

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Authorized by Grand Lodge, 1967

TO THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF WASHINGTON:

Your committee, to which was assigned the responsibility of preparing a memorial service appropriate for occasions on which there is no funeral, submits herewith a draft of such a service.

It is our view that it should be entirely optional, and that the occasion should itself suggest what is appropriate.

We have endeavored to put this in everyday English rather than adopting phrases from existing funeral services. We were desirous of developing something that would reflect the aspirations of Masonry for the individual and, at the same time, be some help and comfort to the surviving members of the family.

We contemplate that there need be no opening of the Lodge for such a service. It is written so that it may be delivered by one person, but there is no reason why it cannot be divided up between two or three; music can be inserted wherever deemed desirable.

In short, this is intended to suggest what may be done, where there is doubt or uncertainty as to what should be done, and it is in no sense a curb or limitation on what can be done.

MATTHEW W. HILL, Chairman

IVAN E. MERRICK

STANBERY FOSTER

We are gathered here as Masons to pay tribute to the memory of our Brother _____

He began his labors in our craft in _____ on _____
(Lodge and Place) (Date He Became a Mason)

He entered the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Grand Master forever presides on

(Date of Death)

During the intervening years he had membership in which he labored in

(State Lodges of which he was a member, and other Masonic affiliations)

It is not the length of our Brother's service in the Craft, which we would emphasize here, but the quality of it. He entered our Craft with a prayer that "he might be a true and faithful Brother among us." and that prayer has been answered. We are proud to have known him as a Brother; we are glad to have labored with him, in accordance with the plans placed on the Trestle Board by the Supreme Architect of the Universe, at least so far as we have been able to read and understand them.

Masonry applies the symbols of the building of temples of stone to the building of a temple of the spirit-"a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." The poet, Markham, has caught our thought in his lines:

We all are blind until we see
That in the human plan
Nothing is worth the making
If it does not make the man.
Why build these cities glorious
If man unbuilded goes?
In vain we build the world
Unless the builder also grows.

Freemasonry trains the character as well as the mind, inculcating ideals as well as ideas, and qualities as well as qualifications. Freemasonry means a better sense of values; rates honesty and square dealing above personal status.

We have known something of our Brother's activities, his interests and concerns apart from the fraternity.

(Here such activities as seem significant may be enumerated with such comments as are appropriate.)

Truly, we have come to know that while a man makes a living by what he gets, he makes a life by what he gives. Some can give wealth and endow great universities and charitable institutions; some, with no extensive material resources, can give those priceless gifts of friendliness and kindness--the encouraging word and the helping hand. Through his Masonic training our Brother was conscious of those virtues which form the triangular base upon which Masonic teaching is built: Faith, Hope, and Charity.

In this hour the spiritual standard of measurement is used--men fail or succeed according to their faith in God. Without God, Freemasonry or any other organization has no meaning, no mission, and no ministry among men. For where faith in God fails, then entrance cannot be made into that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

We are met here in grateful remembrance of one who may not have succeeded in terms of what the world calls success. His name may not be written in any Hall of Fame; it may not appear in Who's Who in America; he may not have acquired a great amount of this world's goods--a way in which too many are inclined to evaluate success. But our Brother left behind a good name, a faith in God and in his fellowmen. His Brethren gathered here testify to the imprint his personality has made on them, to those qualities of heart and mind, which they will always cherish.

To those of his immediate family, the nearest and the dearest to him (here reference may be made to members of the family surviving, if it seems desirable), we, by our presence here, have tried to indicate our deep sympathy and our earnest desire to be of any service that we may.

Were we to go back centuries before the Christian era, there could be seen, at certain seasons of the year, groups of pilgrims approaching Jerusalem to worship in the temple there. As their eyes caught the first glimpse of the hills on which the city was built, the men in the group would sing:

I lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

Then would come the reply from the women and children in the party:

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved;
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold He that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Then the structure of the song would change, and the affirmations become much shorter. The men would sing:

The Lord is thy keeper;
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The women and children would reply:

The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.

The men would take up the song:

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul.

Then everyone would join in the song's climactic affirmation:

THE LORD SHALL PRESERVE THY GOING OUT AND
THY COMING IN FROM THIS TIME FORTH, AND EVEN
FOREVERMORE.

This was a pilgrim song sung year after year as the Jews of long, long ago journeyed to Jerusalem. It has come down to us in an English translation as one of the noblest of religious messages.

The walls and the gates of Jerusalem were unfamiliar to the pilgrims, as were the customs of the city dwellers. Would God protect the pilgrims as they made their trip from village to city? Would He guard them as they moved from one world to another? The old song gave its brave answer:

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.

So, heartened by that assurance, the pilgrims pushed on toward the strange and the unknown; and we know no more heartening assurance to give to those who mourn our Brother than that ancient affirmation:

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