

Ladies At The Table

A program to honor our Masonic Ladies

This program is designed to be an entertainment and is not to be considered Masonic Ritual, which it is not. The program, written by Brother Samuel B. Walker, MWPGM, was used by Siloam No. 32, Trinity-Mt. Olive No. 43, Pythagoras No. 45, Seventh Masonic District Lodges who, each year working together, honored their ladies and widows (called Special Ladies). It is now being used by Estuary Lodge No. 43 for the same purpose.

It may be used by any Masonic Lodge, several lodges together, Masonic District, Fellow Craft Club, or any Masonic group or organization. It is simple to implement, but to be successful careful preparation is required.

The program is conducted during a dinner, which should have as a minimum: salad, entre, dessert, coffee and/or tea. So that all members may participate, it is recommended that the dinner be either catered or held in a restaurant private dining room. If held at a restaurant, offer a choice of entre, such as a meat dish and a fish dish. Give the caterer or restaurant ample lead time. The cost of the dinner can be made up by the sale of tickets. The Special Ladies (widows) are to be invited guests and are not to be charged for dinner. Inviting Grand Lodge Dignitaries is optional of course. They and their ladies may be invited as guests or sold tickets. Whatever your budget will allow.

If possible, a social hour should precede the Ladies at the Table. A bar, for the purchase of beverages during the social hour is an added touch. However, the social hour with or without beverage will give all a chance to get together and reminisce. Hors d'oeuvres at the social hour would be appreciated.

The Master of the Ladies at the Table, although not a requirement, should be one who has Master of Ceremony expertise. He will be the one to keep things moving and on track. Experience has shown that having the M.C. tell amusing anecdotes or jokes, especially those that make fun of men or have something to do with kids, while the Stewards replenish the lamps goes over very well.

PREPARATION: About a month or six weeks in advance send out invitations to your Special Ladies. Be sure to ask if transportation is needed. Also, put your tickets on sale. Have tickets picked up at the door. Designate the task of collecting the money and making tickets and the ticket list. Start to publicize the event in trestleboards, announce it at Blue Lodge Council meetings or by any other means.

TOASTS: Provide each lady who will be giving a toast a copy of her toast a week in advance. The toasts are to be made to famous women, living or dead. Excellent sources for toast material are www.cwhf.org and www.greatwomen.org

SETUP: A recommended seating plan is shown on the next page. An altar is necessary. This can be a card table covered with a white table cloth. On the altar place the Holy Bible (closed), a vase with a red rose in it in upper right corner and a white candle placed in the upper left corner. (Make sure the deacon has matches to light the candle). **ROSES:** Each lady present is to receive a red rose to take home, be sure to buy enough to accommodate all. **BEVERAGE (Oil):** You must plan to provide enough wine and an alternate non-alcoholic drink in great enough quantity to supply each person for the seven toasts. A printed program is optional, but nice.

Good luck and enjoy!

The use of the Gavel

When the Master gives three raps of the gavel, all rise. (If standing is a hardship, please remain seated.) With one rap, all are seated.

Symbolic language will be used for various implements of the table, calling for instance, the knives “Swords”, the forks “Pickaxes”, and others that may be explained later. However, your wine glass will be called your “Lamp” and the wine (or juice) “Red Oil”. To fill your glass is “To Trim Your Lamp”, to drink is “To Extinguish Your Lamp”.

