

THE KEY TENETS OF FREEMASONRY

Freemasonry often uses somewhat dated language throughout its rituals, thereby adding to the poetic flow of its ceremonies and addresses. However this can lead to many Masons wondering what the current meanings of certain important words and phrases are. Tenets are principles, beliefs or doctrines generally held to be true, especially ones that are held in a common belief by members of an organised society. Thus the key Tenets of Freemasonry are our grand principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

With regards to Brotherly Love, who is my brother and what is love? Within Freemasonry, it must be agreed that all our members are Brothers to each other but, perhaps, all those who are not in the Craft also deserve to be so regarded. Love is surely deep affection and a concern for all our fellow Freemasons, be they in our Lodge/Chapter, Province or the United Grand Lodge of England, be that by word of encouragement or by deed.

Relief is the assistance given to all by members of the Craft to those in need of help, both within and without Freemasonry. Helping a Lodge/Chapter member in times of ill health and difficulty is equally as important as a donation to a well deserving charity by a Lodge, often at its annual installation meeting. Major financial assistance to both Masonic and civilian deserving causes usually emanate from Provincial and Grand Lodge charities; these often substantial amounts are a result of donations from individual Masons and thus reflect well on all our charitable efforts. That such benevolent activity is seldom reported outside Masonic circles is a matter for debate. Should the media be made aware of our many charitable efforts or are such actions best kept “in house”? (This is a possible subject for a further “Nugget”.)

Surely, Truth within Masonic circles must demand complete transparency – “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the

truth” is required at all times. Being “economic with the truth” seldom stands the test of time. The truth can hurt but can be delivered in a calm, quiet and private way if it is going to possibly cause pain or concern to a fellow Brother. The truth can also be “good news” and can then be given in a whole hearted, cheerful manner and often in public. We are instructed not to enter a Lodge if we are at variance with or entertain any animosity towards, another Brother. What a sad situation! Surely such differences should be finalised in a peaceful manner well before entering a Masonic meeting.

In conclusion, these three major Tenets are vital in demonstrating to all that we are a loyal and caring society determined to help others, both within and without our organisation. These Tenets also show that we have beliefs and standards and that we try hard to live up to them on a daily basis.

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