

## MASONIC CHARITY

Are we doing enough to take care of our Masonic Companions? When we attend Chapter and one of our members is absent, do we know why? Do we know if they're ok?

It's hard to believe that in the Jurisdiction of Ontario there are few, if any, requests for benevolence in the different Grand bodies of Masonry. I don't believe that we can feel comfortable that we are that fortunate to have so few in need for assistance throughout our Jurisdiction.

Perhaps we get so wrapped up in our Masonic duties and everyday life that we pass over our Masonic charity to our Companions. We need to remind ourselves that we are foremost a Brotherhood, and our foremost duty therefore should be to our Companions. I think that in the politically-correct world that we live in, the pendulum has swung too far. We don't need to explain or justify why we are Masons. We are because we want to be, it's personal, and it's not suited to everyone. After all, we are descended from the same stock, are partakers of the same nature and share in the same hope and have a sincere desire for brotherly love.

And I believe that our number two charitable duty is to our neighbour. Our ritual teaches this, beginning with the final charge in the First degree; the duties we owe to God, to our neighbour and to ourselves. Those beautiful charity lessons which are taught in so much of the ritual in the different Masonic degrees, we must practice in the community in which we live. In short, let us follow the Golden Rule.

Unfortunately, sometimes I think that we apply our charitable efforts for the wrong reasons: to be awarded a jewel, to get a tax receipt, or - membership has its awards, where relatives of members are the charitable recipients.

Companions, we should remind ourselves that charity is not a right or entitlement, but a gift that should be given freely and without any expectation of receiving anything in return.

In conclusion, I ask: as Royal Arch Masons how should we measure success? Is it by the number of titles and ranks that we bestow or hold, the size of our membership and the size of our Foundations; OR, is it by the way we live and act towards our Companions, towards our neighbours and by the level and quality of the harmony we share when we meet together?

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