

Quality vs. Quantity

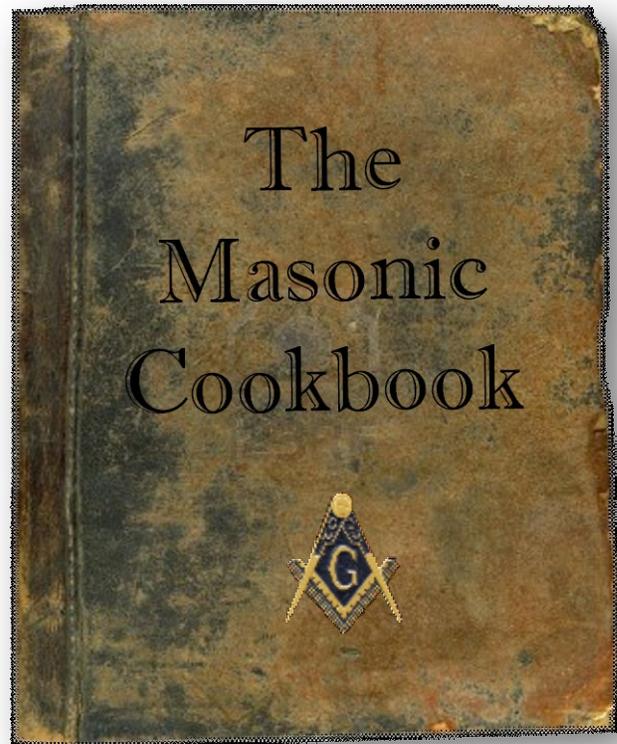
"Foodmasonry & You"

I know you've heard this many times before, that quality is more important than quantity. But logically, without quantity you cannot have any quality, yet if something does not have value then any amount of it is worthless. Both are important. The question is what is the right amount?

Take food for example. Everyone agrees that eating too much is not good, eating too little isn't good either, that it's important to eat quality, natural foods that God gave us, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and certain dairy, fish, and meats. However, if you eat too much of one thing and don't have that balance, then your body will certainly let you know how badly you're treating it. If we took more time to pick out and cook with quality and natural food, our energy levels increase, and are less likely to be a burden upon the health care system.

So, What Does Food Have To Do With Freemasonry?

It should be obvious. I bet you certainly have met many Masons who appear to prefer their food quantities. While many are shining lights of Masonry, some come to every meeting and event, are active in the ritual, sit as an officer, etc., are they getting a good balance of the Craft? What of their character and morals? Are they helping out new brethren as well as taking care of the members who need it? Are they truly Freemasons who practice the principles in their daily life or are they foodmasons who simply enjoy the social mirth in their daily intake?



While social discourse is an important aspect to life, other areas of Freemasonry are important too. Like the food they take in, are they absorbing the ritual? Are you? In your diet, are you getting your proper balance of nutrients, or is it being rejected by your body and wasted? Are you getting your proper balance of Freemasonry or is it being rejected by your lack of morals and intolerance and your soul becomes a wasted vessel of darkness instead of light?

Of course, this article on quality versus quantity wouldn't be complete unless we spoke of membership numbers and what's being done. But this will not be a debate for or against one day classes. There are lodges that don't practice one-day classes, but their ritual work is of poor quality, yet the fellowship is great. There are lodges that use one-day classes, but then leave the dozens and dozens of wet behind the ears candidates out to dry. So what is it? It comes down to what your mother told you, "Chew your food."

Yes, chew your food. Absorb and encourage our new brethren to chew their food that is Freemasonry. But we must offer quality food to chew on in the first place, and what good is the meal for a table full of hungry men if there's not enough quality food to go around. Many will be left starving and eventually, will leave the kitchen table-which is what's happening with some Masonic lodges.

Freemasonry does not have a recruitment problem, we have a retention problem. Repeat.

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We're selling the package like a cereal box says-"there's a cool prize inside," but when you pour out the contents, all you get is a plastic toy, instead of realizing that the cereal is what's good for you. That's like bus advertising and billboards.

Lodges can initiate all the dozens of men they want, but if they don't stick around, what's the point? But how many is too many members? Why do some lodges that have 100-200 members only get 20 brethren out to meetings, yet some with 20 members consistently get 18 out? Of course some lodges still have a lot of members from the post-war boom, and we will likely see a steady numbers decline to a more reasonable level, but with higher dues to keep up our buildings.

How much are Masons willing to pay to keep the quality of Masonry at a high level? In the 1920s and 30s, if we were to take inflation into

the equation, most lodge dues would be the equivalent of about \$800-1000 per year in today's dollars, when most are \$80-100. If you had to pay \$800 a year to be a Mason, I bet you'd try to attend everything and would be active in making sure your lodge is delivering on its value. I'm not necessarily advocating we spike up our dues, but we should be prepared in the near future to start to appreciate this inevitability.

"So with value, like a good steady diet, lodges need to offer the right balance of quality ritual, of a fun social program and fellowship, and of enlightening education and mentoring. I guarantee you if you ask any Mason why they come to lodge, it will be one or more of those things."

So with value, like a good steady diet, lodges need to offer the right balance of quality ritual, of a fun social program and fellowship, and of enlightening education and mentoring. I guarantee you if you ask any Mason why they come to lodge, it will be one or more of those things. Lodges that offer a balanced meal at each meeting will find that the brethren will come back for the next helping, and it's their souls that are fulfilled with an increase in personal enlightenment, in brotherly love and support, and in knowledge.

So, if you believe that Freemasonry offers quality, which it certainly does, then inject Freemasonry first into yourself, into your lodge, and into the brethren. Learn how to cook a good Masonic meal and show the up-and-comers how to do it, but with passion. Don't hog the potatoes. Share them. Don't take the brethren through a fast food drive-thru, have a feast with variety and quality!

- Source: Knights of the North Masonic Dictionary
W. Bro. Michael Bayrak.

