

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDANCE NOTES

DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF EAST AFRICA

The Lodge Mentoring Programme

This Booklet is Published under the authority of The District Grand Lodge of East Africa and compiled by W Bro Anjan A Harkhani.

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MENTORING PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Mentoring Programme is to ensure that every new member enjoys being a Freemason, understands what it is about and becomes involved in his Lodge both in the work and all its activities. Lodges that accomplish this objective will benefit from keen, enthusiastic and committed members who are not only an asset to their Lodge and Freemasonry in general, but also keen to encourage their friends to join as well!

This objective cannot be achieved by one person alone, the Lodge as a whole must welcome, involve and value its new members. In receiving them into our order, their attitude and response to us will depend on how we treat them.

At the start of the Initiation Ceremony the candidate is told that he can “follow your leader with a firm but humble confidence” and so begins a symbolical journey from darkness to light, from ignorance to Masonic Knowledge. The work of the Mentor is to be the new mason's guide, leader and coach once the ceremony has finished, to explain not only the

workings, traditions and organisation of our Institution, but also to lift the veil of allegory and reveal the meaning behind the symbols so that the new mason can enjoy and understand the organisation that he has joined.

Thus the whole focus of Masonic Mentoring is to enable the new Mason to grow in knowledge, involvement and confidence in masonry so that he can benefit from and enjoy his membership.

THE MENTOR

We will first look at the Mentor and his role and then how the Lodge can make it possible for him to achieve the objectives. The Oxford Dictionary defines a Mentor as “An inexperienced person's advisor”.

The Candidate's Sponsors will in many cases assume the role of Mentor. However, it may be an advantage sometimes to have a third party involved who can focus on the new Brother for the first two or three years of his membership of the Lodge and oversee his education and introduction to freemasonry.

It is the Mentor's responsibility to ensure that the new member is made to feel welcome, understands

Freemasonry, what is required of him and what he can look to receive from it, and is involved in the activities and work of the Lodge. To be able to do this the Mentor must be an enthusiastic Mason, keen to take on the role and a good communicator. He will need to be an experienced Mason, not necessarily a Past Master.

The first and most important attribute for a Mentor is that he relates to his charge and that they get on well together and enjoy each other's company. The Mentor will then introduce the new mason to his friends in the Lodge and immediately increase his circle of friends. It is likely, but not necessary, that the Mentor has himself only become a mason quite recently perhaps in the last five years or so and may not have the in-depth knowledge to fulfil his task. If the view is taken that only knowledgeable Masons can be Mentors then it is likely that they will be of a different generation to their charges and while they may relate, the new Mason could find himself in the company of men much older than, and of different interest, to himself.

THE LODGE

It is the responsibility of every Lodge to look after its members and it needs to ensure that a Mentor is appointed for each of its candidates. Lodges may adopt various procedures for doing this. One of the most effective is to appoint a brother to co-ordinate the scheme. This brother should not shoulder the responsibility of acting as a Lodge Mentor because each candidate needs his own guide to whom he can relate. It would also be too onerous for one brother to look after more than one candidate properly as will be seen in the Guidance Notes that follow.

GUIDANCE NOTES

The appointment of the Mentor cannot be too soon. If he is to be one of the candidate's proposers this is easily achieved, but if it is to be another brother then he should be involved as soon as possible so that the candidate can have someone to refer to from the start.

INITIAL MEETING BEFORE THE BALLOT

The Proposers meet the Candidate and his family at the Candidate's home or at another convenient place and answer any questions they may have regarding Masonry. If another brother is to act as Mentor they will probably wish to involve him in this meeting.

The following points should be considered in the discussions with the Candidate:-

- Does he believe in a Supreme Being?
- Are his moral and mental standards satisfactory?
- Will his acceptance create financial or domestic problems?
- Is he prepared for the time commitment that membership might involve?
- Is he prepared to support the charitable aims of the Order?
- What are his motives for joining Freemasonry?
- Does his family support his wish to become a Freemason?

In particular, we need to be satisfied that he is not seeking to become a Freemason because he expects that membership will advance him in his business, or provide him with a material gain or preference.

Explain the procedure and reasons for Balloting for new members and that he will have to be interviewed and why. Explain that a brother will act as his Mentor. The Candidate and his family will get their first impression of the Craft from this meeting so ensure that it is a favourable one.

The Candidate and his family must be given copies of the five Grand Lodge booklets namely:

- What is Freemasonry
- Freemasonry and Society
- Freemasonry and Religion
- Regular Freemasonry and Public Affairs
- Freemasonry's External Relations

Upon the election of the Candidate for Initiation the lodge should send the Candidate a congratulatory letter which should also inform him of the proposed date of his Initiation, the fees he will have to pay and the correct dress for the evening.

The Proposers, or Mentor, must inform the Candidate of what is expected of him at his Initiation. The Proposers, or Mentor, must also ensure that the Candidate and his lady are invited to any forthcoming open Lodge functions. The Proposers, or Mentor, must find out if the Candidate has any particular

Masonic friends or associates who would like to be invited to attend in the conferral of the Degrees. Above all, the Proposers and Mentor will make the new Brother a part of the Masonic Family.

