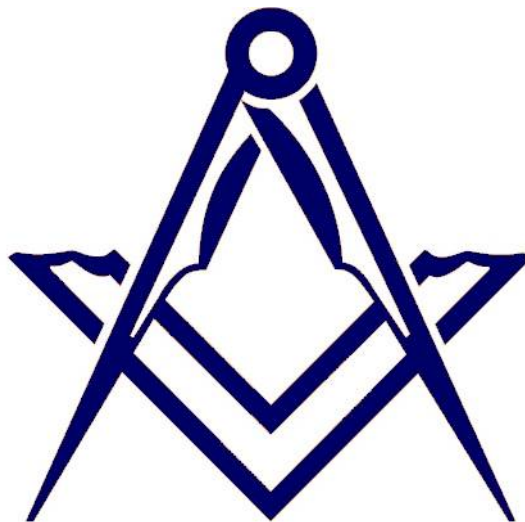


**AN INFORMATIVE MEETING & PLAYLET
FOR A
PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS'
EVENING
IN
THE LODGE ROOM or REFECTORY**

**By
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PREFACE

As a relatively new Master Mason I feel I had a brilliant Initiation, Passing and Raising during 2001, by the brethren of the Alpha Lodge. There is no doubt that Freemasonry is providing me what it is claimed to do. I am thoroughly enjoying my masonry both in my Lodge and in others. I look forward to the future events that will follow with anticipation. However, I have one major concern, which has come about by my joining. This concern is the one held all the way across world by Freemasonry, Service clubs, and their like. That is falling membership. I am amazed that any person ever joined when Freemasons kept so quiet and undemonstrative.

Bearing this in mind I looked at my own position as one who came to the Craft in late middle age. I have to ask myself would I have enjoyed it so much as I would if I had been younger, and I am sure the answer would have been "Yes, most definitely".

However, how can one join an organisation when one has not the slightest knowledge about what it is? The actions of operative masons in the past would indicate to outsiders the ideals of masonry, but in modern day society we almost to a man are Speculative Masons. How do members of the community know who are masons, and what we stand for, without us telling people?

After 6 months I felt tremendous satisfaction, but also a feeling of indignation that no one had given me an idea as to what Freemasonry was. In my own instance I would have joined 16 and 15 years earlier when two different friends made approaches to me in the gentle manner that masons do.

- Had I had any previous knowledge of the craft other than those anti-masonic ramblings that from time to time appear in the press I would definitely have joined.
- Had I known the large number of friends who were masons I would have joined.
- Had I known the calibre of people who are masons in the Alpha Lodge, and the other lodges that I visit I would have joined.
- Had I known my grandfather was a mason I would have joined.

Why did I join? Well, on being approached a third time, and told that I might enjoy Freemasonry, I was asked if I knew any Freemasons. As I knew none I could remember, I was amazed that I knew several, and I enjoyed all of their company. I was not asked to join, but had to ask these two brothers.

I later accepted an invitation to go along to a Masonic Christmas Lunch with my 6 year old grand daughter who I was baby sitting.

- I participated in the fellowship of Freemasonry
- I saw a large number of very good friends who were masons
- I saw the calibre of people who are masons

It was not until 11 months after my initiation that I learned through a visiting mason that my grandfather was a mason.

I am therefore delighted that the Grand Lodge of New Zealand has initiated Freemasonry Awareness Month Events. This programme is one for an evening with public & friends for the aLodge to give a little insight into what Freemasonry is, to show you the Lodge, to give a little of the History of the Lodge, to answer your questions on all but the Handshakes, Password and Signs. Please respect our wishes there, as we start the evening.

