warden...** "The foundations of Ancient Craft Masonry go back many, many years and our exact origins remain a question of considerable debate. We have all heard that we grew out of the stone masons guilds who built the magnificent cathedrals in Europe. Some trace our beginnings further back to the Knights Templar and the crusades. Yet others contend that our order was formed in the ancient age of King Solomon.

While there is evidence to support each theory, we can definitively trace Freemasonry back to the Regis Manuscript of ca 1390, so we know that we are today, in 2010, at the very least, 620 years old. At Rosslyn chapel in Scotland, stone carvings of our square and compass date to the late 900s CE. What is more important is that our founders laid the ground work for an order that has withstood the test of time. Freemasonry has changed over the years, but the basic principles of Brotherhood, Relief, and Truth have not. What is more, they will not change because in order for us to be joined as brothers, all must be rendered equal, and be met upon a common plane.

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Junior Warden."

(\*) "Senior Steward, cause the wine to meet the line."

**Senior Steward...** "Wine Stewards, fill the glasses to the lines?"

*(After all the glasses are filled.)*

"The wine is to the line sir."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Senior Steward. \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to make a toast at this time."

(\* \* \*) *(All stand)* "Ladies and Gentlemen."

**Brother** \_\_\_\_\_... "The third toast is to our oldest attending brethren (*insert names of 25/50 year members*)"

**MC...**"Touch, Grasp, Rise to toast, To Cause, Taste, Sip, Toast, Rotate, With Honor, Please be seated."

**Worshipful Master...** "Serve the second course please! "

*(Special Note: Near the completion of the second course, the Junior Warden should be ready to give an explanation.)*

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Junior Warden, will you please give us a short history of  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Junior Warden...** "*(Insert History of 25/50 members: present certificates etc)*"

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Junior Warden."

(\*) "Senior Steward, cause the wine to meet the line."

**Senior Steward...** "Wine Stewards, fill the glasses to the line."

*(After all the glasses are filled.)*

"The wine is to the line sir."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Senior Steward. \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to make a toast at this time."

(\* \* \*) *(all stand)* "Ladies and Gentlemen."

**Brother** \_\_\_\_\_... "The fourth toast is to a the Past Masters of Henry L. Palmer lodge  
\_\_\_\_\_

**MC...**"Touch, Grasp, Rise to toast, To Cause, Taste, Sip, Toast, Rotate, With Honor, Please be seated."

**Worshipful Master...** "Serve the third course please!"

*(Special Note: Near the completion of the third course, the Senior Warden should be ready to give an explanation.)*

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Senior Warden, would you please give us a short history of  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Senior Warden...** "**(Presentation of Pins)**" To be a Worshipful Master of a Lodge a mason must be of good morals and of great skill, true and trusty: and demonstrate a love for and of the fraternity wheresoever dispersed over the face of the earth, these masons have demonstrated these qualities with fidelity and honor.

The Common Gavel is one of the working tools of the Entered Apprentice Mason. It is made use of by the Operative Mason to break off the corners of the rough ashlar, and thus fit it the better for the builder's use, and is therefore adopted as a symbol in Speculative Masonry, to admonish us of the duty of divesting our hearts and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting our minds as living stones for that spiritual building, that house made not with hands, eternal in the heavens. It borrows its name from its shape, being that of the gable or gavel end of a house; and this word again comes from the German *gipfel, a summit, top, or peak* -- the idea of a pointed extremity being common to all... The true form of the gavel is that of the stonemason's hammer. It is to be made with a cutting edge, that it may be used to break off the corners of rough stones, an operation which could never be effected by the common hammer or mallet. The gavel thus shaped will give, when looked at in front, the exact representation of the *gavel or gable* end of a house, whence, as has been already said, the name is derived. The gavel of the Master is also called a *Hiram*, because, like the architect, it governs the Craft and keeps order in the Lodge, as he did in the Temple. The gavel pictured above is circa 1920 and was a common souvenir item bought by Masons when traveling to the Holy Land as tourists. The heads are made from the stone of King Solomon's Quarries and the handles are made of olive wood.

I now present you the gavel; a symbol of your authority.

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Senior Warden."

(\*) "Senior Steward, cause the wine to meet the line."

**Senior Steward...** "Wine Stewards, fill the glasses to the line"

*(After all the glasses are filled.)*

"The wine is to the line sir."

**Worshipful Master...** " Thank you Senior Steward. \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to make a toast at this time."

(\* \* \*) *(All stand)* "Ladies and Gentlemen."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Senior Steward. The \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to make a toast at this time".

