

8/23/2011

Brothers and Sisters,

Time and Tools? My wife Janie and my daughter Tiffany, who is the mother of my 2 year old granddaughter Eva, spent last Saturday building a house with Habitat for Humanity. If you know them, then you know that neither of them are construction types. Yet they spent 8 hours hanging siding with a nail gun. **This was not the first time they have donated a day to serve God and a family they do not know.** Their self-less acts of service caused me to think about how we spend our time and the tools we use.

I talked to a homemaker / mother about the tools she uses to do her job, which I think is one of the most honorable and difficult jobs on the planet. So she listed the tools she uses; a vacuum cleaner, an iron, washer, dryer, dishwasher, broom, mop, etc. **What tools do you use on your job?** My friend and brother Larry Mercer is a locksmith and I don't really know what to call the tools he uses to open a lock without a key, but if you lock yourself out of your house or car then you'll want to call him, because he has the tools and the talent. (Larry by the way is filled with talent, a Past Master, current Chaplain of Centennial Lodge 84 and he led the singing this last Sunday at our 6:30 pm service and unlocked the hearts of everyone.) Almost all of us use computers as a tool. Policemen use guns, Tasers, and handcuffs. Carpenters have hammers, mechanics have wrenches, Judges have a gavel, office workers have copiers and staplers and they used to have whiteout. **All the young people are saying what is whiteout?** As a real estate and mortgage guy I would be lost without my HP 12C calculator and my phone. In my college days I was a hod carrier and then a bricklayer. **So I guess I was a mason before I was a Mason.** A shovel, trowel, head joiner, bed runner, tuck pointer, a level, a bucket and a masons rule are some of the working tools of that trade. **Tim Allen would say what we need is "More Power". To which I say OH OH OH!**

As Entered Apprentices (the 1st degree of Masonry) we are given the working tools of that degree, which are the 24 inch gauge and the common gavel. Operative masons use them to measure and lay out their work and to break off the corners of rough stones but we are taught to use them for more noble and glorious purposes. The 24 inch gauge is divided into 24 parts, like the hours of the day, which Masons are taught to divide into 3 equal parts. **When we do, we find 8 hours for the service of God and the distressed, 8 hours for our usual vocation and 8 hours for refreshment and sleep.** The common gavel teaches us to divest our minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life and thereby fitting us as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **That means we are to cut out the excess junk and live a Holy Life. By the way did you know that comes from 1 Peter 2:1-6 which says: "Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." NIV**

I have to confess that I fall so short in my effort to live up to and obey this teaching. I am still a rough ashlar and perfection is a long, long way off. But I am convinced that it is the key we have been searching for. **Imagine what our world would be like; imagine how many people would flock to our Lodges and Churches; imagine what your life would be like;**

imagine if you and I gave 8 hours a day to the service of God and the distressed, as we lived a Holy Life without all the excess. I believe we would have to build bigger buildings to handle the mass of people who would want to be part of something that produces so much Joy, Peace and Blessings. The real question is: “Is there room for God in your everyday life and are you willing to display it to others through acts of service?” That is the only way to make a real difference. I hope you will say along with me - Lord Please Help me and give me more power as I fill up my nail gun.

You are all invited to come to the Sunday Night 6:30 Service at the Robert Russell Eastern Star Chapel.

**I pray God will Bless you and yours,
Rev. Steve Schroeder PM
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