PROGRAMME FOR A MEETING WITH NON- MASONS

A MOST INFORMATIVE PROGRAMME

1. WELCOME BY MASTER - Optional
2. HAND OVER TO NARRATOR
First part with Questions and Answers on Freemasonry by 2 Brothers
 1. History of Freemasonry
 2. What Freemasonry is.
 3. Our Lodge
 4. Requirements to be a Freemason.
3. HISTORY OF THE LODGE
4. VIDEO - FREEMASONS NZ VIDEO OR FAMOUS FREEMASONS
5. PARABLE TYPE PLAYLETS
 1. Part 1 with TRAVELLER
 2. Narrator's Summing up on Playlet Meaning
6. CALL FOR STEWARDS TO LEAVE
7. FAREWELLS – Optional
 1. Visiting Lodges
 2. Any other visitor
8. EXIT TOGETHER – at Master's discretion
8. REFECTORY – Fellowship & Toasts

This suggested programme is only that. Lodges should feel quite at liberty to adapt the procedures to suit the venue and occasion, to leave out or add to them. This should be a reflection of your lodge's character, and the wishes of the master and brethren. It is just another vehicle to show Freemasonry to members of the general public.

Note: This has been typeset at a large font size to allow the file to be printed as a booklet, and still be quite legible at rehearsal.

The Master bangs the Gavel once.

The Master welcome the visitors to an Informative Meeting and appoints a Narrator, and two brothers to assist the proceedings who take the chairs in South and West.

NARRATOR

Tonight is an Informative Meeting for friends, guests and interested persons. It in no way should be thought that it is a Masonic Ritual. It is in fact a series of informative statements on Freemasonry, followed by a short playlet in the form of a parable. This is a presentation from the members of the Lodge for our Visitors and Guests.

The first is to provide an overview of Freemasonry. With the help of (W) Bro & Bro we will begin.

BRO 1

In the beginning there was darkness and the Lord gave us light, so that he might bring about his works. The first of which were the Stars and the Firmament, the Sun and the Earth and Moon in their own time.

Scriptures say that he made all living things, amongst which was Mankind.

Mankind roamed wild across the plains, and lived in the open, in trees and thickets, and when they could they lived in caves.

BRO 2

At some time, in the distant aeons that are our past, man was taught the rudimentary art of building a shelter, and from that, to build in many materials. The most lasting of which was stone.

First in its un-worked form, then in rough hewn shapes, until several thousands of years ago, they made the finest sculptured shapes that fitted seamlessly together. Shapes that only skilled craftsmen could make. These were men, who were very much sought after to build the ancient Buildings of note and nobility. Monuments that still stand today.

It is from these Stone Masons, and latterly these freemen in Feudal society, that Freemasonry is derived.

NARRATOR

What about Our More Recent Past?

BRO 1

Modern masonry was established so masons could follow the great building projects in Europe and the Middle East of the past few millennia. As masons had to be available wherever such a project occurred, they were freemen, and not the serfs of a Lord, tied to one place. So they followed the great building projects of the centuries, moving from one place to another.

They had no fixed home, and so lodges were built where they could stay. They provided shelter for the mason and his family, and ensured that the morality, and virtues, of the craft could be taught to the benefit of the family group. They provided shelter for the wives and education for the children.

BRO 2

However, they had to ensure that those who requested to enter the lodge to work, were fit and trained to do so. They could not rely on the word of mouth alone. So while teaching their apprentices the art and skills of the craft, at each stage they gave them signs. Signs that they could take with them to use to enter other lodges, and apply for work. Amongst these are the signs, handshakes, passwords and knocks that have become infamous in the ranks of the unknowing.

These were

- the tickets to enter that required no paper,
- the certificates that needed no ink,
- the keys that required no locks
- the signs that could be conveyed in light and in darkness.

They were the reference of the standard to which a Freemason had attained, proving his competence and ability.

This was the method by which the Quality of work could be assured.

NARRATOR

What are Speculative Masons that we hear about today?

BRO 1

As masonry progressed and supported its numbers and their dependants, persons of other trades and commercial background looked on. As stonemasonry lost numbers to other building methods, the admission of speculative masons, who did not work in stone, was allowed. They took the ideals of masonry and applied them to their lives, to improve themselves. In this way Freemasonry ensured its survival, and the survival of their lodges to this day.

BRO 2

The modern mason takes the tools, and texts of masonry past, and uses them to illustrate the moralities of life itself. Many sayings in the English language derive from the Lodge, "Are you on the level?, Will you square with me?, An upright citizen etc." To name but a few.

Different countries have their own Freemasonry and much of New Zealand Masonry has been grouped into New Zealand's own Grand Lodge, but lodges of English, Scottish, and Irish orders are present in this Country. They work closely together.

