

FUNERAL SERVICE

Masonic burial is a privilege, not an absolute right. The Lodge may bestow or deny it; and it may be extended to non-affiliated Masons in good standing, as well as to members of the Lodge. It is for the Lodge and its Master to determine. No worthy Mason should be denied this sacred rite.

In case of death of a sojourner, the Master should immediately contact the deceased brother's Lodge for instructions.

The privilege of Masonic burial may be extended to include Master Masons of record, Master Masons who have not taken their proficiency, Fellowcraft Masons and Entered Apprentice Masons. This privilege may also be extended to non-affiliated Masons in good standing and to members of the Lodge at the discretion of the Worshipful Master.

The Master, or a Warden in his absence (or a competent Brother called by him to preside for the time being) shall officiate in the funeral ceremonies, during all of which the Lodge shall remain open on the M. M. degree, or as a Lodge of Sorrow. The brethren shall be properly clothed and none but Master Masons in good standing shall assume our funeral habiliments.

All brethren in attendance at a funeral should be properly clothed in dark suits, wearing white gloves, aprons outside of outer garments, crape upon the left arm, and the customary evergreen on left lapel of coat.

The Master's gavel, Warden's columns, Deacons' and Stewards' rods, Marshal's baton and Tyler's sword should be tied with black crape.

The Secretary should prepare, in duplicate, an Obituary Roll containing the name of the deceased, date and place of birth, dates of receiving the degrees, date and place of death, date of burial and name of Lodge performing the service. After the Roll is read it is copied in the minutes and deposited in the Archives of the Lodge, and a duplicate, tied with crape, deposited in the grave.

A Lodge shall not attend a funeral in Masonic clothing unless so requested by the brother in his life-time or by his near relatives after his death. If it is desired and so requested by near relatives, the Lodge may attend a funeral service in a Body clothed as Masons, without having any part in the service whatsoever.

In preparing for funeral services, the expressed desires and wishes of departed brother as well as those of near relatives should be respected. Close coordination with the family as well as with officiating Clergy can prevent ill-will and misunderstanding.

A Lodge, which has been invited to officiate at the burial of a brother, shall have entire charge of the funeral procession. After the Masonic Services have ended, there should be no further service, except that there will be no objection to pronouncement of a benediction by an ordained Minister, selected by the bereaved, following the Masonic Services or the rendition of Military Honors, or both. This prohibition shall not apply in event there is a further service at a different place in which the Lodge does not participate.

If societies composed solely of Masons be invited to take part in the procession, they shall serve as an escort to the Lodge, and shall follow the musicians. Societies not so composed shall follow the mourners. The Lodge performing the ceremony shall be immediately in front of the hearse. The pall-bearers should be Master Masons clothed as such, but in extenuating circumstances, as many as three non-Masons may act in that capacity. Selection of pall-bearers should be made in advance with the approval of near relatives.

It is proper for a Lodge to escort the remains of a brother to the place of shipment when interment is to take place elsewhere.

The House or Church Service may, if deemed advisable, be extended to include the entire service to the conclusion of the Funeral Hymn.

For the purpose of burial of the dead, if the officiating Lodge has not opened a Lodge of Sorrow, the Master may open his Lodge in the lodge room of any constituent Lodge of the Jurisdiction, or in any convenient, safe place. Also, if not open on a Lodge of Sorrow, the Master will open Lodge on the M. M. degree of Masonry, state the purpose for which it has been convened, and instruct the members in the funeral grand honors, etc.

The Lodge service then follows, all standing:

LODGE SERVICE

(All brethren should join in the responses.)

MASTER: What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?

RESPONSE: *Man walketh in a vain shadow; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.*

MASTER: When he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.

RESPONSE: *Naked came he into the world, and naked shall he return.*

MASTER: Man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

RESPONSE: *All flesh shall perish together, and man shall again unto dust.*

MASTER: As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

RESPONSE: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

MASTER: Let us die the death of the righteous, and let our last end be like theirs.

RESPONSE: *God is our God forever and ever; He will be our Guide, even unto death.*

The Master then reads, or causes to be read, the Obituary Roll, after which:

MASTER: Almighty Father! Into Thy hand we commend the soul of our departed brother.

RESPONSE (giving the Private Grand Honors): The will of God is accomplished! So mote it be! Amen!

PRAYER

CHAPLAIN: Most Glorious God! Author of all good, and Giver of all mercy! Pour down Thy blessings upon us, we beseech Thee, and strengthen our solemn engagements with the ties of sincere affection. Endue us with fortitude and resignation in this dark hour of our sorrow. May the present instance of mortality remind us of the short tenure of our earthly existence, and draw us more closely to Thee, our only refuge in time of need; so that when the solemn moment shall arrive at which we, too, must quit this transitory scene, the enlivening prospect of Thy mercy may dispel the gloom of death; and, after our departure hence in peace and in Thy favor, we may be received into Thine everlasting kingdom, to enjoy the just reward of a virtuous and well-spent life. Amen!

RESPONSE: So mote it be.

Solemn music may here be introduced, during which a procession is formed, if the body be not in the Lodge-room.

