

Forgiveness

The Masonic year at our lodge is winding down and the June meeting offers the last chance for us to gather before the lazy, hazy days of summer are upon us. Many of you have not been to a meeting in quite a while for one reason or another. Maybe now is the time to come back...come home to your mother lodge.



If the reason you have not attended is because of your busy schedule, then maybe now is the time to step back, slow down and be among your Masonic family. Maybe you are worried that you may no longer recognize those who are in

attendance but let me re-assure you that you will be among brothers who will be glad to meet you again!

In this time of economic uncertainty, it is now, more than ever, that we all need the arm of a brother around us. A safe haven, so to speak. A very special place where men from different backgrounds and beliefs can come together and can leave the outside world of uncaring and unconcerned people.

If the reason you have not attended is because you feel that you have been offended by someone in the past, maybe now is the time for forgiveness. In a very real sense, forgiveness offers us the opportunity to practice Masonic virtues. We are taught that Charity is a central tenet of Masonry. Forgiveness is a supreme act of Charity because we overlook a brother's action and extend brotherly love to him. When we forgive a brother, we give him the opportunity to renew his oath and his obligations to the brotherhood.

Faith and Hope are also the foundations of our lodge. By forgiving, we demonstrate that we have Faith that our brother, who may have wronged us, will want to rectify his actions. We always have Hope that brotherly love will prevail against all odds.

Has it become passe for us to address one another as brothers? I hope not. The question becomes one of how a group of relative strangers

can create the "mystic tie" of brotherhood. In part, our lodge needs to be a place of refuge where one can commit a human failing and still receive forgiveness. We are taught to "whisper wise counsel" in an erring brother's ear. Yes, the brother may have erred toward us



personally, but are we not guiltier of tearing the fabric of our mystic tie by being unforgiving?

Do we not act less dignified when we are unwilling to extend the hand and heart of brotherly love to a brother? A brother who has wrongfully hurt us is still a

brother who needs to know that we are compassionate. There is little doubt that living the life of a Freemason, according to its principles, is difficult, but it is well worth the effort. What a different world this would be if people followed our Masonic dictates.

The lodge offers an opportunity to practice Masonic virtues and then to go into the world and share them. The root of forgiveness is humility, and all of our Masonic work highlights this characteristic. Let us live the work. Extend the hand of brotherly love and compassion. Sooner or later, you may need a brother to act in kind.