

Masonic Renewal: What does it mean to you now and in the future?

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The concept of Masonic Renewal is something that is very new to me. As a Mason for only 3 years, I have been a devout, inspired, and loyal brother to my mother lodge. The idea of renewal doesn't truly apply to me as I feel such a strong connection to Freemasonry since I was raised. However, over the past three years, I have seen much change in the landscape and have truly noticed the lack of spirit from the members of the fraternity. This is not attributed to one thing or one person, but rather an amalgamation of a variety of issues plaguing our proud lodges. As a fraternity, we are in dire need of a renewed sense of purpose and a new self-image to combat the apathetical or negative views of our great institution. We need to look introspectively and toward the future of sustaining our traditions, values, and fraternal spirit.

To start, we need to impress and inspire from the moment a candidate signs their name to a petition. We need to make sure our committees on inquiry are careful to ask the right questions and make sure that a man will be a good fit to masonry. They should also make sure they do not offend the potential candidate and present a good first impression of the fraternity, lodge, and brothers. The renewal essence stems from these first impressions. Any brother that has a good first impression is more than likely to stay within the lodge and hopefully become a viable member. As the candidate goes through the degrees, another good first impression is created here additionally. As mentioned many times, a brother can only take the degrees once. As a fraternity, we must strive to make a strong impression on their minds and hearts in how we share the noble truths imparted in the lodge. This does not mean we cannot have fun and enjoy our time, but in manners regarding ritual and dignified decorum, we should show how we respect our lodge, our ritual, our fellow brethren, and ourselves. We hold ourselves in high regard

and expect our brothers to be of good and improving moral character. We should expect that our new brethren do the same.

Some brethren have chosen to put other parts of their life, occupation, or family more toward their “front burner”, placing masonry on the “back burner”. These brethren should never be forgotten, but respected. We know that our necessary vocations should take up a third of our time and family should be above Masonry. Masonic Renewal in this sense refers to the renewal within the hearts and minds of our wayward brothers. Not all masons can be officers or ritualists, but we need men on the sidelines cheering for our officers and to be at our functions in support of our local lodges and our grand lodges. More family nights could help to alleviate issues of family members missing either from home or work. We need to keep moving forward with new in our efforts to keep these men in our lodges and continue to have them be a part of our masonic family without sacrificing too much of their regular family time.

The community of people around our lodges must have a better impression of our fraternity from the beginning as well. Too long have we stayed in the dark and let our names become sullied or chained to cheap jokes or laughable conspiracy theories. Many lodges have shuttered not just from lack from interest, but lack of purpose and community reputation. Our communities need our help and support. We are here to serve not just ourselves, but the world as a whole. The greater assistance and reputation we have in our communities, that more men will be interested in joining our ranks. Many lodges invite prospective new members to various open functions or just simply to dinner. This is a practice that should continue and should be published. If the lodge has an open installation, it should be opened to anyone interested in learning about the lodge.

Any other open functions should be published in newspapers, lodge websites, and social media. Our good works and fraternal spirit should be shared with all and so that people may see that we are a band of brothers working together to make good men better. This is the essence of the Masonic Renewal spirit. Without our communities, our reason for existing will be meaningless and futile.

Our future as an organization is in jeopardy. Almost all civic organizations are having difficulty now and are also consolidating their ranks as well. Part of this problem rests on the idea that people today are working more hours than before in order to make ends meet. This makes it harder for organizations including ours to have a great base of dedicated and future members and leaders. As Masons, we need to remind our current and future brothers that Masonry is a lifelong journey. It is not an easy commitment but does require some serious thought and some effort. We also need to inspire the younger generation to aspire to the levels of knowledge that we have ascertained. As mentioned previously, opening our lodges to the public, publishing our accomplishment, and being representatives of our communities are just the start. Continuing to reach out to our youth through active involvement in youth groups, DeMolay and Boy Scout Troops for example, can help to add to our ranks. Not all DeMolay boys join a lodge but it gives them something to aspire to if they see us as men involved in their well-being and advancement of our community. Observing us as just guys getting together to drink, eat, and talk will not help foster the Masonic spirit. The spirit of renewal for the future rests on inspiring the youth of today to aspire to higher ideals.

In conclusion, the future of our grand institution rests solely on our efforts of renewing the Masonic spirit today. If we do not take further steps into renewing the spirit

now, our organization will face further obscurity, contempt, and isolation. We must be the movers and shakers of not only our lodges, but of our lives and communities. “Every human being has a claim upon your kind offices.” These are the words that should inspire our hearts to be better everyday after our raising. The spirit of Masonic Renewal will depend on how we view ourselves and how the world views us.