

GUIDELINES
for
THE JUNIOR OFFICERS
of a
COMMANDERY

*Interest, Knowledge
Enthusiasm, Service
prepare for. . .*



Leadership

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Introduction . . .

These recommendations and observations, as a Grand Encampment service for Commandery officers, have been prepared under the direction of the Grand Master, and executed through the office of the Grand Recorder.

Copies are available from that office free of charge for all present and prospective officers of a Commandery of Knights Templar.

As a point of information, it is noted that the guidelines primarily are in the form of suggestions and that specific application may vary from Commandery to Commandery.

The multiple-theme, however, is constant and unalterable for any Sir Knight now serving or aspiring to serve as a Templar officer: INTEREST, DESIRE, KNOWLEDGE, INVOLVEMENT, CONSISTENT SERVICE IN A CHRISTIAN CAUSE—and LEADERSHIP.

TO THE JUNIOR OFFICERS OF A COMMANDERY

As an elected Junior Officer of your Commandery, you have good reason to believe that you will progress through the lines until you attain the highest honor and assume the greatest responsibility your Commandery can confer — the rewarding and demanding attributes of Eminent Commander. To be worthy of that honor should be the aim of every officer who appreciates the value of Christian Masonry and understands his Commandery's contributory role in the Templar structure.

LOOKING AHEAD

The duties of your present office should be well known to you and should be executed to the best of your ability. Additionally, it is of vital importance that you look ahead and prepare yourself with diligence and dedication to the time when your fellow Sir Knights will elect you to executive leadership of your Commandery. The duties of a Commander are as numerous as they are important. They extend far beyond the conferral of the Orders and the conducting of the Conclaves.

It is, however, within the capabilities of every Eminent Commander who has prepared himself in advance to perform those duties with zeal and distinction — if he realizes that his primary function is to serve Templars and Templary and if he has become fully acquainted with the demands for this once-in-a-lifetime experience and opportunity.

This booklet of comment and recommendations is dedicated to you as a Junior officer with the hope that it will be of assistance to you during your preparatory years. The booklet emphasizes two major points — first, fulfilling the needs of your present office willingly and effectively; second, preparing yourself in every way for your future duties, powers, responsibilities and privileges.

WHAT TO EXPECT

When you become Eminent Commander of a Commandery of Knights Templar you must preside and you must govern. It will behoove you to be careful and considerate so that your conduct and your decisions are both wise and just, and that they will need to be made “on the spur of the moment” without the opportunity to receive counsel and advice from others. There will be instances where the circumstances cannot be foreseen. However, the majority of decisions to be made can be anticipated with proper study and knowledge, thus giving you time to prepare.

It is impossible to stress the importance of preparation too strongly. The need for personal preparation is an obvious and fundamental fact. Long before you

are about to become Eminent Commander, you should study and become thoroughly acquainted with the Constitution and Statutes of the Grand Encampment of the United States of America, the laws and regulations of your Grand Commandery and the By-Laws of your own Commandery. Do not wait to apply zeal and diligence until the time arrives for you to be elected Commander.

QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications of an Eminent Commander are Masonic, Templar and Personal. Each man elected to this station should have those virtues which are normally associated with a Christian member of the Masonic Fraternity.

He should be moral and upright before God and of good repute before the world, obedient to the moral law, holding the deepest respect and confidence of his fellow men. He should know the ritualistic work and be able to teach it. Above all, he should either be, or train himself to be, an efficient executive in order to properly preside and conduct all the affairs incumbent upon the individual elected to head his Commandery. Ritual conferrals can be assigned; executive leadership cannot.

He should be familiar with the tools provided him by the Grand Encampment – the variety of guidelines on such subjects as Membership, Religious Activities, Patriotic and Civic Activities, Public Relations, the Knights Templar Educational Foundation – and, to remain current and well informed, the *Knight Templar Magazine*. These written materials give you valuable information, directly and indirectly, and will be particularly helpful in your selection of Sir Knights in guiding and directing them in the various committees it will be your duty to form.

THE COMMANDER AS AN EXAMPLE

No one man can be expected to possess all the desirable personal traits, but an Eminent Commander should have quite definite personal qualifications. Some, if not already possessed, can be acquired. It must be remembered that every Sir Knight is a mirror for Templary, but none reflects the presence or lack of Christian principles so graphically as the Templar who serves as Eminent Commander. What he says and what he does can make a tremendous difference in what the Order means to others, both inside and out of the asylum. He can attract or repel by personal example.

