



PAPER

The Responsibilities of a Proposer

Summary: Advice for Proposers & Seconders.

Introduction

Proposing a candidate for Freemasonry is much more than signing his 'Form P', it is preparing him for his initiation and supporting him through his early years as a Freemason. The aim of this short guide is to help you assist him in becoming a long term, active Freemason.

Prior to a Proposal

You should know the man concerned and believe he is an ideal candidate; or you would not be considering proposing him. It is very important at this stage that he has a realistic appreciation of the financial and time commitments in joining the fraternity. You will have explained how many Lodge meetings are held in your Lodge and added the possibility of visits to other Lodges, together with the need to attend Lodges of Instruction (Lodges of Development) and social events. So that he understands joining the Lodge is much more than attending a few meetings per year.

Then there are the costs, joining fees, annual subscription, dining fees, alms collections, regalia and perhaps clothes for himself and his partner.

When all this has been fully discussed and you are sure your candidate is fully informed and comfortable with all this, it is prudent to check that his partner is also happy for him to become a Freemason.

Your Lodge may wish to interview the potential candidate, UGLE recommend a small unimposing team carry this out and you as his proposer should accompany him for moral support.

The Proposal

When you are ready to propose him, you should check with your Worshipful Master, Secretary and others.

- Is he known to others in your Lodge?
- Who will you get second your proposal? (someone who knows him, or someone who trusts your judgement enough to second your proposal).

The Secretary should be able to brief you as to what to say and when, if you are not sure, but it is usually done near the end of the meeting, either under 'Proposals' or a 'General Heading'.

The Initiation

You should ensure your candidate arrives in good time, as he will have a little paperwork to complete and your Treasurer will require payment of fees. You should ensure that he is correctly dressed; a black or dark suit, white shirt (no tee shirt underneath), black tie, black socks and black shoes. You should advise him that he will be asked to remove all his jewellery, money and metal objects, and that he will be prompted with any responses he is expected to make. Emphasise that this is an experience shared by every Freemason, the world-over, and is meant to be uplifting, inspiring and above all enjoyed!

The Festive Board

You will probably be expected to propose a short toast to the Initiate, which will need to be prepared well in advance. Its being purpose is simply to introduce the new member to the brethren.

You may want to share your introductory remarks with him, and help him with his response; especially in relation to the 'start and finish', i.e. *'Worshipful Master and Brethren ... W Bro..., I thank you for that very kind toast and you brethren for the way you received it'*.

It might also be helpful to write out what is expected. No-one wants or expects him to say any more than that. He will get plenty of chances to prove his toast-making prowess as he progresses.

The Future

As his Proposer, you have a duty to guide, assist and generally encourage him as he progresses through his own Masonic Journey, in conjunction with the Lodge Mentor, Lecture Master and the Director of Ceremonies.

If he is attending a meeting in a degree above, you should ensure he is accompanied, and if necessary accompany him when he is asked to leave the Lodge. You should also encourage him to visit other Lodges, and whenever possible accompany him; especially on any early visits.

You should also encourage him to attend LOI's, rehearsals, Instructional evenings, 'Light-Blue' gatherings, events and outings; so as to help him to make an advancement in Masonic knowledge.

When he is invited to read a nugget, deliver a piece of ritual or take-office, check that he is ready and not being pressured. Similarly, when he is asked to join the Royal Arch, or some other order, and he will be, again check that he is ready and willing. Also, go over the additional time and financial commitments with him.

We all want your new-made brother to progress through the officers to the Master's Chair and stay in Freemasonry until age or infirmity prevents it. Surveys by the United Grand Lodge of England have identified that a percentage of new-made Masons leave because they did not fully realise what they were joining, or did not understand what is happening in the ceremonies. We should do everything possible to help them prepare; help them understand; help them to get the most from their Masonic experience; and help and support them to develop as Masons and members of the wider community.

Recommended use of Papers

Papers offer a simple, direct means of advancement in a particular aspect of Masonic knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways:

- Read at home for private study
- Shared for pre-reading by members of a discussion group
- Read aloud in Lodge or Chapter, or in an LOI/COI/new members forum
 - Followed by 'any questions'
 - As a precursor to a discussion (in which case much more time is needed, possibly more than double that allocated to the paper itself)
 - Supported by audio-visual aids, if necessary

They can be delivered by a single person or split into bite-sized pieces and read by multiple presenters (in which case, the speaker(s) should have read and practiced the delivery of the paper beforehand).

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version unless otherwise specified.

If the paper is to be used to introduce a discussion, the presenter will need to have thought about the material, done a little research, and prepared some open questions to engage with the audience. Kipling's dictum can be of help in preparing open questions, which should begin with one of his 'serving men', as follows: *'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are, What and Why and When and How and Where and Who'*. Rudyard Kipling

If used as part of an event, the paper should be advertised and promoted by way of trailers, flyers and announcements, in summonses, letters, emails, notice boards, and on social media.

For further papers and other learning materials visit *Solomon* at <http://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

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