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**👁 Freemasons: Information Pack 13 - Table Lodge and Festive Board**

2 messages

**Indiana Grand Lodge of Freemasons** <grandlodge@ingrandlodge.com>

Wed, Sep 8, 2021 at 6:55 PM

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## Information Pack 13 Table Lodge and Festive Boards

### Brother Elman,

As you have come to learn, gathering as Masons is not limited to the Lodge Room. Masons continue to be involved in public building dedications, Masonic Memorial Services along with all types of activities associated with our appendant bodies. Two additional activities that occur outside of the Lodge Room are Table Lodges and Festive Boards.

The Festive Board / Table Lodge should not be an occasion for getting out a capacity crowd. By its very nature, this gathering should be small and intimate, thereby providing opportunity for Masonic fellowship at its best.

### DRESS AND DECORUM

In attending your first Table Lodge or Festive Board, your first attention should be to yourself. Adhere to any spoken dress code for the event or, if no discussion to dress has been made either ask, or assume one level of attire "more" than what is expected during a Master Mason degree or for the restaurant you will be attending.

At all times, remember that your behavior both during and after, reflect upon your adherence to Masonic tenants. Your behavior should be subdued. While wine may be used at the discretion of the lodge and at your choice for the Ceremony of the Seven Toasts, never allow yourself or a brother to fall prey to intemperance or excess. If you have been made aware of a brother who is traveling a personal journey from addiction, consider asking the Lodge to abstain altogether in a manner respective of the trust given to you.

### Table Lodge

The observance of Masonic festivals, such as the Feasts of the Holy Sts. John, is one of the noble old traditions of our Craft. It contemplates the use of a Lodge for Table Instruction (usually known as a Table Lodge) where the officers of a lodge open the Lodge for that purpose.

The earliest "ritual" of the French Table Lodge was long and elaborate. In a modified form a similar ceremony was then used in England. The ceremony suggested for use in Indiana Lodges is greatly abbreviated and simplified, but retains all the significance of former times.

The Table Lodge is no mere banquet with entertainment; it is a special Lodge ceremony in itself, with a ritual, formalities and a special terminology which is of some interest. Particular care should be taken, therefore, to see that the observance is conducted in the proper spirit of the occasion. The event must be held in the Lodge building in the banquet room and the Charter of the Lodge is to be present.

During a Table Lodge, smartphones should be turned off or be left with the Tyler if you feel that you will receive an emergency message or call. Pictures should not be taken during an open Table Lodge

#### THE DINNER

1. Table Lodge will be conducted only in connection with a dinner, and not otherwise
2. To be held in dining room, and not elsewhere
3. To be served (rather than buffet service)
4. To be a complete dinner (rather than sandwiches, potato chips, etc.) with a menu that will enhance the image of Freemasonry

#### DECOR OF DINING ROOM

5. Dining room to be attractive for occasion with tasteful decorations, etc.
6. Complete table coverings to be used (in contrast to narrow sheets of paper)
7. Attractive table setting to be used (floral centerpieces, candles, etc.)
8. Wine or fruit punch to be used for Ceremony of Seven Toasts and served in glass punch cups or glasses

#### THE PROGRAM

9. Temple to be free of all competing events
10. Table Lodge to be complete in itself (not combined with other activities, such as installation of officers, presentation of awards, etc. )
11. Appropriate instrumental music to be provided for dinner and as accompaniment for singing
12. Good singers to be recruited from among the Brethren, rehearsed and used in stimulating others to sing' the odes
13. Box of Fraternal Assistance to be passed
14. Gift in Box of Fraternal Assistance to be used for charitable purpose consistent with Symbolic Masonry

#### THE SPEAKER

15. Address by Masonic speaker (not discussion, travelogue, showing of slides, pep talk, etc.)
16. Speaker understands his address must be Masonic address (not sectarian sermon or speech with political overtones)

### **Festive Board**

A Festive Board is called for the purposes of fellowship and sometimes education. Unlike a Table Lodge, a Festive Board is not tyled, it is held without the Charter thus making it an unofficial meeting of the Lodge. These meetings are historically held in public restaurants - sometimes in a dedicated banquet room, other times in a block of tables. These meetings may be held in mixed company and serve as an introduction to the fraternity. This can include Brothers' spouses and responsible children.

It is acceptable to disclose the presence of the Fraternity through clothing, jewelry or other disclosures. As such, if you do not wish to make your membership public, as is your choice, you should abstain from these public events.

As you are publicly representing Masonry, be very mindful to act in no way to bring a stain to the Fraternity and assist your Brothers in remaining upon the plumb. The speaker should speak on a topic relevant to Masonry but it must contain nothing that is considered a Masonic secret.