NARRATOR

As masons in Lodge, we wear aprons . As the apron was the badge of a working Freemason, so the apron we wear is a symbolic representation of the ancient craft apron.

There are various versions of the simple white apron, and, in general they designate the elevation or rank of members, and also the the differences of Masonic Orders to which one can belong.

Freemasonry, like all organisations has a formal structure .

The basis of the overall Organisation is the members and the Lodges, each of which has representation in the Administrative body. This body is called The Grand Lodge of New Zealand. It has a Constitution and laws, derived originally from the English Grand Lodge which have been constantly refined over the last 350 years, while each Lodge administers it's affairs, according to it's own by- laws.

When one joins freemasonry, one not only becomes a member of a local Lodge, but is entitled to visit, and receive support from any Lodge throughout the World

But What is Masonry you might ask?

BRO 1

Masonry differs from other organisations in that the reason for our existence is that it was formed for self improvement, to improve our family and personal lives, and to be a good citizen of the country in which we reside. These are our first, second and third responsibilities. The unique difference between Freemasonry and service clubs, to which we are sometimes compared, is that the majority of funds raised for public works are our own.

BRO 2

Once a Member has attained the distinction of becoming a Master Mason, there is no obligation to progress higher in masonry unless he wishes to do so. He is now a Mason for life. (Provided of course that he remains financial)

"Like joining it is his option to attend, and his alone"

NARRATOR

And what is the history of our Lodge, the Lodge (*or Lodge*).

Brother 3 can you give a short history of the Lodge to our visitors

BRO 3

Bro 3 gives a short History of the Lodge here.

Mention if thought applicable past Masonic Members of the Lodge.

NARRATOR

If applicable The Freemasons New Zealand Video or Famous Freemasons is shown at this point

VIDEO OR FAMOUS FREEMASONS

After the Information on the history of Masonry and the Lodge, and the VIDEO is shown, the Parable is explained

NARRATOR

Having explained to you all a little about masonry and what we as Freemasons try to be, it is incumbent on us to provide for you a little of the feeling of Masonry.

Although we have signs and words restricted to Freemasons, and **we will not break our solemn obligation that they remain so**, we will endeavour to tell by the way of a story how illustration and repetition may work.

I stress that this small playlet is **NOT** a Masonic ritual.

Let me introduce our cast to you

Fate will be played by

The Outer Gate keeper will be played by

The Inner Gate keeper by

The Victim will be played by

I will continue to be the **Narrator**

Let us begin

FATE

Narrator, a moment. As Fate, I need a **Traveller** to lead and guide

NARRATOR

So we do. To continue our playlet

Either a brother playing the Traveller comes forward

Bro. will you be the Traveller tonight

(Or if thought applicable enlist one of the visitors to play the part)

("We need a (male) guest to volunteer to be our Star and take the simple parts of the Travellers in our playlet tonight. It is not an onerous task, there are no lines to learn. and you will be guided through all the way. "

Volunteer is obtained from amongst the guests and brought to the floor.

Thank you (name) for volunteering to participate in this our production for an Informative Meeting. As I indicated you will be guided every step of the way by FATE who stands beside you. He will guide you on where to go and what to say.

NARRATOR

Tonight, we travel back through two millennia

To a story, that that great book told

A parable presented now to you tonight

Events that are of a timeless nature

(Narrator pauses for a moment)

Let us begin The parable of the Good Samaritan.

FATE leads TRAVELLER around a first time – stops on North side when . . .

NARRATOR

Who walks this road?

FATE

It is I, Fate, who walks this road

NARRATOR

Whom have you with you?

FATE

I am accompanied by a gentleman of good breeding, hard working and honourable, a pillar of Society, come to visit his friends

NARRATOR

Walk on

TRAVELLER is walked on past South East Corner around a Victim lying at the corner, Stops and turns back to look at victim only at the voice of the Victim

VICTIM

Please oh Please won't someone help me
For I have been struck down and robbed
Please oh Please won't some one help me
For I am badly injured, and cannot rise on my own

TRAVELLER is turned and walked on. STOPS at South when

OUTER GATEKEEPER

Stop who goes there?

