

THE FIVE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP

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The central bonds that hold Freemasonry together are found in the obligations we have taken and the commitment to which we honor them. The word fraternity has its origins in the Latin word "Frater," which means "Brother." Thus, our Fraternity is a Brotherhood, or sacred band of Brothers, committed to mutual support, understanding, and affection. The symbol which best communicates our commitment is the Five Pointed Star, presented in the Master Mason's Degree. Each point of the star represents a point of fellowship and reminds us of our obligations to each other. As a group of equals, the Five Pointed Star should guide our actions toward one another.

With the first point of fellowship, we are instructed to go by foot to answer the needs of others, but more especially that of a Brother Freemason. This is not to say we ignore others in our benevolent acts, but rather that we look carefully not to ignore our Brothers in need. Beyond helping with Masonic instruction and guarding a Brother's fidelity, we should strive to insure our Brethren reach their potential and serve the Order to the fullest. Helping them to improve themselves helps us be better Freemasons.

Within the second point of fellowship, we find the power of prayer, especially prayer directed for the benefit of a fallen Brother. When we kneel to pray, we call upon the most powerful force to bring about good. Acknowledging our dependence upon The Most High can lead to the wisdom to see His path, the courage to choose that path above all others, and the strength to carry out His will. Clarity of action and concern for the welfare of our Brethren makes Freemasonry a stronger Fraternity.

With the third point of fellowship, we are reminded of the responsibility of trust. Holding in our heart the secrets of our Brother Freemason is a sacred responsibility. We do have some discretion with those secrets, but our honor requires treating them with the utmost respect. When communicated to us confidentially, a Brother's words are to be securely guarded, as we would wish our own words to be properly guarded. We earn the trust of others by giving trust, and our Brother is our most trusted friend.

In the fourth point of fellowship, we are charged to support the character of our Brother, either before his face or behind his back. In an age when people eagerly seize rumors concerning the conduct of others, we must guard the character and integrity of our Brethren on all occasions. As Freemasons we are charged to erect our Masonic edifices, not tear them down, and a careless word can do more harm than good.

With fifth point of fellowship, we are encouraged to give wise counsel to our Brother Freemason and to support him in his time of need. In Ancient Craft Masonry, the hand symbolized the support, while the whispered counsel, if found worthy, was equally common. The key is to see the responsibility of communicating good advice and providing support and help in implementing that advice. No matter who we are, we will need some help at some time, and, as Freemasons, we should strive to be available to offer our assistance to others when needed.

Thus the Five Pointed Star reminds us to extend love and affection to our Brother Freemasons, doing for each of them as we would wish done for each of us. Each point carries an important lesson and responsibility found within the teachings of the Third Degree. Never forget that five-pointed ritual and the bonds that unite us into a sacred band of friend and brothers who strive to emulate the love of the Supreme Grand Architect of the Universe.