

## **Lodge Education Program**

### **Chandler Lodge #138**

Today the fellowcraft degree is the second degree for initiates into blue lodge masonry. This was not always the case as it is widely recognized that structured freemasonry began with only two degrees, and that the master mason degree was added about 1730.

First remember that in the Entered Apprentice degree the candidate is 'introduced' to masonry, some of the basic story, symbolism and structure, it is meant to represent the youth period of our lives, and demonstrates being the learner, or young mason. As you age or progress in freemasonry you advance to the degree of Fellow craft. Its lessons, and the lecture and charge show progress in the teaching and learning of a young mason and demonstrate the 'adulthood' or most fruitful years of a mans life, and his further experience in freemasonry. In the origins of freemasonry many men were not formally educated so the lessons use further Masonic symbolism to expand the mind in the lessons of arts and sciences, to broaden their horizons and improve their education and generate better men within society.

Here are just a few highlights of the degree.

-First and primary is the winding stairs. The steps are not only symbolic of the liberal arts and sciences explained in the lecture, but also allude to the further progress and travel upward toward the next degree of Master mason, and ultimately the celestial lodge above. You are to travel slowly, learn the lessons, and make observations that will lead you to improve yourself, and the fraternity.

-Upon arriving at the Middle Chamber you are presented with wages and jewels, together with your working tools and the lessons of the degree you are midpoint of your Masonic light. Symbolically your heart shall always represent the middle chamber, in this place you will always have your wages, jewels, and working tools to maintain the focus of leading a good life.

-You passed through the pillars of the Temple. This is to symbolize your advancement from being a learner, to becoming a builder within the fraternity. The pillars also allude to the support of the fraternity, and the globes encourage you to always be looking towards the celestial heaven above.

-Your working tools for this degree; the square, level, and plumb. The square teaches morality, or being right it demonstrates two right or square angles, which are necessary to build any firm structure. The level teaches equality, not only between all men, but also for each of us individually, to remain balanced and accurate as we construct our internal edifice of morality. Finally the plumb symbolizes rectitude and uprightness; it is our daily demonstration of being a stand up guy and should remind us of that plumb line we follow and how it always points upward towards heaven.

-Lastly you are introduced to the letter G. It has many representations, and in this degree alone can allude to our basis in Geometry, and also to our own personal great architect of the universe or God. The Letter G ultimately becomes the doorway to never-ending knowledge. The science of Geometry can further lead us to principles of numbers, proportions, symmetry and order. The lessons of God can lead us on a path of greater wisdom, spirituality, and principles to assist each of us on the journey of Human Life. We should continually reflect upon this image and not only recognize its prominence, but also honor its noble placement in this great fraternity.

The fellowcraft degree is often called the forgotten degree, it is somewhat shorter and holds less prominence than the other two degrees, which is a fault or our own. It does not contain as much Masonic symbolism and lessons of the fraternity. However if you dissect this degree, and its lessons you realize this degree encompass the whole education, spirituality and general well being of man. Without this knowledge and principals for a strong foundation we would have nothing to build upon, and thus not require the lessons of the other degrees. One could therefore easily judge that this could actually be the most important degree within our fraternity.