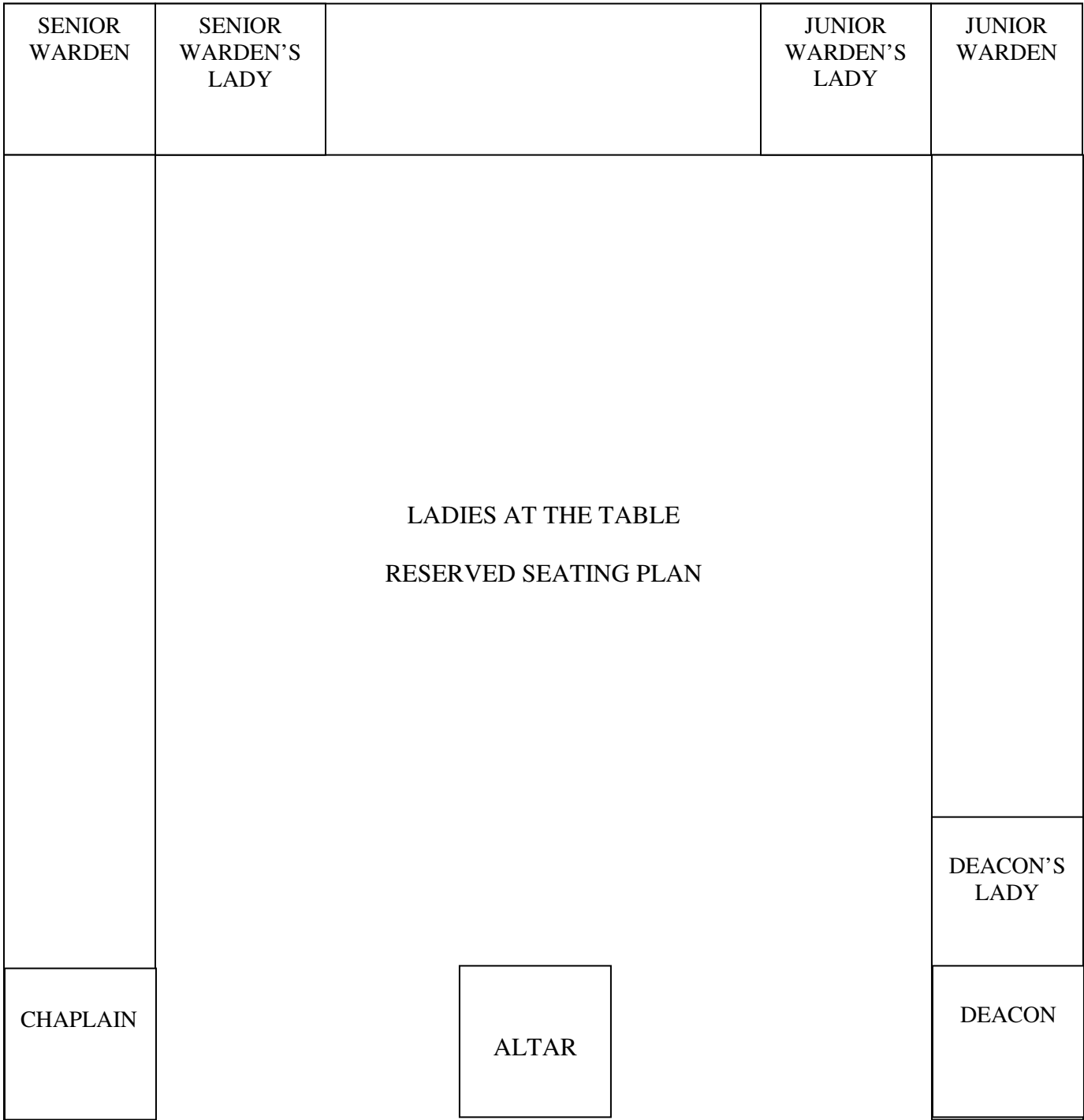
(Please refrain from eating until after the Grace is said.)

There will be seven toasts which will be given before and during dinner. Wine and fruit juice will be provided. Please indicate your choice to the Steward at the proper time.

The Toasts are held in this manner:

- TOUCH:** The right hand reaches to the wine glass.
- GRASP:** The right hand holds the glass, but does not lift the glass from the table.
- RISE TO TOAST:** With the right hand and arm extended the glass is brought up, straight out from the body, level with the chin.
- TO CAUSE:** The glass is brought to the lips.
- TASTE:** Drink approximately 1/3rd of the wine (or juice) in the glass.
- SIP:** Drink approximately 1/2 of the remaining wine.
- TOAST:** Drink all the wine that remains in the glass. DO NOT remove the glass from your lips.
- ROTATE:** The glass is moved away from the lips and extended straight out to the dead level of the chin. As a group working together, with the arm extended with the glass, first move the glass and arm 45 degrees to the left and return to the center, move 45 degrees to the right and return to the center and STOP.
- WITH HONOR:** The glass is carefully brought to the table in unison with only one sound (hopefully) of the glasses meeting the table.

Note: Be careful. The stems of the wine glasses are easily broken. Be gentle.



