



33° Disappointment ... or Opportunity?

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It is an inevitable consequence of the outcome of the honors bestowed by the Supreme Council, that some who were perhaps expecting recognition are passed over. The feelings of shock, disappointment, and yes, even resentment which often appear after the names are announced, can be an opportunity to spur a Brother to travel one of two roads: First, he can choose the low road of self-pity and a desire to somehow "revenge" himself on the Rite, by withholding his person and purse from future activity and involvement. Second, he can resort to character assassination or backbiting against those who were honored, without knowing the details involved in their selection. This is, quite frankly, the Un-Masonic route and does the disgruntled Brother no credit and only ends up hurting him worse than it does his intended victims. What many Brethren fail to realize is that they were not chosen because they were not worthy, but because there were so many worthy to choose from.

Honors are limited in number and from the quotas established by the Supreme Council, it will be readily apparent that not every active black crown will turn purple. The factors, which enter into the selection of an honoree, are broad and demanding: What part has he played in furthering the causes of the Scottish Rite, Freemasonry and community service? Has he narrowly circumscribed his service to just one of these areas? Is he reliable and dependable? Does he accept responsibility and then carry through with the task? Is he respected and admired as a worker and a leader? Have tangible results occurred as a result of his efforts? Has he been part of the solution or part of the problem? Does he practice in his everyday life the tenets of Freemasonry? Even given such stringent conditions as these, there are still many who are eminently qualified to receive honors.

In order to achieve fairness and harmony, it is often necessary to apportion honors among the various geographical areas that comprise a Valley or Orient. For instance, a Brother may live but a few blocks from his Consistory, attend meetings and functions regularly, serve happily on degree teams and committees, and be quite actively involved in the life of his Valley. This is good, but it works no special hardship on him to be visibly active. On the other hand, another Brother may live 70 miles from the Consistory and have a job or family situation, which precludes regular attendance.

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But, he is active in his community and its projects, serves as a volunteer for church and community charitable endeavors, helps and work with the youth in his area; all this unknown to the Valley membership at large. Is the nearest Brother any more “worthy” of an honor in this case? Thus, it should be the particular care of every Brother to refrain from the uncharitable “What did he do to deserve it?” Mindset when learning of who has received honors—there are often many influential factors of which he is totally unaware.

Having said all this, let’s look at the second, the high road. A Brother pursuing this route will realize that his failure to receive recognition was nothing against him, personally. He will accept the fact that it was just not yet his turn to be honored and that if he continues steadfast in service and dedication, he may reasonably hope at some future period to receive preferment. But, even if he never does, he can still take pride in the fact that he did not “desert his post,” that the Scottish Rite and Freemasonry are both the better for his being a part of them and that his service and efforts are appreciated by those whom he has benefited. He has been a part of a faithful camaraderie of workers and Brothers, many of whom like himself, have not received recognition. He uses his disappointment as energy to fuel a new flame of dedication and zeal for the cause of Scottish Rite Masonry and its programs and loses his rancor in a renaissance of redoubled service to the Craft and his fellow men. In so doing, he serves as a model for newer Brothers and inspires them to persevere even when things get tough.

My Brethren, our perception of Supreme Council honors, presents us with an opportunity—on the one hand, of self pity and puerile “I quit” sentiments or, on the other, to rededicate ourselves more altruistically to go forward in laboring in the noble cause of Freemasonry, without the hope of fee or reward. If the choice is yours, my Brother, which option will you elect?

“Continue your labor”