



VISITATION, FRIENDSHIP & DISTRICT

Address to the Brethren and Visitors of Dufferin Lodge No. 291 on April 18, 2019 by R.W. Bro. Robin J. Colville – DDGM Hamilton District “C” on his Official Visit.

Good Evening Brethren:

As your DDGM this year it has been an honour and privilege for me to visit all the Lodges in our District, as well as the chance to travel into other Districts to make new friends and greet old ones. The practice of visiting is one of the oldest customs of Masonry, and dates back to the days of church and cathedral builders, when the members of the lodges were all Operative Masons. Lodges at that time were attached to a building site and served as a home for Masons who had travelled there in search of work, & if no work was available at the time, they were given shelter, fed and told where they might find work. Eventually Lodges developed a social side where Masons visited to greet their friends and enjoy their company.

Based on this foundation, visitation is one of the most important of all Masonic privileges, because it is based on the principle that the global Masonic Fraternity is one universal family, and the well-known maxim that "in every clime a Freemason may find a home, and in every land a Brother."

Over the years, visitation has undoubtedly become a central pillar of Freemasonry. At the simplest level, it is the opportunity to share comradeship & enjoy each other's company. But of course, visiting another Lodge offers much more than this, it provides opportunities to exchange ideas, to achieve a better understanding of the ceremony, and to make a fuller, more complete sense of the ritual. Visiting helps serve as a guide, in our search for meaning and better understanding within our own Masonic journey as we seek out a different perspective to our own Lodge practices. Through visitation we are often able to reinterpret our understanding of Freemasonry, to see different interpretations, and reinforce those fundamental ideas which underpin Freemasonry and unite us as Masons. Visitation is therefore, a sense of expanding horizons and consciousness, of fellowship, of enjoyment and advancement of Masonic knowledge.



To promote visitation in District "C", we have adopted the custom of having an accompanying lodge for each official visit. This custom makes sure the brethren of each lodge get an opportunity to visit another lodge in their district at least once a year.

Friendship is the soul and the cement of the Lodge. It confirms our purpose to take good men and make them better. To borrow a quote from a prominent Mason, "friendship is the cement that holds Brothers together in a fraternal bond which mutually influences improvements in values, thoughts, and behavior."

Bonds of permanent friendship are often formed through close Lodge relationships. For example, the close bonds formed between Mentors and Apprentices, between members with common interests, and among the line officers who work together to improve their Lodge. Many times these bonds extend also to the families of the officers, who work and socialize together because of their mutual commitment to common goals. These lasting friendships are very rewarding and constitute much of the wages of a Master Mason.

Friendship & Visitation go hand in hand. We know that a true Mason is a man whose heart beats warm for friendship. A visitor to a lodge can expect to be greeted with a warm smile, sincere hand shake, genuine hospitality, and be treated like a true friend. The host doing their utmost to ensure any guest is welcome, by showing brotherly love and fraternity. With such an approach it is easy to understand how visitors may arrive as strangers, but will leave as friends!

So my brethren, I consider each and every one of you in this room to be my friend. And what do friends do for each other? They look out for each other, and help each other, and care for each other, and take a genuine interest in the well being and welfare of each other. I was told by R W. Glen Notman when I was first elected as DDGM that I would find that I would go into the position as a member of Buchanan Lodge, but that I would leave the position as a member of our District . His words have come to pass and through my visitations and friendships made over the past year I truly feel like a member of Hamilton District "C" no longer limiting myself as only a member of Buchanan Lodge. Buchanan Lodge is only 1 of 12 Lodges in our District and I realize now that there is no reason to



limit my Masonic circle to 1/12th of what it truly is. We are all members of our Hamilton Masonic Districts ... and need to think like members of a group that is bigger than just our own Lodge.

There are now 5 lodges in District "C" with only 40-60 members on their roster. In typical fashion, only a handful of these members are active in their lodge. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that even though these lodges all have a strong core of loyal active masons, there are not enough dues paying members to cover the operating costs of a lodge, and not enough members to maintain the sustainable health of a lodge in the long term. Without the knowledge and assistance of experienced Past Masters in these lodges, there is little hope of a Master covering all the parts in our ritual due to this basic shortage of manpower. Cooperation and communication amongst our District Lodges has never been more important. Visitation has never been more important. We need to start thinking like members of Hamilton District "C" not just a member of the Lodge you pay your dues to. We need to pull together as a District to maintain the health of our District Lodges. Like the motto of the 3 musketeers "all for one, and one for all" !

Brethren I encourage you to come out and visit Lodges in your District, enjoy their hospitality, visit with old friends, offer to help with the work of the evening if you are able, and remember to have fun doing it. I guarantee you will make a few new friends in the process!

Thank you for your attention.

References: R.W. Bro. Walter Foster, D.D.G.M., York District 2012-2013
Bro. J.J.P. Goody, Godolphin Lodge No. 7790, Province of Cornwall, UGLE