

Brethren, if there's one thing that really irks me, it's when somebody is asked to assist with some project, charge or role in the Lodge and glibly responds, with little or no thought to the matter, "Sorry, I don't have the time". You see, in my view, such a brother is often paying his Lodge and Master a supreme insult and could well be ignoring the very vows he has made around the altar.

Let me try to explain with the assistance of a brief article I recently received on the Internet. Imagine that there is a bank that credits your account each morning with R86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening, it deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during that day. What would you do? You'd draw out every cent, of course!!!! Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits us with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this we have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for us. Each night it destroys the remains of the day. If you fail to use your day's deposits, you lose them. There is no going back or drawing against tomorrow. You must live in the present on today's deposits. You must invest it so as to get from it the maximum health, happiness and success!

Brethren, each of us has time and, indeed, we all have the same amount. It's not whether we have it, but how we use it. Be aware that, when you tell somebody that you "don't have the time", what you are often really telling them is that their need is of such low significance to you, that you are not willing to give any of your precious time to it. Everything else that you are allocating your time to is more important.

I recently came across an observation by an American whose name I don't recall. His question was "Where would our world be if the likes of Pasteur, Churchill, Mozart, Washington, Jenner, Aldrin, Kipling and Fleming had failed to have enough time?".

Freemasonry promotes the basic precepts of Truth, Morality and Brotherly Love. It promotes a belief in God and a strong commitment to one's family. It promotes charitable conduct. In my view, our beloved Order offers those fortunate enough to have found it the most incredible foundations on which to build a spiritually rewarding and productive life. If all the world applied Masonic standards, what a difference that would make – and yet so many Masons declare that they "have not got the time!" to properly support their Lodge. Perhaps the question that should be asked is "What are you doing with that time that has so much more value to you or to the community in which you live?". In many cases, I'm afraid that the honest answer would have to be "nothing of any significance!".

Let me share what I feel is the minimum amount of Time that a brother should invest in Freemasonry – and why. Firstly, you made a commitment to attend the BOM and ceremonial workings of your Lodge. To gain any benefit, you need to be involved and it's not acceptable to simply break your commitment on a whim. I tell all my friends that I'm not available on the 1st 2 Wednesdays of the month for the rest of my life. Unless exceptionally relevant or unavoidable, other options will not even be considered.

I believe that every Brother should make at least one visit a month. To grow as a Freemason, you need to broaden your range of Contacts and share ideas with BB outside your own Lodge. You need to put some time aside to learn the ritual. My preference is early in the morning, but you may make a different choice. To really expand your Masonic knowledge, I firmly believe that a sound knowledge of the craft rituals is essential and, as many of us have discovered, you learn something new each time you study a charge.

You must get actively involved in your Lodge's charitable efforts. Everyone can contribute, even if it's only in supporting those BB who are working hard to promote our Order's efforts. Include your family – share your Freemasonry with your friends – encourage the world to enjoy the richness of our craft.

To me Brethren, developing your Masonic attributes is like going to the Gym. To make meaningful progress, you have to do the training. To develop morally and spiritually requires regular practice, study and involvement. It needs a realistic share of your TIME. Allocate it well and the rewards will be yours.

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