

Can we be involved in Masonic activities

Family and family values, as well as good friendships, are an important part of Freemasonry and families and friends are frequently invited to join in with what we do. Freemasonry can provide men and their families with a full and active social life with like-minded people from all walks of society. Friends and families are frequently invited to take part in a range of events both formal and informal, from balls and banquets to family picnic days and barbecues; weekends away with our friends; sponsored activities for charities in the community; children's parties and the like.

It is acknowledged from the start that a Freemason's family and work must always take precedence over his Masonic membership, but after that, it is equally important that a Mason's family understands his Masonic associations and supports him in that part of his life.

How much time is a Mason expected to spend on Freemasonry

Just as when joining any other social organisation, this will depend on the extent of the man's enthusiasm and interest. Lodge meetings are usually held monthly (though most Lodges do not meet in the summer) and if they are to make sense of the organisation members need to attend regularly.

If a man decides to take a more active role within his Lodge, the amount of time he will dedicate to Freemasonry will increase. Similarly he will hope that his friends and family will be with him at the associated Masonic activities which occur throughout the year such as dinners, formal and informal, fundraising events and the many other social and charitable initiatives which a particular Lodge might organise.

What costs are involved in joining Freemasonry

As with most organisations, annual membership fees are expected of members and these vary from Lodge to Lodge. For example, a Lodge that values fine wine and cuisine after their meetings would be more expensive than a Lodge which opts for plainer fare. No two Lodges are the same; every Lodge has an individual character and it is important that a candidate choose a Lodge which is right for him. When first becoming a Freemason a man will also have to pay a one-off joining fee (which also varies) and purchase Masonic Regalia.

In comparative terms, however, the cost of membership of a Golf Club, for example, is usually a far more expensive proposition!

Is Freemasonry a religion

It most emphatically is not. Because our traditions and ancient history give, in the popular mind, a certain impression of mystery, some have assumed that Freemasonry has some religious purpose.

Freemasonry has a *moral* purpose but as long as a member is able to profess a belief in God, Freemasonry quite deliberately does not involve itself in the nature of his personal worship. Our membership being diverse and including men of many faiths, the name of God, is quite deliberately referred to as 'The Great Architect of the Universe' and is used at all our meetings (for example we still say Grace before dinner). Otherwise all discussion of religion (and politics, incidentally) is forbidden at a Masonic meeting, and men of all faiths can be found side by side and at ease in a Freemasons' Lodge.

It is noteworthy that the Lodges in Ireland are governed

by just one Grand Lodge of Ireland, regardless of which side of the border they meet; and at a recent lodge meeting in Israel, at Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee, one of our members found himself, a Christian, sitting beside Arab and Jewish Masons as they worked a bilingual ceremony. Afterwards, they all dined together in unity.

What charitable work is Freemasonry involved in

Freemasonry is a major charitable institution and donates millions of pounds each year in assisting others: both to Masonic organisations and to those with no such connections. We fund projects for the infirm, the elderly, the disadvantaged and the young. Every Hospice in the land receives an annual grant from The Freemasons. We contribute, for example, to the Scout and Guide



North West Air Ambulance
Supported by West Lancashire Freemasons

movements, the Air Ambulances, and the Samaritans. There can be few areas of society where Freemasonry has not helped those with needs.

Regular contributions to charity are expected of a Freemason, but he gives only what he can afford, and it is done privately.

Why can't women become Freemasons

But they can. There are distinguished and dignified organisations for ladies who wish to be Freemasons. They have their own traditions and purposes that are similar to ours. They do not admit men just as we do not admit women.

What will a man get out of Freemasonry

As a Freemason, it is our hope that a man will feel part of a centuries-old but modern international organisation, which is determined to play a part in encouraging good and thoughtful conduct; a love of family and friendship, an instinct to help others and a desire to have enjoyment in good company.

If you would like to know more then please ask the person who gave you this leaflet or contact:

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FR E E M A S O N R Y

A Guide

Partners, Families & Friends



Why would a man wish to become a Freemason

Freemasonry is unique. It is unlike any other institution in that it offers experiences not found elsewhere.

Freemasons are ordinary men from every walk of life, of all religions and backgrounds. They share a concern for human values, moral standards and the importance of helping others.



Freemasonry is an organisation that supports self-development and promotes family and community values. It offers opportunities for public service and hands-on involvement in charitable and community issues.

It provides the opportunity to meet with men from all walks of life in the absence of religious, political or social barriers.

What is Freemasonry

Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest and largest fraternal societies. There are approximately five million Freemasons throughout the world and more than three hundred thousand English Masons. It is a non-profit-making organisation, committed to supporting charitable causes and to bringing people together.

The particular bond which makes Freemasonry unique is the traditional manner in which we conduct our ceremonies. We have inherited these ceremonies and traditions from our predecessors hundreds of years ago and by 'working' them at our meetings they are preserved, providing a dignified and a splendid context to our meetings.

It is by means of these ceremonies that a man is gradually introduced to and helped to understand the meaning of our organisation.

Our ceremonies date from a time when lessons and ideas were taught and explained by demonstration and simple symbolism rather than in writing. It is through these ceremonies, in which we all participate, that the values and instincts which we believe characterise a good man, and a Mason, are explained to our new members.

Freemasonry is old; its precise origins are not clear, but certainly our ceremonies are related to the working practices of medieval stonemasons who, as highly skilled craftsmen, formed themselves locally into 'Lodges' in order to preserve the standards of their work and protect their skills and the secrets of their trade. An Apprentice Mason was introduced into full membership of that Lodge by means of a series of ceremonies and tests by which he gradually proved that his skill was such that he deserved to become a full member of the Lodge.

By the early eighteenth century these practical ceremonies and tests had evolved into symbolic ceremonies with moral meanings. The ceremonies which we 'work' now are substantially the same. Mozart was made a Mason in a ceremony very similar to that of a new Mason today.

Whilst our ceremonies are ancient, they teach us and remind us about the most important issues in our modern world.

So is Masonry a secret society

Absolutely not! We are proud for you to know we exist; what we do and why we do it. We welcome as members all good men who feel that they would want to do what we do. Just as the ancient stonemasons did, we meet in private and as the new Mason progresses to full membership, he is successively taught new symbolic 'secrets', which are only applicable within the Lodge and which he is expected not to disclose.

By continuing in this traditional manner, we believe that each new Mason comes to realise, with unique clarity, that he has joined a substantial organisation with serious moral purpose.

In the course of his earliest ceremony the new Mason must publicly declare his clear understanding that he is not joining Freemasonry in the expectation of gaining

any worldly advantage from doing so and that there will be no place for him within the fraternity should he attempt to do so. We make no secret of this.

Is there more to Masonry than ceremonies

Our ceremonies only take up part of our evenings together, and once we have left our Lodge Room we

usually enjoy drinks and a dinner together in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. We regularly invite our ladies and men who are not Masons to join us at some of our Festive Boards (as we call them). In this way we hope the warmth and enjoyment of our gatherings can be made clear to more people.



Masons preparing for a ceremony