**Brother Toasting:** "To those brothers who have gone before us."

**MC...** " Touch, Grasp, Rise to Toast, To Cause, Taste, Sip, Toast, Rotate, With Honor, Please be seated."

*(Special Note: Near the end of the main course, the Junior Warden should be ready to give an explanation as to why this toast was made.)*

**Worshipful Master...** "Serve the main course please!"

*(Special Note: Near the middle of the main course, the Senior Warden should be ready to give an explanation.)*

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Junior Warden, would you please give us a few words in honor of our departed?"

**Junior Warden...** "The poem, ST. JOHN'S DAY, by Rob Morris

Ended now the Mason's Labor  
Past the travel and the toil;  
Gather in, ye loving neighbors  
Share the Corn, the Wine, the Oil;  
Brethren now of each degree  
Come in harmony and glee  
    Happy Meeting  
    Gentle Greeting  
'Tis the joy of Masonry

Spirits of the blest departed  
As on earthly ways they roam  
Where are met the faithful hearted  
They to share our labors come;  
Though their forms we cannot see  
They are here with you and me."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Thank you brother \_\_\_\_\_"

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Wine Stewards, fill the glasses to the line."

**Senior Steward...** "Wine Stewards, fill the glasses to the line."

*(After all glasses are filled)*

"The wine is to the line sir."

**Person Toasting...** "The sixth toast is to that lady of a mason who has travelled to that foreign land where the temple made without hands lies \_\_\_\_\_"

**MC...**"Touch, Grasp, Rise to toast, To Cause, Taste, Sip, Toast, Rotate, With Honor, Please be seated."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Senior Warden, would you please give us a short history of the Broken Column

**Senior Warden...** "In Freemasonry, the broken column is, as Master Freemasons well know, the emblem of the fall of one of the chief supporters of the Craft.

The use of the column or pillars as a monument erected over a tomb was a very ancient custom, and was a very significant symbol of the character and spirit of the person interred.

This pin was created as an emblem to symbolize our continued concern and honor for the widows of a Brother Master Mason, a Brother whose name added luster to the Craft as he labored with us in The Quarry.

Now that his name has been entered upon the Roll of the Celestial Lodge, we cannot forget those things which he loved so deeply, nor can we be unmindful of our duty to him.

It is my distinct privilege to present this emblem to you that you may wear it with great pride.

It is our desire that it be to you a reminder of your ties to us; a relationship wherein you will find friends who will assist you in times of need, join with you in times of gladness, and welcome you to a continued association with us as we continue our labors of Friendship, Brotherly Love and Truth.

You are not alone. When moments may cause you to doubt, Look at this emblem and be assured that we are there and we care.

This Masonic Widow's Pin was created with the hope that it would be worn by the widow of a Master Mason on all appropriate occasions, especially when traveling, so that she may be recognized, greeted, and assisted when necessary, by Masonic friends throughout the world.

It is an emblem of honor and should be worn separately, and not in conjunction with other jewelry.

May she who wears this emblem find that she is not alone. We are there and we care."

**Worshipful Master...** "Thank you Senior Warden."

**Worshipful Master...** "Ladies and Gentlemen, the floor is open to anyone who wishes to speak."

**Worshipful Master...** "Serve the final course please!"

*(Special Note: The Master should move to the inside of the tables and extend his personal welcome to each of the guests, especially the widows of the Lodge.)*

*Near the end of the final course, the Master gives the last toast.*

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Wine Stewards, fill the glasses to the line."

*(After all the glasses are filled)*

**Senior Steward...** "The wine is to the line sir."

**Worshipful Master.** - - "I wish to make a toast at this time."

(\* \* \*) *(all stand)* "Ladies and Gentlemen."

"The seventh toast is to all of our ladies and friends, the most important people in our lives. Touch, Grasp, Rise to Toast, Taste, Sip, Taste, Toast, Rotate, With Honor, Please be seated."

"The hour grows late and our evening must come to an end."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Senior Warden, are all seated on your left?"

**Senior Warden...** "All are now seated."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Junior Warden, are all seated on your right?"

**Junior Warden...** "All are now seated."

**Worshipful Master...** (\*) "Deacon, set the altar and close the Lights"

*(Deacon moves to the altar, closes the Holy Bible, snuffs out the candle and returns to his seat.)*

"In closing, be careful driving home tonight. Say a prayer for our troops who may be in harm's way, wherever they are around the world.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace, now and forever more.

Thank you and good night.

As Master of this dinner, I declare this "Table Lodge" be now closed?"(\*)