

Which Committees or Service Opportunities Offer the Best Fit for the New Member?

Each lodge has several committees already in place. As a new brother progresses through the degrees, inform him of the lodge's activities and program, as well as the committees and other service opportunities that are available. There are many opportunities for service – line officer, handyman, auditor, and chef – just to name a few. Ask the new member what interests him -- and don't be afraid to ask if he has a particular area of expertise that may benefit the lodge. Many hands make light the work!

What Other Masonic Activities Are Available?

Although we all would like new brothers to remain active in their Blue Lodges, several appendant bodies within Freemasonry offer the opportunity to gain further Masonic light. These bodies need our participation as well. We should be looking to share information on the York and Scottish Rites, Eastern Star, the Shrine, and similar organizations with new members, taking care not to overwhelm our new brothers with too much information. Everyone can find a niche in Freemasonry, and it's up to us to freely offer what is available.

What Is the Desired Outcome of Having an Effective Mentoring Program in Place?

Your lodge will have a successful Mentoring program when you have new brothers who feel at home. They will be comfortable at lodge, will look forward to upcoming meetings, have a desire to participate, and will look to introduce their family, friends and co-workers to a fraternity of true friends and brothers.

You will also find:

- More informed brothers
- Regular and more predictable attendance
- Comfortable interaction with others
- A desire for more opportunities within the Craft
- Possible officer interest
- A future Mentor

When Does Mentoring End?

Mentoring never really ends. You certainly want to be sure the new brother is comfortable coming to lodge regularly and feels as though he is contributing. If he doesn't attend a meeting, call him. Keep in regular contact after the Third Degree.

As times goes by, we are not mentoring as much as we are just being brotherly. We are here for each other, and we will naturally look to those we trust for advice and direction.

Retention is a Good Indicator of Success

With the large number of men joining the Fraternity over the last several years, the lodges that seem to have the greatest number of brothers remaining active following the degree process are those that have implemented a Mentor program.

Many lodges see candidates finishing their degrees and not returning. It's easy to say that they were not the right fit. However, maybe we didn't meet their expectations? Maybe they were looking for us to get them engaged within the lodge and to help them get active. Maybe they hoped there would be someone who would introduce them at meetings.

The number one reason for brothers not returning is that they don't feel they belong. Let's fix this!

A Mentor program in your lodge is not a difficult or complex thing to put in place. It is a series of steps during the degree process that ensures the candidate knows what is coming next, knows what is expected of him, and has someone "in whose fidelity he might with safety confide."

A lodge needs to have at least as many Mentors as Candidates. It's also a good idea to continually train new brothers so they can step in as good Mentors on short notice.

Mentoring is not handholding. It is a brotherly grip that says, "Follow me...I will help you."

It is pivotal during the period the Mentor is working along side the new brother that the spouse and family members are included. What activities could they be invited to attend? What lodge functions are coming up that they could take part in? Let's not forget that without their support and encouragement, it will make lodge attendance a very difficult reality.

Massachusetts Masonic
Education & Training



Blue Lodge
Boston, Massachusetts



Cable-Tow Brothers ***Lodge Mentoring Program***

"Strengthening the Candidate Experience"



For additional information:

Membership Development Committee
www.MasonicAmbassadors.net

What Is a Mentor?

A Cable-Tow Brother, a mentor, is a member of your lodge, appointed by the lodge's Mentor Chairman (who in turn is appointed by the Master). His job is to work systematically with a candidate (or a newly raised brother) as he begins his Masonic journey. There is a lot to learn in the first several months of joining the Craft, and it is important to have someone by each candidate's side to guide him.

Why Does a New Member Need a Mentor?

Keeping in mind the old adage "numbers don't lie," most lodges have a retention rate of fewer than 20% of new Masons who maintain regular attendance over their first 24 months. Too many brothers are not finding what they are looking for once they join. It's not because the substance is lacking -- but it may be as simple as that the substance never was introduced to them.

The position of Mentor has been created to assist in educating a brother throughout and after the three degrees, to explain the "big picture" of Freemasonry to him, and see to it that there is an understanding of the myriad of service opportunities available within the Craft.

Isn't the Sponsor a Mentor?

Ideally, a sponsor would be not only a good friend or relative, but also one who is aware and comfortable with the content as well as nuances of each degree. He would sit side-by-side with the new brother at the degrees, the Lodges of Instruction, and when attending other Masonic functions.

Unfortunately, there are times when a Sponsor isn't available or "battle ready" to guide a candidate through the degrees. It could be that he lives some distance away; perhaps his work schedule doesn't allow him to attend all the necessary meetings; maybe he hasn't been in lodge for some time and doesn't recall the particulars of each degree, let alone the nuances.

Without question, many Sponsors are well equipped to serve as a Mentor. Alternatively, the Sponsor could work collaboratively with an appointed lodge Mentor to create an even better candidate experience. The only rule to follow is to do whatever makes the most sense to ensure the candidate receives a thorough, quality introduction to Freemasonry, the lodge, its members, and the necessary instruction.

Who Should Be a Mentor?

A Mentor should be a brother who has a certain level of experience in Masonry. He should have the time available to attend to the new brother, especially during the first three months. The Mentor who is appointed will hopefully have things in common with the candidate and won't look at the Mentor role as an imposition, but as a great opportunity to build a friendship.

What Role Does a Mentor play?

With so much information being presented; stories being told, lessons being learned, the Mentor acts as an advisor and teacher. A candidate doesn't know what's coming next, and no one wants to do something that may be improper. The Mentor will be their guide throughout the process. The Mentor knows what information needs to be imparted, and they will be the one who will help the candidate know what is expected of them.

To Whom Should the Mentor Report?

Before a candidate can progress from one degree to another, they are expected to be proficient. A Mentor should have someone that they can go to and ask for guidance if an issue or question arises. The Master of the lodge should appoint a Mentor Chairman. He should be consulted first, and direction can be given from there.

When Should a Mentor Be Appointed?

Taking into consideration the information offered in the application form, it may be possible for the Master to choose a Mentor from what has been presented. If this is the case, the Mentor could be a part of the Investigating Committee for that applicant. This is an ideal opportunity to ask questions of the Mentor and family, and hopefully the Mentor and candidate will be a good fit for each other. If not, notify the Master right away for someone who may be better suited for them.

What Should Be Done Each month During the Degree Process?

Before anything else, the candidate should be given a complete schedule of all the events that will be coming up during the degree process. It should include dates for the degrees, Lodges of Instruction, Cipher instruction, etc. You may also want to include other activities that would be available to the new brother, such as Table Lodges, Blood drives, other activities within the district, etc. You should also:

- Contact the new brother before any meetings and see if they need a ride. Let them know a reasonable time they can expect to be home so this can be communicated to their spouse/partner.
- Be sure they know what to wear
- Explain to them, as best as you can, what will be happening that evening. No one likes surprises or to be embarrassed.
- Introduce them to everyone at the meeting
- Find other brothers who may have similar interests
- Never leave them alone! If you have to leave for a time, be sure to introduce them to someone who will remain with them
- Assist them in pursuing the criteria for the Master Mason Rookie Award

Don't Forget to Ask Questions!

When an applicant asks to join the fraternity, they have thought long and hard about what they are looking for. In doing this, they have set expectations for what they want. The only way we can find out what those expectations are is to ask questions.

We build friendships by getting to know one another, and this comes through a dialogue of questions and answers.



A Cable-Tow Brother Offers the Hand of a Brother!