



Paper

'Profit and Pleasure may be the Result' Why do we come to the Lodge?

Index

Profit and pleasure - why we come to Lodge.

Summary

An exploration of what makes Freemasons tick and attend Lodge Meetings.

Keywords

Attendance, Enjoyment, Satisfaction, Profit, Pleasure

‘That Profit and Pleasure may be the Result’ (Why do we come to Lodge?)

It’s a good rule in life to ask ourselves fundamental questions about our activities, our general behaviour, and how we approach things. This process questions the validity of what we are doing and the way we are thinking, and, hopefully, it allows us to consider the reasons behind our acts and thoughts. A positive answer should reinforce our attitudes. A negative or even a non-committal answer could change our behaviour if we can overcome the inertia of the familiar and the comfortable.

It goes without saying that one of the important things in our lives is the fact that we come to Lodge, whether regularly or occasionally. Whatever the frequency, we do in fact come, contribute in some way or other, and pay our fees. The fundamental question to be considered is why we come to Lodge. In Masonic language, we could rephrase this by asking what is the ‘Profit and Pleasure’ we derive from it, bearing in mind the effect of our membership on our general way of life, family, friends and wallets.

Let’s remember that we are not asking ourselves why we originally joined our Lodge. That’s quite a different, although closely connected, question. At the time we joined Freemasonry, it’s most likely that we didn’t know a lot about it, and most of our motives were probably social. We may have been introduced by friends or family with their recommendation and encouragement. But we didn’t just join, look around (or ‘survey the precincts of the Temple’ to quote the Bristol Ritual) and leave. We joined and stayed. That’s why we are here today, interested enough to ask ourselves questions about our membership of our Lodge. How many other organisations do we know where individuals often retain unbroken membership for over fifty years, as evidenced by the growing number of Fifty-Year Anniversary Certificates being issued these days?

So, after our initial period of Masonic membership, why did we stay and get involved, despite the costs in money and time this involves? What is it about the Craft that holds our attention, grips our imagination, and causes us to give that degree of commitment that can lead us to learn the Ritual, do administration, and get involved in all the other multifarious aspects of Freemasonry, as well as pay the monetary price?

Do we derive ‘Profit and Pleasure’ from any of these:

- The friendly atmosphere of the Lodge ?
- The Lodge dress code?
- The Ceremonies and Ritual?
- Learning and performing the Ritual?
- The Honours system and the satisfaction of progressing?
- The sense of belonging?
- The dining, conversation and fellowship outside the Lodge room?
- The enjoyment of the social contact for our ladies with other ladies?

May you also get ‘Profit and Pleasure’ from the more subtle and esoteric aspects of Freemasonry:

- Its moral, ethical and social teachings?
- Its place as a good – sometimes only – reference point for our moral and ethical guidance?
- Its harmonisation with, and support of, our religious beliefs?
- Sharing ideals and inspiration for our lives?
- Its commitment to charitable giving?
- Its commitment to Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth?
- Being part of a large international benevolent organisation?

It’s almost certain that at least some of these thoughts have already surfaced in our minds, however far we are along the journey of our Masonic membership. Have we taken the next step and drawn conclusions about the effects on our personal lives and the lives of our fellow members as we have observed them at regular intervals over the years? Or, for newer members, is the initial impact still fresh in our minds?

Here’s just a little food for thought about what the effects of our Lodge membership may be, or have been:

- Does it provide us with emotional and moral fulfillment?
- Do we feel that it helps men, even good men, to become better men?
- Do we think society in general is better for it?
- Do we feel that our local community is better for it?

Freemasonry today is progressing steadily, but surely, on its journey to greater openness, resulting in a closer integration and harmony with society at large, of which we are an important, integral and long-standing part, at all levels.

The days of Freemasonry turning its back, figuratively speaking, on the world are gone. We are now turning our faces outwards and taking our proper place in Society. The Grand Lodge and the Craft in general is seeking to do this as a matter of policy as the climate changes. After all, we have well over a quarter of a million members in England alone, and (with the exception of the National Lottery) we are the single greatest contributors to charity in the country. This inevitably means that, as Freemasons, we shall increasingly need to be able to talk about our Masonic membership to our friends and family at least, as our information officers seek publicity at both national and local levels.

The first step towards this may well be to be clear in our minds and hearts what ‘Profit and Pleasure’ we get from our Masonic membership, so we can give a clear and concise answer to the question ‘Why do we come to Lodge?’

##END##

Recommended use of Papers

Papers offer simple, direct means of advancement in particular aspects 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*).

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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