

So you want to be a Senior Deacon?

Here are a few things you should know

THE BASICS

According to Constitution and Code (C&C): Section U 214

- A. To convey orders of the Master in the active duties of the Lodge.
- B. To give fraternal attention to visiting Brethren.
- C. To receive and conduct candidates in the several degrees of Masonry.

LEARN THE RITUAL

This position is critical in the performance of the ritual of the Lodge, both Stated and Special. You are the Custodian of the Three Great Lights of Masonry. Your professional and respectful handling of the opening and closing of the Lodge have a major impact in how the Brethren perceive the significance of the ceremony. Do not cheapen or devalue the importance of this act. If you do, you disrespect your position and to a greater extent Masonry as a whole.

In addition to the ritual for opening and closing a Lodge (or moving between degrees) you must learn the ritual for conduction of a candidate for each degree. This is a very important position and you serve as the figurehead for the candidate on his journey into Masonic enlightenment. How well you conduct yourself during this work can have a profound and lasting impact upon how the newly admitted Brother views Masonry. Treat this work with the utmost respect.

In addition to the ritual for your office (and the ritual for your subordinates), you should learn the ritual for the Junior and Senior Warden during the opening and closing of the Lodge on each Degree, and the ritual for the conduction of business during a Stated Meeting. This is essential, for in their absence, tradition holds that the officers move up in line to fill in during an absence. Learning this ritual in advance of your promotion to that station or place will be invaluable in the following years.

Voting

When a vote is taken on the admittance of a new candidate or to accept an affiliation you will be called upon to conduct the ballot box through its various journeys during the voting process. All eyes will be upon you as you conduct the ballot box and this should be handled with the utmost respect and dignity.

Visiting Brethren

One of your chief duties is to act as a welcoming committee for visiting Brethren. If a Brother has not attended our Lodge before or even if he says he has, but you have not sat in Lodge with him, before the meeting starts, you must find a member of our Lodge who can attest to his good standing in Masonry. If this cannot be done, you must notify the highest ranking officer you can find, in order that the visiting Brethren may be examined to insure his acceptability to sit in Lodge.

If you are able to vouch for the visiting Brethren (or once he has passed examination) you should act as an ambassador of the Lodge. See to it that he feels at home and engage him in conversation.

Ascertain if he has not sat in our Lodge before. If so, protocol dictates that he should be introduced by the Master during the meeting. It will be your job to inform the Master of the need and to escort him before the altar for introduction. Prior to the meeting commencing you should gather his name, Lodge, Lodge Number, city and state of the Lodge, ascertain if he is a Past Master, and if so in what year, as well as if he is currently a Grand Lodge Officer or Medal of Honor Recipient. Learn the ritual for conducting a visiting Brother.

Trestle Board

When the Master schedules a degree, he or the secretary should notify you of the intended work, so that you may build the trestle board for that degree. By the time you reach the level of Senior Deacon, you should be aware of the capabilities of the Brethren who are able to work in the various degrees. Refer to the document on the Construction of a Trestle Board for further guidance in the required positions for each degree.

It is best to rotate brethren between the various roles within a degree, taking into account their capabilities, both ritual-wise as well as physical. With the aging population of our membership, Brethren who possess great ritual knowledge and expertise may not be able to be called upon due to physical limitations.

Try to contact the Brethren as soon as possible to ascertain who will be available to work in the degree and what their preference would be concerning their role. Protocol dictates that you should honor the specific requests of the officers, as to their desired roles, starting with the Master on down. This may not always be possible and should only be taken as a suggestion. The important thing is that we provide the candidate with the most impressive degree that we are capable of giving. Just because someone requests to work a position does not mean that they are capable of doing that position honorable service. Your duty lies to the Candidate and to Masonry as a whole, not to the vanity of a Brother, by insuring that a quality degree is conducted.

Attendance

As an officer you will be expected to be at everything, every time. You should plan to be in Lodge every Monday and Tuesday night for practice or a Special or Stated Communication. You should plan to work at every fundraiser. You should plan to be in attendance at every special function like Fifty Year Pin ceremonies, Widows & Wives Appreciation, Past Master's Dinner, and so forth. You should plan to attend all officer meetings, district meetings and district schools. Yes, you should plan to be at Lodge, or wherever required, each and every time that the doors are open. Is this a realistic expectation? No, but you should do your best to make these things a priority in your scheduling. As an officer you took an additional obligation when you were installed into office, obligating yourself to higher action than a non-officer. Keep your Lodge and/or Masonic calendar handy at all times, so as to reduce the possibility of scheduling conflicts.

REFRESHMENTS

It is your responsibility to act as back-up to the Stewards should additional kitchen staff be needed. Report to the Junior Warden each time you arrive to see if you can be of assistance. Even though you may have served your time as Steward, your duty lies to the service of the Fraternity. Any officer, who feels that he is above serving his Brethren, has no place in the line of Officers. Being an Officer is not to lead, but to serve.

Worshipful Master's Page

To carry orders from the Worshipful Master is not just so much language but an actual responsibility. In former times, during the course of a meeting, if a Master wanted to instruct his Wardens to action, the Master's order was relayed via the Senior Deacon. Report to the Master before each meeting to see if there is any manner in which you may be of service. You will serve as his page, which is signified by your chair being placed to his right, in the East, which is his domain.

HAVE FUN