

What It Means To Be a Mason

by Brother Jeff Young

Have you ever wondered how many people know you are Masons? Soon after becoming a Master Mason, I proudly displayed a Square and Compass emblem on my car's rear window. Soon after, I bought a Masonic ring to wear, showing the world my pride in being a part of this great fraternity. All of these actions were to clearly indicate that I was a proud member of the Masonic Fraternity.

Even with the emblems on my car and the ring on my finger, I began to wonder just how many people know what being a Mason means to me, or what my being a Mason mean to others? I think we can all agree that these questions are hard to answer because there is seldom a tangible way of calculating or quantifying a response. In searching for an answer, maybe we should ask ourselves, "When is the last time I talked to someone about Masonry and what it means to me, particularly with someone not in the Fraternity? When is the last time I went to a Lodge dinner, visited a sick brother or widow, or supported a Lodge event?" It's easy to purchase Masonic emblems, rings, or other merchandise and display them for all to see. It's much harder, and much more rewarding and challenging, to actually perform some physical action that supports the beliefs we profess by displaying Masonic icons.

Think back in time, can you remember the last time someone saw you walking into your Lodge building? I realize many brothers cannot attend Lodge because of health or family and work commitments. But, if you are in this category, have you ever asked a Brother to join you for lunch one afternoon – or even for a coffee – to discuss Masonry? Or, when you do meet up with a Brother, do you only talk about work or the big ballgame?

Let's get a little closer to home. What do you think being a Mason means to your family? Have you told them you are a member of the oldest and greatest fraternity in the world? Do they know that in North America alone, the Masonic family gives nearly \$2 million **a day** to charities? That's right, \$2 million each and every day of each and every year! Does your family see you as a contributor to these great charities, or are you only contributing about \$1 each week by just paying your dues each year. Does your family see you proudly telling others you are a Mason, or only hear you tell your Brothers, "I'm too busy to attend Lodge." Have you shared with your family the significance of the Masonic Funeral or Memorial Service and what it means to Masons everywhere? At Lodge, you always see Brothers sharing the joy of being a Mason. Don't limit this sharing with just your Brothers – or just in Lodge! Be proud to be a Mason! There's an old story I read a while back that typifies this message.

A Mason, let's call him John, was sitting alone in his back yard casually tending a small fire of sticks and limbs he had picked up after a windstorm. As he sat peacefully watching the fire flickering in the breeze, the "Senior Warden" of his Lodge walked up and set down next to him not saying a word. Both felt the warmth of the fire as they set watching the coals glowing red-hot. John, knowing the Senior Warden was going to invite him to Lodge finally said: "Now look brother Senior Warden, I'm a good Mason. I pay my dues each year, other people know I'm a Mason and I don't need to go to any Lodge meetings or events to remain a good Mason".

About that time, a hot coal popped from the fire and landed about a foot away from the others. Both men sat quietly watching as this coal, now sitting all alone, quickly lost its glow and warmth and soon began to die out. The Senior Warden gently guided the coal back into the fire and it soon became red hot again as it shared in the warmth of the others. John, with a smile on his face, casually turned to the Senior Warden and said. "I'll see you in Lodge this week my Brother".