THE NIGHT OF THE INITIATION CEREMONY

Upon arrival at the Lodge building, the proposer should ensure that the candidate is welcomed by the Worshipful Master and some of the members. He should be introduced to the Tyler and the Junior Deacon who should put him at his ease and explain that he is not expected to say anything unless he is prompted to do so. When the Lodge is being opened he should, preferably, not be left on his own, but if he is it should be explained that the Tyler will come and collect him after a short while.

It is recommended that the Mentor assigned to the Candidate should be formally invited to the pedestal by the Worshipful Master, and introduced to the Candidate immediately after the Charge is delivered. After the meeting the Mentor must look after the Candidate by showing him where to leave his Apron, taking him to the Bar and seeing that he is introduced to the Brethren.

At subsequent meetings the Mentor should sit with the candidate both in the Lodge Room and at the Dinner afterwards, making sure he is introduced to as many of the Lodge members as possible.

AFTER INITIATION

THE MENTOR'S WORK

The Candidate meets with the Mentor a minimum of FOUR times:

- 1) Following the First Degree, prior to the Second Degree
- 2) Following the Second Degree, prior to the Third Degree
- 3) Following the Third Degree
- 4) One month after the third session to discuss the continuing Education Programme as designed by the Lodge and the District.

The Candidate needs to know and understand his duties as a Mason and what his rights and privileges are. He should be taught how to visit other Lodges and the Mentor should take the opportunity to arrange visits to other Lodges where he can see the Ceremony he has recently taken part in. He needs

information about the traditions and work of the Craft as a whole.

It must be stressed that the duties of a Mentor continue until his charge has become involved in a Lodge of Instruction. Do not leave the newly made Mason alone to fend for himself after the Third Degree. For far too long, new Candidates have been brought into the Craft enthusiastic and eager to become active members, only to be neglected by their Lodge. A properly educated, oriented, and interested new Mason is an ACTIVE member of his Lodge. The Mentoring Programme is the first step to membership retention and expansion.

N.B. If there is to be a meeting where a superior degree ceremony is to take place and the Candidate has to leave the Lodge for a while the Mentor should accompany him. This is an excellent opportunity for further instruction especially if there is another new Mason in the same position.

FIRST MEETING:

Location: The Lodge Room is best.

Educational Material: The Book of Constitutions and the Peterborough booklet.

Suggested subjects to discuss:

- The Initiation Ceremony.
- The Signs, Token and Word.
- The Organisation of the Lodge, the Lodge Officers.
- Masonic Etiquette and Protocol.
- The Festive Board.
- Brief History of Freemasonry.
- The questions to be answered in the next ceremony.

SECOND MEETING:

Location: Again, The Lodge Room is preferable

Educational Material: As for first meeting.

Suggested subjects to discuss:

- The Second Degree Ceremony
- The Signs, Token and Word.
- Masonic Aprons and Collars
- Masonic Jewels.
- District Charities and associations.
- The questions to be answered in the next ceremony.

THIRD MEETING:

Location: The Lodge Room

Educational Material: The same as the other meetings

Suggested subjects to discuss:

- The Third Degree Ceremony.
- The Signs, Token and Word.
- The Five Points of Fellowship.
- Visiting other Lodges.
- The Organisation of The District Grand Lodge and The United Grand Lodge of England.
- District Charities.
- Honours given to Grand and District Grand Officers.
- Grand Charities, their structures and aims.
- The way forward to the Master's Chair.

FOURTH MEETING:

Location: The Lodge Room

Present: The Mentor, the new Master Mason, the Preceptor of the Lodge of Instruction.

Suggested subjects to discuss:

- The Grand Lodge Certificate
- Joining the Lodge of Instruction
- Learning the Ritual.
- The responsibilities of Lodge Officers, especially the Master in his year of office.
- Discuss any special contribution the new Master Mason can make to the Lodge
- Joining the Royal Arch.

LODGE OF INSTRUCTION

It is regretted that so many new Brethren are ignored after they receive the Third Degree. Often they are left to their own devices and to fend for themselves. If the Lodge can retain their interest during this most critical period of their Masonic careers and give them guidance and encouragement until they have had time to form habits of interest and activity for themselves, they will develop into working, active Masons. Otherwise they are likely to stop attending after a few meetings and either lapse into chronic indifference, or find their way to some other more attractive activity. It is therefore important that the Mentor and the Proposer introduce the Candidate to a Lodge of Instruction as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION:

If the Mentoring Programme is followed, the Lodge will have a new member with a clear understanding of the fundamentals of Freemasonry and who will have met and enjoyed the company of the members of the Lodge. By joining the Lodge of Instruction he will have become involved in the ritual and ceremonial proceedings of the Institution. He should therefore be in a position to thoroughly enjoy his Freemasonry.

In short, by looking after, taking care of and instructing the new Brother, the Lodge has gained a valuable new addition to its membership and the Craft in general is strengthened with a strong link in the chain.