

Brotherly Love

Presented at Wingham Lodge # 286 4th October 2011

What does Freemasonry mean to you? It has philosophies which can change a man, making him a better person. It can supplement and support your own religious beliefs. I, cannot give you an answer as each man finds his own answers at different stages of his Masonic life. There are numerous principles, virtues, words, allegories and symbols by which we try to find a better meaning in our lives. Try to find a place where we feel we are doing some good in this world by following these principles. Let us think of just one of those this evening. BROTHERLY LOVE:

Our understanding of Brotherly Love can be different between Masons and to non-Masons it is certainly not the same as what we understand it to mean. LOVE has been described as the most powerful force in the universe. It is multi dimensional being categorized under three headings. First; Sensual or erotic love, Second; divine love; bestowed through grace and Third; Brotherly love.

The dictionary defines it as “a kindly and lenient attitude towards people”. I believe it is much stronger than that. I compare it to the military expression of “esprit de corp”

“consciousness of, and pride in belonging to a particular group; the sense of shared purpose and fellowship”

“A common spirit of comradeship, enthusiasm, and devotion to a cause among the members of a group.”

“the spirit of a group that makes the members want the group to succeed”

That certainly sounds much closer to what masons believe but this expression again doesn't do it justice.

Esprit de corps, like “teamwork”, tends to focus inward on the group. When I served in the Royal Marine Reserves in Scotland, esprit de corps made me believe strongly in the superiority of my unit and the unit members. It helps build a confidence in each other and a belief in the ability of the unit and its members to succeed.

When I played rugby, teamwork was a huge part of the game, it helped us work together towards a common goal to succeed. Supported each other at all times for the good of the team.

Both these examples as you can see are inwardly focused on the unit, the team and I do not believe that is what Masonry is about. Although we do focus on supporting each other we also support many areas outside Masonry.

If you take all those elements of “esprit de corp” and use them more universally to all people then I believe that is more towards what Masonry means by Brotherly Love. A description more like;

It is said to “ be offered to another human being without thought of personal gain”

or that we place on another person, the highest possible value as a friend , a companion , an associate or a neighbor. That is much closer to what I believe “Brotherly Love” means in masonry.

Our Charities are not for Masons only, they encompass all people of all races and religions. We help Children through the Cochlear Implant Program which supports research into hearing problems and implants for children, the Chip Program for identification of Children, drug prevention, Autism and bursaries are just some of the support we cover. We support the public education of Prostate Cancer and have helped many times over the years in numerous Disaster reliefs. And of course we must never forget the Shriners Hospitals which spend approx. 700 million dollars per year on free hospitals and care for children under 18 with burns and orthopedic illnesses.

We should be proud of these actions that our fraternity carries out but we need to be more than just proud. We need to continue to act on these

actions and also act within our communities which many of us do, helping to make society a better place. The work we do, and are seen to do, within our communities has a far greater impact on what people think of masonry and I believe we need to be seen so we can be recognized for what we are. I know over the years I have not always shown an openness of being a mason and that comes from the “old” way of being secretive about being a Mason. We need to become more open about the charities we support, the things we support in the community not only financially but voluntarily. We need to consider picture opportunities when we do these things so people know that Masons support our communities.

How many of our brethren act on community boards, support and assist in Blood Donor clinics, support food banks, assist with sport organizations etc.? These are the things we do that show how we regard “Brotherly Love”, not inwardly focused but widely applied. Don’t be a Mason once a month on lodge night. Act as a mason every day “in your public and private avocations”.

I have heard it stated many times that what you put into Masonry will be returned to you, multiplied many times. The same applies to volunteering time and finances to community projects. We all know the philosophy of masonry, the words of our principles and tenets but we need to follow these

philosophical beliefs and live them openly so everyone can see what Masonry means to you and therefore the community at large. Then more men will be coming forward asking to be part of that Brotherly Love and find out for themselves the many other principles and philosophies that Masonry offers to

And then there is the more simple form of Brotherly Love, which was mentioned earlier, that in which we bestow respect and the highest possible value on a person as a friend and companion which this evening has been demonstrated by the friendship shown by the Brethren who have travel long distances, being away from their families to support a me as a brother, and I hope as friend and not as the District Deputy Grand Master. Gold braid and the pomp and ceremony, I have been told, all comes to nought at the end of your year and one becomes a "Past". The value of true friendship or Brotherly love last for ever.

Thank you my friends and my Brethren