

Brethren,

The following was an address made by Worshipful Doug Jones, Metropolitan Lodge's Master in 2007. It was presented as our Lodge Education Moment during our June 2009 Stated but dealt with the subject of an impending dues increase. His thoughts are literally "Thought Providing" and I encourage you to read on.

Fraternally,

Tom Wadkins, Senior Warden / Webmaster

June 12, 2009

What's In It For Me?

Have you ever heard anyone say, or maybe someone has asked you, what's in Masonry for me? At a time when our economy is turned upside down, and when so much of what we hear on the news makes us wonder where our great country is headed, and yes we are talking about things like a dues increase, this is a pretty good question and I think it goes to the heart of Freemasonry.

Any conversation about Masonry seems to dance around this topic as if it were too low-minded a question to try to answer directly. Why would anyone want to go through so much trouble to join an organization that has no obvious benefit? The secret, **as you all know**, is not that there are no benefits, maybe though, those benefits are not so obvious.

Here are some reasons to think about.

Masonry means friendship. My primary reason for joining the Craft was to make new friends and to be a part what appeared to be a very fine fraternity made up of many great men. I like to come to Lodge and hang out with my friends and hash over different things that are going on. Like many of you, I just like to talk. I like to listen and watch my Brothers as they share in fellowship. I like to watch my friends give a lecture that has been said the same way for hundreds of years, but do it in a way that is a little bit different than the last guy. I like to see them succeed. If they screw up, well, I don't really mind because I know that next time it will be better and their success will be that much sweeter. We all meet on the level and I can say with confidence many of my best friends are here in this Lodge room.

Masonry keeps you sharp. Your mind needs exercise as badly as your body. The memory work of Masonry is unlike anything I have ever done in my life. I thought I would hate it and wondered if I would ever be able to learn everything that was required of me. Actually, sometimes I probably did hate it and have asked myself the question why on earth am I doing this. But the truth be told, more than anything, I love it!! The mental calisthenics of learning a new part in a Degree, a prayer or a lecture has taught me, and many of you, that I can do far more than I ever thought possible.

Masonry is also entertainment. My life, like yours, is busy. Very busy in fact. Work and family seems to expand to fill every possible moment. The schedules of the Lodge and other appendant bodies force a break. I know years in advance I have an appointment on the second Thursday of every month. I know that if I don't show up, someone will notice. Not only will they notice, they will probably wonder if I am okay. Our programs at Stated Communications are almost always excellent and even when it turns out to be something that does not appeal to me, the fellowship always makes me glad I came. In fact, every time I go home after attending Lodge, I have an improved outlook on life, and I am reassured that the world is bigger than the space I occupy, and all of those things that demand so much of my attention, sure they're important, **but so are each of you.**

Masonry makes you proud. The driving force of this and every Masonic Body is to do good. We help our members, we help our community and certainly we help ourselves. Every time we consider involving ourselves in something, the first and often only issue on the table is how will this benefit the Fraternity, the members, or the community. Seldom, if ever, have I heard a Brother ask what's in it for me. They already seem to know. I have never found any other group that comes even close to such a glorious purpose. When I find myself talking about what my Masonic Bodies are up to, it is always with tremendous pride.

So, as we discuss some tough topics, topics that I might add are worthy of a fair debate, you may **ask what's in it for me.** You may wonder if it is worth the investment of time, energy, and yes, your dollars.

If those questions are on your mind tonight, I would simply ask that you look around the room, this "sacred band or society of friends and Brothers" held together by the "cement of brotherly Love and Affection." Just think about all the good men you now call friend and Brother, think about the experiences and fellowship we have shared and soak in the rich history of our Lodge. So, is it worth the investment of time, energy and dollars--what's in it for me.....

Look around my Brothers.....

Worshipful Master, thank you.

(Source: The Scottish Rite Journal, February, 2001)