The procession will move to the house or church, and thence to the place of sepulcher, in the following formation:

The Tyler, with drawn sword
Musicians
Stewards, with white rods
Master Masons
Treasurer and Secretary
Senior and Junior Wardens
Past Masters
The Bible Bearer

(The Bible, Square and Compasses, on a cushion covered with black cloth, carried, if practicable, by the oldest member of the Lodge, and supported by the Deacons with crossed rods.)

The Chaplain, and the attending clergyman if a Mason

The Master

Pall Bearers

Pall Bearers

(Upon the coffin, a Masonic apron)

The Mourners

Honorary pall-bearers not members of the Fraternity may walk on the outside of the Lodge troll-bearers.

HOUSE OR CHURCH SERVICE

(May be omitted if deemed advisable.)

On the arrival of the head of the procession at the house of the deceased, or at the church, the procession will halt in front of the entrance, open ranks and face inward, forming two parallel lines; the stewards cross rods.

After the non-Masonic services are concluded (if any be held), the Master, preceded by the Marshal, will advance between the lines, followed by the other officers in reverse order, into the house, the brethren closing in, with heads uncovered. The Master will take his station at the head of the coffin, the Senior Warden on his right, the Junior Warden on his left, and the Chaplain on the left in rear of the Master. The station of the Bible-bearer, holding before him the Great Lights, will be at the foot of the coffin: the Deacons and Stewards with blue and white rods crossed--the former near the head and the latter at the foot of the coffin. The Pall-bearers will form in line on either side of the coffin, between the Deacons and the Stewards; the brethren form a rectangle (or circle, if more convenient) around all.

HYMN

An appropriate Hymn may be sung.

MASTER: My brothers, it is an act of grace and of wondrous mercy that we are privileged to speak to the Eternal God; to make appeal to Him as to a father. Let us therefore ask of Him power and assistance to fulfill our duties in this life, and His gracious blessing in the fuller life to come.

PRAYER

CHAPLAIN: Most holy and glorious Lord God, the Giver of all good gifts and graces: Pour down Thy blessing upon us, and strengthen our solemn engagements with the ties of sincere affection. May the present instance of mortality remind us of our own approaching fate, and draw our attention toward Thee, our only Refuge in time of need; that when the solemn moment shall arrive for us to quit this transitory scene, the enlivening prospect of Thy mercy may dispel the gloom of death; and after our departure hence in peace, and in Thy favor, may we be received into Thine everlasting kingdom, to enjoy, with our departed friends, perfect happiness, as durable as is the eternity of God. Amen.

RESPONSE: So mote it be.

MASTER: My brothers, let us draw inspiration from the Volume of the Sacred Law:

Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass, which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

The following may be read by the Master or sung as a Hymn

HYMN

[Air: St. Anne, Common Meter]

"Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to *come*,
Our shelter from tile stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home."

EULOGY

Biographical sketch and eulogy may here be introduced.

HYMN

An appropriate hymn may be sung.

MASTER: The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear; the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His tabernacle; yea, in the secret place of His dwelling shall He hide me.

God is our refuge and strength: a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be moved and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. The Lord of hosts is with us. Trust therefore in the Lord for with Jehovah there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption.

God shall wipe away all tears; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall My covenant of peace be removed saith the Lord whose mercy endureth forever. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are fresh every morning and are renewed every evening.

It is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

The Lord hath established His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all.

Therefore because of the Lord's faithfulness, which faileth not, even in the darkest night, "Hope sees a star and listening love hears the rustle of an angel's wing."

At the option of the Master the House or Church Service may be continued to include the following, or

The procession is again formed and moves, with the body to the grave (or place of incineration), where tile ceremonies are concluded.

The brethren should not leave their places iii the procession, without permission of the Master. Upon arriving at the place of cremation or burial, the same formation shall take place as at the "House or Church Service"; the mourners (within the circle) at foot of grave. The services will then be resumed, as follows:

SERVICE AT GRAVE OR CREMATORY

MASTER: From time immemorial it has been a custom of the Society of Free and Accepted Masons, on proper request, to accompany the remains of a brother to their final resting-place.

In conformity with this ancient usage, and in accord with our loving: duty to our brother, we are assembled here as Masons to offer tribute of our affection and to testify before the world our faith in the Almighty Father and His beneficent goodness to us, His children.

With becoming reverence, then, let us supplicate the Divine Grace to insure the favor of that Eternal Being whose goodness and power know no bounds; that on the arrival of the momentous hour when the fading taper of human life shall faintly glimmer in the socket of existence, our faith may draw aside the sable curtain, and our hope may sustain and cheer the departing spirit.

PRAYER

CHAPLAIN: Almighty and Eternal God -- in Whom we live and move and have our being, we beseech Thee to be present with us in this hour and during' all the days of our earthly life; lead us by the hand of love; point out to us the pathway of duty. Pour out Thy continual blessing upon the relatives and friends of our departed brother. Lead them to know that he is waiting to greet them in a world where light and bliss are eternal. Grant us Thy divine assurance, oh!