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I, a gentleman of good breeding, hard working and honourable, a pillar of Society, come to visit my friends

OUTER GATEKEEPER

Walk on to your friends

TRAVELLER is turned and walked to the West. Stops when

INNER GATEKEEPER

Stop who goes there?

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I a gentleman of good breeding, hard working and honourable, a pillar of Society come to visit my friends

INNER GATEKEEPER

Walk on to your friends

TRAVELLER is turned and walked to North West and stopped

NARRATOR

Time passes by, another traveller appears on the road

FATE leads TRAVELLER around a second time – stops on North side when the Master's asks

NARRATOR

Who walks this road?

FATE

It is I, Fate who walks this road

NARRATOR

Whom have you with you?

FATE

With me I have a rich merchant, a man of means. He comes to visit and trade his wares with other merchants, so the people may have clothes and the possessions of their dreams, and to help wealth to grow.

NARRATOR

Walk on

TRAVELLER is walked on past South East Corner around a Victim lying at the corner, Stops and turns back to look at victim only at the voice of the Victim

VICTIM

Please oh Please won't someone help me
For I have been struck down and robbed
Please oh Please won't some one help me
For I am badly injured, and cannot rise on my own

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I, a rich merchant, a man of means. I come to visit and trade my wares with other merchants, so the people may have clothes and the possessions of their dreams, and to help wealth to grow.

If you wait there I will buy you help when I reach the next town, and send them back to help you.

TRAVELLER is turned and walked on. To the South

OUTER GATEKEEPER

Stop who goes there?

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I a rich merchant, a man of means. I come to visit and trade my wares with other merchants, so the people may have clothes and the possessions of their dreams, and to help wealth to grow.

OUTER GATEKEEPER

And you also will grow rich. Walk on to your business

TRAVELLER is turned and walked on

INNER GATEKEEPER

Stop who goes there?

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I a rich merchant, a man of means. I come to visit and trade my wares with other merchants, so the people may have clothes and the possessions of their dreams, and to help wealth to grow.

INNER GATEKEEPER

And you also will grow rich. Walk on to your business

FATE leads TRAVELLER around a third time – stops on North side when the Master's asks -

NARRATOR

Who walks this road?

FATE

It is I, Fate who walks this road

NARRATOR

Whom have you with you?

FATE

I bring a poor Samaritan, who has had nothing but ridicule and hate from people, who travels this road looking for work or charity so he may feed his family and himself.

NARRATOR

Walk on

When at the South East Corner goes direct to VICTIM and kneels down

VICTIM

Please oh Please won't someone help me
For I have been struck down and robbed
Please oh Please won't some one help me
For I am badly injured, and cannot rise on my own

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I, a poor Samaritan, who has nothing but ridicule and hate from people, who travels this road looking for work or charity so I may feed my family, but I will gladly help you. - Take my hand.

TRAVELLER helps injured man to his feet and supporting him walks VICTIM straight to OUTER GATEKEEPER (No knock)

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

Gate keeper Please help me for I have an innocent man, robbed of all he owns, and grievously injured

OUTER GATEKEEPER

Who may you be?

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I, a poor Samaritan, who has had nothing but ridicule and hate from people, who travels this road looking for work or charity so I may feed my family. But I have found this poor man robbed at the side of the road, and badly beaten. I bring him here for help and assistance.

OUTER GATEKEEPER

Go quickly to the West where you will find help.

Walks on supporting victim straight to INNER GATEKEEPER (No knock)

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

Help me Please.

INNER GATEKEEPER

Who may you be?

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

It is I a poor Samaritan, who has nothing but ridicule from people, but I have found this poor man robbed at the side of the road, and badly beaten. I bring him here for help and assistance.

INNER GATEKEEPER

Welcome, bring him in to our good care.

(INNER GATEKEEPER supports VICTIM's and turns him towards North and the VICTIM sits down– INNER GATEKEEPER turning back to the TRAVELLER again).

We thank you for your kindness. Is there anything that we may provide for you?

TRAVELLER (ASSISTED BY FATE)

No thank you, I am happy that I found a place to give that poor man help, and that is reward enough. I thank you for taking him in and tending to his wounds.