### **Box of Fraternal Assistance**

A time-honored Masonic custom is the passing of the Box of Fraternal Assistance. Please come ready to contribute as you are able and see fit. The festivals of the Craft and the Table Lodge provide the natural setting for a positive act of rededication and the reaffirmation of the great Tenet of Charity. It is the duty of the Stewards to provide the box and to pass it among the Brethren at the proper time. The Master should announce that the Box of Fraternal Assistance is to be passed and state the purpose for which the gift shall be used. The Master himself should determine the purpose. One great opportunity is for the donation to be directed to the Indiana Masonic Relief Fund which can be called upon to assist a brother or widow in need. Whatever the purpose, it should be for charity—never for a building fund, or the purchase of equipment, or a donation to another Masonic organization.

## **Ceremony of the Seven Toasts**

The Ceremony of the Seven Toasts may be the climax of the evening's fellowship. Wine may (not must) be served as part of the Seven Toasts but be sure to always provide a second beverage that will add to the festive spirit as some of our brothers may not partake in wine due to personal or religious beliefs. This alternate could be a good fruit punch or even a hot spiced punch. At the proper time, the Master will call for the beverage. If in lodge, it is to be served in bottles and pitchers usually by the Stewards and the newest members who will fill the glasses, and then take their places at the table.

The Master should request that a Brother who is familiar with the practice of drinking Masonic toasts give a few words of instruction prior to the ceremony. Above all, the Master should not permit levity during such a solemn rite.

The only two toasts that are required are "To our Country" at the beginning and "To All Freemasons Wheresoever Dispersed" at the end. Other appropriate toasts may be substituted as appropriate. These may be "To the President" (always implying the Office of the President of the United States and not the politics of the officeholder,) to the "Armed Forces of the United States," to the "Founders of our Lodge," etc.

If you happen to be the person whose health is being toasted or the representative of the group (i.e. Master as representative of his Lodge for "To the Lodge," an active service Armed Force member for "To the Armed Forces...," or a visitor during the Tyler's toast) it is appropriate to stay seated and not join in the drinking. In this circumstance, it is appropriate to give a brief response in the form "Worshipful Master, Brother (toast maker,) Brethren all..."

The following are examples of how Masonic toasts could be given and appropriately responded to:

### **appropriate**

#### 1. To Our Country

**Always given by the Master:** Brethren, I have the honor to propose a toast to our Country: Long may our land be bright with Freedom's holy light; Protect us by Thy might, Great God our King! With me, To our Country!

**Response (All):** To our Country!

#### 2. To the Holy Saints John

**By the Master or a Brother Called Upon by Him:** Let us now drink a toast to the memory of the Holy Saints John: May their saintly qualities inspire each of us to live a life of more exalted usefulness. With me, Brethren, to the Holy Saints John!

**Response (All):** To the Holy Saints John!

#### 3. To the Memory of Our Departed Brethren

**By the Master or a Brother Called Upon by Him:** May I propose a toast now to the memory of our departed Brethren: May their contribution to our Brotherhood inspire us

more earnestly to dedicate our lives to the service of our fellow men. With me, Brethren-to the Memory of Our Departed Brethren!

**Response (All):** To the Memory of Our Departed Brethren!

4. To the Grand Master

**By the Master or a Brother Called Upon by Him:** Brethren, I have the honor to propose a toast to the Grand Master of Masons in Indiana: symbol of our continuing relationship to an ancient Craft; to the Grand Lodge over which he has been called to preside. May he direct with wisdom, decide with justice and plan with a vision worthy of the Fraternity he serves. With me, Brethren-to the Grand Master!

**Response (All):** To the Grand Master!

5. To Our Lodge

**Always given by the Junior Warden:** Brethren, it gives me especial pleasure to call for a toast to ..... Lodge: the Lodge so close to the hearts of its members, commanding through long years an interest and loyalty unshaken by adversity and unspoiled by prosperity. So may we reflect its integrity and stability in our daily lives. With me, Brethren-to ..... Lodge!

**Response (All):** To ..... Lodge!

6. To Our Visiting Brethren

**Always given by the Senior Warden:** Brethren, a toast to our Visiting Brethren: our guests of the evening who will not doubt the cordial hospitality of our welcome. May this occasion persuade them to share our hospitality whenever their circumstances permit. With me, Brethren-to Our Visiting Brethren!

**Response (All):** To Our Visiting Brethren!

7. To All Freemasons Wheresoever Dispersed

**Always given by the Tyler:** And now let us drink the age-old, traditional toast of the Craft- To All Freemasons wheresoever dispersed over the face of the earth: May our Brethren of all nations be united under the mantle of universal friendship and brotherhood for the benefit of all mankind. With me, Brethren-To All Freemasons Wheresoever Dispersed!

**Response (All):** To All Freemasons Wheresoever Dispersed!

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