Most merciful God, to redeem our mis-spent time, and, in the important duties which Thou hast assigned us in the erection of our spiritual temple, give us *wisdom* to direct us, *strength* to support us and the *beauty of holiness* to adorn our labors and render them acceptable in Thy sight, so that, when our labors here on earth are ended, we may be with Thee amidst the radiant splendor of eternal truth. Amen!

RESPONSE: So mote it be.

MASTER: We commit the body of our brother to the kindly embrace of mother earth, in a sleep so profound that the giant tread of the earthquake shall not disturb it; but his spirit has winged its flight to that blissful Lodge which will remain open during the endless ages of eternity. In that Heavenly Sanctuary, the Mystic Light, unmingled with darkness, will reign unbroken and perpetual; and there, amid the sunbeam-smiles of Immutable Love, under the benignant bend of the Ail-Seeing Eye, by the Infinite Grace of the Almighty Father, we shall meet again.

The Apron is taken from the coffin and banded to the Master; the coffin, in case of burial, is then lowered into the grave, but not covered with box-cover.

LAMBSKIN APRON

MASTER: *(holding apron, unfolded):* The Lambskin, or white leather apron, is an emblem of innocence, and the badge of a Mason. Its pure and spotless surface is an ever-present reminder of that purity of life so essentially necessary to gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge above. This emblem I now place on the casket of Our brother, as a symbol of his labors in our Craft, and as a token of our brotherhood with him and our kindred sonship with the Father. *(Places apron upon the casket.)* Thy day of toil on earth, my brother, is over. Thou hast entered upon a greater field of labor and love.

SCROLL

MASTER: This scroll, on which is inscribed the name of our departed Brother, I now deposit with his remains *(drops it in the grave)*. He has passed away, never more to return. His name is inscribed in the Book of Life.

THE SPRIG OF ACACIA

MASTER *(holding up sprig):* The Evergreen, which once marked the temporary resting-place of one illustrious in Masonic legend, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded that we have an imperishable, immortal spirit, which survives this death, and which will never, never, *never* die. By it we are admonished that we, too, like our brother, whose remains now lie before us, shall soon be clothed in the habiliments of death; yet, through the loving-kindness of the Supreme Grand Master, we may confidently hope that our souls will hereafter flourish in eternal spring.

The brethren face to the left and move in procession around the coffin or grave, each depositing a sprig of evergreen as he passes the head. While depositing the evergreen, they sing the following funeral hymn:

FUNERAL HYMN

Air: Pleyel's Hymn

Solemn strikes the funeral chime,
Notes of our departing time;
As we journey here below,
Through a pilgrimage of woe.

Here, another guest we bring
Seraphs, of celestial wing,
To our fun'ral altar come;
Waft a friend and Brother home.

Lord of all! below,--above,--
Fill our hearts with Truth and Love:
As dissolves our Earthly *Tie*,
Take us to Thy Lodge on High!

FUNERAL GRAND HONORS

(Must be given at place of interment)

Having resumed their original positions, the Funeral Grand Honors are given, as follows: Raise and extend the arms to the front (palms of hands inward, fingers extended), at an angle of about forty-five degrees, eyes cast upward, repeating together the words: *His Spirit hath ascended on high*; then lower the arms, hand extended (**palms downward**) to a horizontal position, repeating the words: *We commit his body to the tomb (flames)*: then cross the arms upon the breast, right hand resting over the heart, left arm overmost, repeating the words: *And cherish his memory forever*. This ceremony to be given three times.

MASTER: Reverently we commit the body of our brother to the grave (**flames**)---earth to earth (**drops earth from hand, by three distinct pauses, on coffin**); ashes to ashes (**drops earth as before**); dust to dust (**drops earth as before**). Though our brother has passed beyond our mortal view, yet we can trustingly leave him in the hands of a beneficent Being, who doeth all things well; who is glorious in His holiness, wondrous in His power, and boundless in His goodness and love.

(In case of BURIAL)

The Master then approaches the grave (or entrance to the tomb), and says:

Soft and safe to thee, my brother, be this earthly bed! Fragrant be the acacia that here shall bloom! May the year's earliest buds unfold their beauties o'er this thy resting-place! May each springtime renew their loveliness! And here may the sweetness of the summer's last rose linger longest!

(In case of CREMATION)

The Master then approaches the casket, and says:

May we, my brother, whom you have left behind, go forth with a firm resolution to cultivate the spirit of Truth and Brotherly Love; those virtues which, when subjected to the chastening fires of Time, alone remain, consumed, in all their strength and beauty!

With firm faith and reliance in the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe, we know that we shall meet once more in realms beyond the skies. Until then, dear friend and brother, until then, farewell!

BENEDICTION

CHAPLAIN: The Lord bless us, and keep us: The Lord make His face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us: The Lord lift upon us the light of His countenance, and give us peace. Amen!

RESPONSE: So mote it be.

In some instances the grave is filled by the brethren (no profanes); each taking turn. all assisting more or less, thus completing a true Masonic burial.

Thus the service ends. The procession will be re-formed by the Marshal and return to the Lodge room. The Lodge will be closed in due form.