Dignitaries and their Ladies

Ladies At The Table

The Proceedings

Special Notes:

- - - *Only those called upon by the Master shall rise from their chair to respond and then return to their chair.*

- - - *At the proper time to open the Ladies at the Table. the knocks are passed, as follows:*

Master *

Senior Warden *

Junior Warden *

The Opening:

Master Senior Warden, have all been seated in your column on the left?

Senior Warden All have been seated.

Master Junior Warden, have all been seated in your column on the right?

Junior Warden All have been seated.

Master Deacon, set the Altar and display the Light.

(The Deacon moves to the Altar. Opens the Holy Bible to the Twenty-first Psalm. Lights the candle in the upper left hand corner of the altar and returns to his seat.)

Master * * *

The Grace. Given by The Chaplain

Chaplain Let us pray. Bless, O Lord, this food of which we are about to partake, to our use, and us to Thy service. Grant, O Lord, that in all the joy of life, we may never forget to be kind. Help us to be unselfish in friendship, thoughtful of those less happy than we ourselves, and eager to bear the burdens of others, Amen *

Master Senior Warden, please explain the meaning of the Red Rose.

Senior Warden The Red rose signifies the level of relationship between two people. A White Rose stands for purity, a Yellow Rose for jealousy, and the Red Rose is for love. Therefore, it is only fitting that, on this occasion only the Red Rose is used.

Master Thank you Senior Warden. Junior Warden, please explain the meaning of the Burning White Candle.

Junior Warden The White Candle burns for those Mason's Ladies of the past, who have been called to follow the path to a far off country, from which no one ever returns. The flame burns brightly 'for them to be remembered, especially on this night.

Master.... Thank you Junior Warden. Ladies at the table, it is a great pleasure to have you here this evening. This evening is intended to provide you with enjoyment and pleasure. It is also an evening set aside for us to remember your greatly valued friendship, your loyalty and your love, without which we could never reach our goals.

Worshipful Master of Lodge ... (If the Master of Ceremonies is not the Wor. Master, or this may be read by some other person designated for that purpose.)

In France, about the middle of the 18th century, a group was established functioning parallel to Masonry known as, "Adoptive Lodges". The first of these lodges of which we have any notice was established in Paris, in the year 1760. In 1774 we know that another was established in Holland. There were basically four degrees of Adoptive Masonry. the first being Apprentice; this was followed by the degrees of, Craftswoman; Mistress; and Perfect Mason.

The 4th degree, being the summit of the Rite of Adoption, was furnished with a "Table Lodge", or the ceremony of the banquet, which immediately followed the closings of the lodge and which of course, added much to the social pleasure and nothing to the instructive character of the Degree.

The members always used a symbolical language by which they designate the various implements of the table and the different articles of food and drink, calling for instance, the knives "Swords", the forks "Pickaxes, the dishes "Materials", and bread "Rough Ashlar". The lodge room was called "Eden", the doors "Barriers", a wine glass is styled a "Lamp", and its contents "Oil" - water being "White Oil" and wine being "Red Oil", and many other eccentric expressions.

As all things come to pass. this special dinner and evening was eventually set aside, no longer to be. The French Revolution played a big part in its ending. Ben Franklin is known to have attended at least one of these dinners during his time in France.

In our present day, Ladies At The Table is a special evening and dinner, set aside for all the ladies of our lodges. By this we include Wives, Lady Friends, Mothers, Daughters, Sisters, and our Special Ladies. The toasts are given to those ladies who have given of themselves to the improvement and need of others, they may be from the past or present and from anyplace in the world.

Master I will now attempt to explain the movements of the toast. Please refer to page 2 of the program.

Master follows the directions given in the program.

Master.... * Stewards you will trim the lamps with oil. (wine or juice is provided to all)

When it appears that all the lamps have been trimmed the Master asks:

Master Have all the lamps been trimmed?

Master Thank you Stewards. It is my pleasure to introduce my lady, (name) who wishes to make the first toast.

* * * (*all Stand*) Ladies and Gentlemen

(name of lady) The first toast is to (name) (Read Toast)

Master:

**TOUCH, GRASP, RISE TO TOAST, TO CAUSE, TASTE, SIP,
TOAST, ROTATE, WITH HONOR, Please be seated ***

Master Thank you. Stewards, the lamps having been extinguished, you will again trim the Lamps.

Master Have all the lamps been trimmed'?