FATE takes TRAVELLER to Left of INNER GATEKEEPER and places him next to INNER GATEKEEPER

INNER GATEKEEPER steps down and takes TRAVELLER by his right hand. Walks him forward to between pillars

INNER GATEKEEPER

Brethren and Guests, I present to you a poor Samaritan, who has had nothing but ridicule and hate from people, Who is happy in his mind at the success of finding help for another human being in need, and satisfied that that is sufficient reward.

NARRATOR

Samaritan, May I congratulate you. The contentment that you found today by helping the victim will live long in your mind. A feeling that you will wish to repeat. By helping others such happiness will be multiplied many times throughout your life, and so allow you to sleep contented more and more.

That ends our playlet Ladies & Gentlemen. However, I would like to thank our Guest Actor for his help in illustrating for us the parable of the Good Samaritan. Please return to your seat.

Fate leads the Participant (TRAVELLER) to his seat. Slight Pause

Perhaps, if any of you ever meet a victim, whether of some large or small circumstance, at some future time, you may be reminded of tonight, and so render assistance. Thank you for your help.

NARRATOR

For our participant who played the parts of the upright citizen, the wealthy businessman and the Samaritan, this was a real experience today. It may have been the nearest he will ever get to having such emotions .

To you our other guest(s) of Masonry, who watched, you will agree that watching is not the same as experiencing. Today we watch many films, TV serials and Shows at the Theatre. Watching is definitely not the same as experiencing.

I hope that you all may have felt some small part of the emotions of the characters he played in this parable tonight. And that you have gained from this experience. I ask

you all to reflect for a moment on what we have seen in the story of the Good Samaritan and how your daily life may benefit from its message.

NARRATOR

There are many reasons that people may give for not helping others in distress. But in all reality they are summed up by one statement

My convenience - is worth more - than my conscience

NARRATOR CONT.

Guests, you will no doubt have noticed that Masons never talked much about Masonry other than to tell you that you might enjoy its fellowship. This is because there are really just 4 points that we may use to talk to any prospective members

- Firstly by telling no secrets but only an outline of the works and history of Masonry.
- Secondly to illustrate the uprightness and morality of Freemasonry by providing names both local, national and international of masons past and present.
- Thirdly by telling of our own experience of the fellowship and friendship that Masonry extends.
- And finally by only providing the information but never trying to influence the decision.

In fact tonight we masons have acted like fishermen. However, we do not cast out a hook by which to catch you. We present to you a ring at the end of the line. A ring has no sharp edges, like Masonry itself. It is the ring of friendship. It requires an individual to hold the ring willingly.

That ring was shown to each of us in some way and we grasped it.

Finally to sum up.

Masonry is not entered by a Mason asking you to join. To become a Freemason each individual must ask to become one. It is quite acceptable for any male to ring a Lodge telephone number and ask to join Freemasonry, whether in a town they have lived for a long or short time. Masonry is a readily available and accessible organisation. It is unusual in two ways,

- New members always ask to join and
- secondly that it zealously guards its ritual, to the extent of obliging secrecy.

In this latter respect we are no different from many professions, crafts and businesses of today. They too have followed the example of those original Stone Masons and guard their techniques, processes, routines and intellectual property by secrecy. Although Industrial espionage may be prevalent in today's world, it is by no means a recent phenomenon. Masonry was the first to try and counteract it.

In the case of Speculative Freemasonry the benefits of such secrecy are in the surprise of discovery, and the ability to make yourself known to other Freemasons when you visit another Lodge where you are not known to be a Freemason.

To become a Freemason there are just 4 requirements

1. Belief in a supreme being. Freemasonry was the first organisation, to adopt this cross religion approach, in 1713.
2. That the applicant be Free and not tied.
3. That the applicant be male
4. The applicant be over 21 years of age.

We thank you for your attendance. We welcome you to our public functions in the future, and hope that you have enjoyed and benefited from this Informative Meeting. We look forward to perhaps welcoming some of you as brothers into this or other lodges. We invite you to join in fellowship and friendship with us in the refectory for tea and refreshments in a few minutes.