

The Level and the Square

by Bro. Jeff Young

The Lodge meeting is almost over, all the business has been conducted and everyone has had their opportunity to speak their concerns and revelations about our great fraternal order, and the impact it has on our wonderful Lodge. The Worshipful Master has made the last call for any comments from the assembled body and is proceeding to close the Lodge.

By this time, most of us are winding down from the meeting and getting ready to go home. After all, this is just the Lodge closing formalities that we have listened to hundreds of times and it is the same thing we heard at opening, just an hour ago.

The next time you have the opportunity to witness the closing formalities of a Lodge, I challenge you to listen carefully to the last part – just before the closing charge and dismissal.

We meet upon the Level, act upon the Plumb, and part upon the Square. These are more than just words that are said before you get to go home. They are the very foundation and strength of how Masons should act – to all mankind. Think about those simple, yet significant words, and what they mean to you and how you conduct yourself in your day-to-day interactions with others.

WE MEET UPON THE LEVEL. All men are equal in the eyes of The Great Architect of the Universe and our fraternal order. Material wealth or station in life does not make a man a better Mason, one over another. The rich man leaves his wealth outside the Lodge and the poor man finds respect and brotherly love around our altar. And when we are finally called to that “house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”, we are not sorted out based on status or stature, we are treated as equals, truly meeting upon the Level.

But do we really treat all men as equal? Do we have some unkind word or thought about a fellow man – be they a co-worker, friend, neighbor, or even Brother Mason? Dealing with problems can be very difficult, and we are but frail human beings that have many faults and deficiencies. Yet we can still meet upon the Level and solve any problem, yet still treating all men with respect and dignity, as we search for solutions together.

WE ACT UPON THE PLUM. It is the rule and guide of a Mason to preserve an upright appearance before God, Mason and mankind; and that we honor our faith and give each man his due. We should walk upright in virtue's way, leaning to neither side, and remember that the Supreme Architect of the Universe reads what is in our hearts and bears witness to all that is true.

Do we benefit from this teaching? Do we truly maintain that upright appearance in our daily events? Do we speak ill of a fellow man or bring discredit upon him simply because he looks different that we do or believes in some idea we don't embrace? Being in Lodge should be an opportunity to refresh our minds and bodies by remembering the Masonic 'basics' and shrugging off the superfluities of life.

AND PART UPON THE SQUARE. Parting upon the Square reminds us to always square our actions with all mankind, treating each other with equal reverence and dignity. After all, no man is accepted as a Mason because of his worldly wealth or status; so why should we make that a standard for dealing with others?

Do we really treat all with equal reverence and dignity? I believe we all want to; and try to. But are we always successful? Do we look down on the penniless man on the street corner of life, or do we offer assistance at a level not to impede our own moral or financial stability?

These important reminders are given to us all, just before parting Lodge, in an attempt to remind us how we should deal with mankind. Reality and human nature can make meeting these goals difficult. But how hard do we REALLY try?