

Re-Obligation Night

The Masonic Obligation is the foundation and the basis of Freemasonry. It is the obligations which make a man a Mason. When the candidate is asked "What makes you a Mason"? The answer has always been "The obligation". Over the years of Masonic service we tend to forget those sacred words we repeated at the altar when we became Brothers of the Fraternity of Freemasons. It is not unusual for a Brother to forget the words but he almost never forgets the meaning.

The practice of having a Re-Obligation Night ceremony is performed in many jurisdictions around the world. There is a set ceremony in some jurisdictions and there is no set ceremony in the others. Many Lodges have performed the retaking of the obligation by its members from time to time, depending on the desires of the Worshipful Master. This practice has been mostly performed under older Worshipful Masters who had taken their degrees many years ago.

In as much as the Obligations of our Fraternity are the basis of our being Freemasons and that they form the foundation upon which it rest. We should from time to time renew those vows we once assumed. On some occasions in the past, the Grand Master of Masons in Texas has, on his visit to the Alamo in San Antonio, performs a Re-Obligation Ceremony for the Brothers present inside of the Alamo. We should renew our vows from time to time so that we may continue to be reminded of those truths and values we hold dear. The moral code of Freemasonry is found in our obligations and to insure we are familiar with that code we need to be reminded once in awhile of that moral code and to remind us that we are Brothers.

Re-Obligation Ceremony

There is currently no set ceremony for Re-Obligation Night. In some Grand Lodges there is one required. There are Lodges that do have a program of Re-Obligation that they use. It really doesn't matter what format that is used, what does matter is that the Obligation be repeated by all present. There must be a knowledgeable Brother in the Lodge, one who confers the degrees, available for the ceremony.

One Ceremony That Has Been Used

The following is one such ceremony that has been used in a Texas Lodge.

The Worshipful Master assembles the Officers at the altar, with the Senior Warden and Junior Warden kneeling, the other officers are assembled behind the Senior and Junior Wardens, placing their right hand on the shoulder and each member do the same to the Brother in front of him. The Worshipful Master descends from the East and leads the members in the Master Masons Obligation. When completed the Lodge will return to order. In the case the Worshipful Master can not remember the Master Masons Obligation another knowledgeable Brother may lead the reciting of the Obligation.

This is only one ceremony that has been used. You may have heard of other formats of reciting the Obligation. What ever format desired is OK. It has been observed that some Lodges have not had a degree in a long while and no member is sure that he can remember the Master Masons Obligation well enough for the ceremony. The Grand Lodge District Instructor of your District can be of great service to your Lodge.



Conclusion

While it is not necessary to have a Re-Obligation Ceremony, but it does provide us with the reminder that we are all Brothers. Our Obligation is what makes us Masons and if we, as a Fraternity, do not live by those vows we all made before the altar and our God, then we have failed as Fraternity. Remember that we are all Brothers each bound to one another by that Obligation, and some times we may need to be reminded of those vows. The goal of our Fraternity is to "take a good man and make him better". If we live by that Obligation then that goal will have been achieved.

One of the best ways to remind ourselves of our Obligation is to repeat it from time to time in a re-dedication to our Masonic Vows. One of the best ways is to perform a Re-Obligation Ceremony within your Lodge.

We as a Master Masons are the best of the best and should be a guiding light within our communities and our Fraternity. That Light which comes from the East and sheds its brilliance upon the Brethren and bound by those stronger ties we hope to have achieved that Peace and Harmony so essentially necessary to our being Brothers of the Craft.



A product of the
Masonic Renewal Committee of North America

P.O. Box 87
Harbert, MI 49115
1-888-734-4232