Master (Gentleman's name), please introduce your lady as it is her wish to propose a toast at this time

* * * (*all stand*) Ladies and Gentlemen

(name of lady) The second toast is to a lady by the name of (name) (Read Toast)

Master:

**TOUCH, GRASP, RISE TO TOAST, TO CAUSE, TASTE, SIP,
TOAST, ROTATE, WITH HONOR, Please be seated ***

(Dinner should be served)

Master Thank you. Stewards, the lamps having been extinguished, you will trim the lamps again.

Master Have all the lamps been trimmed?

Master (Gentleman's name), please introduce your lady that she may propose the third toast of the evening.

* * * (*all stand*) Ladies and Gentlemen

(name of lady) The third toast is to a lady by the name of (name) (Read Toast)

Master:

**TOUCH, GRASP, RISE TO TOAST, TO CAUSE, TASTE, SIP,
TOAST, ROTATE, WITH HONOR, Please be seated ***

Master Stewards, please trim the lamps again with oil.

Master Have all the lamps been trimmed?

Master (Gentleman's name, please introduce your lady as it is her desire to propose the 4th toast.

* * * (*all stand*) Ladies and Gentlemen

(name of lady) The fourth toast is to a lady by the name of (name) (Read Toast)

Master:

**TOUCH, GRASP, RISE TO TOAST, TO CAUSE, TASTE, SIP,
TOAST, ROTATE, WITH HONOR, Please be seated ***

Master Thank you. Stewards, do your duty.

Master Have all the lamps been trimmed?

Master (Gentleman's name, our Senior Deacon, please introduce your lady as she desires to propose the 5th toast.

* * * (*all stand*) Ladies and Gentlemen

(name of SD's lady).... The fifth toast is to a lady by the name of (name) (Read Toast)

Master:

**TOUCH, GRASP, RISE TO TOAST, TO CAUSE, TASTE, SIP,
TOAST, ROTATE, WITH HONOR, Please be seated ***

Master Stewards, trim the lamps for the 6th toast of the evening.

Master Thank you. Our Stewards are doing a fine job this evening, let us show them our appreciation with a hearty round of applause.

Master (gentleman's name), Our Junior Warden, please introduce your lady who will propose the sixth toast.

* * * (*all stand*) Ladies and Gentlemen

(name of JW's lady) The sixth toast is to a lady by the name of (name) (Read Toast)

Master:

**TOUCH, GRASP, RISE TO TOAST, TO CAUSE, TASTE, SIP,
TOAST, ROTATE, WITH HONOR, Please be seated ***

Master Ladies and Gentlemen, the floor is open to anyone who wishes to speak.

May we now have a word from:

The dignitaries present, (Associate Grand Marshals, District Deputies, Appointed Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Masters, Elected Grand Lodge Officers)

Our Guest of Honor,

Most Worshipful Grand Master

Master Stewards, it is time to trim our lamps for the seventh and final time.

Master Have all the lamps been trimmed?

Master (Gentleman 's name) our Sr. Warden, please introduce your lady who will propose the seventh and final toast of the evening.

* * * (*all stand*) Ladies and Gentlemen

(**name of SW's lady**) The seventh toast is to a lady by the name of (name) (Reads Toast)

Master:

**TOUCH, GRASP, RISE TO TOAST, TO CAUSE, TASTE, SIP,
TOAST, ROTATE, WITH HONOR, Please be seated ***

Master Before we close I want to thank (name) who did such an excellent job in organizing this festive occasion. Thank you (name). (applause)

Master The Wardens and Deacon will now distribute the Red Roses to the Ladies. (Each lady to receive one rose, the remaining roses to be presented to the Guest of Honor's Lady, or Grand Master's lady if present.)

Master:... The hour grows late and our evening must come to an end. I thank you all for coming. Have a safe journey home and may the Great Architect bless and keep us while we are absent one from another. Amen.

Response... So mote it be.

Master Senior Warden, are all seated in your column on the left?

Senior Warden All are now seated.

Master Junior Warden, are all seated in your column on the right?

Junior Warden All are now seated.

Master* Deacon, set the Altar and close the light.

Deacon moves to the Altar, closes the Holy Bible, snuffs out the candle. Returns to his seat.

Master As Master of this dinner, I declare this "Ladies at the Table" closed. *