PLANNING

The length of time you will have for preparation varies among the different Commanderies, but it is recommended that you always keep a minimum of “one year ahead” in your study and in your planning. This may seem like an unnecessary injunction to many who are serving in the Commandery line because it is

so obvious and logical. However, as you perhaps may have observed, there are instances where a Knight Templar reaches a certain station, either that of Commander or of a Junior officer, without having a knowledgeable conception of what the office entails until he is elected.

In business and commercial activity, especially if the individual knows he is going to be regularly advanced, learning the next man's job would be a mandatory and obvious practice. Templary deserves the same kind of consideration — or more. Look ahead as far as possible and become as familiar with the aspects of Commandery operations as possible. When you become Generalissimo, you have just one year in which to make your final preparations for the important year of Commander. Your term as Generalissimo can be especially productive in making your next year successful and rewarding. Use the time during this last year fully and wisely and your efforts will reap a rich dividend for you, for your Commandery and for Templary in general.

APPOINTMENTS — WHO AND HOW

When Generalissimo, give particular time and attention to those you will select as appointed officers and committee chairmen and members. Appointments should be made with the utmost care, bearing in mind that you need more than friendship to support you in your work for the Commandery. You need good and faithful officers and committee members to achieve Commandery progress. Also, remember that some of the men you select may advance ultimately to the office of Commander. Therefore, use unbiased judgment in your selections.

You should not be influenced by politics, friendship, “mercenary or any other improper motive” in planning your appointments. As a Templar your appointees should demonstrate among other characteristics these qualities: regular church attendance, exemplification of the highest type of knighthood, punctual in engagements, ardently interested in Templar activities, capable of mixing with fellow Sir Knights, have some ritualistic abilities and, especially, a potential for executive leadership. Obviously, as a Knight Templar, your appointments should be also charitable, humane, kind, considerate and diplomatic — as well as practical.

Here is one suggested method of developing your slate of appointments in a pleasant and harmonious manner: First, make your list of appointees and their respective offices, then several months before your election — possibly before a Stated Conclave — arrange a dinner (perhaps a “Dutch Treat” affair) at the Temple or in a nearby restaurant where you can have a private room for discussion. To this dinner invite your Commander, Captain General, Recorder and the active Past Commanders.

During or following the dinner, for their information, consideration and comment, present the name of each appointee, and his office, one by one. Listen

to the comments and suggestions. Be ready to detect any possible objections that may be caused by improper motives, but, above all, listen for the viewpoints and the expressions of Templar opinion. When you have gone through the list, considering each name separately, you will have received an educated evaluation of the individuals you have planned to appoint. If you receive agreement from this group, you will have surmounted an important hurdle and will have made a most significant gain in cooperation and support.

Later, but still well in advance of election, a second dinner would be helpful of the same general type. This time, invite the Commander, Captain General, Recorder and all of your tentative appointees. On this occasion you should briefly but directly state precisely what you and the Commandery will expect from each person to be appointed, stressing such particular items as punctuality, efficiency, obedience to the rules and regulations, consistency of performance, an understanding of the value and need for "programs of continuity" and a matching desire, with you, to plan and work not only during your term but to project programs and ideas for the continued progress of your Commandery. When each appointee has indicated his acceptance of the proffered office or committee appointment and has obligated himself to be present for installation, you are ready to make your official appointments upon your election to the post of Eminent Commander.

A Commander generally can appoint such special committees as he feels will help the Commandery maintain interest and participation and make progress in the basic needs of Christian Masonry. Additionally, there are a number of committees which are strictly required and which are quite essential to the well being of the Commandery and of Templary.

In selecting Sir Knights for your committees, guard against the automatic naming of the most active Knights. Your selection should be made from the entire roster of members, choosing those who have special talents along the lines required by the work to be performed by the committee. Too often we overlook those Sir Knights who are sometimes "just waiting" to be asked to do something and whose talents, if studied, would show that they can contribute much to your Commandery.

Frequently a member will become enthusiastic because you have given him incentive and because he may have received for the first time as a Templar an opportunity to use his talent and to contribute to a project in which he has convincing belief. In general, pick the persons you believe are the most capable and the most willing to carry out the work of the Commandery, but be sure to keep looking for those supposedly "inactive" Templars who might suddenly become active if you give them something worthwhile to do.

COMMITTEES THAT CONTRIBUTE

Undoubtedly the most important committee you will appoint is the Committee on Membership. Ideally, this committee should consist of Sir Knights who are active in each Lodge, Chapter, Council, Consistory and Shrine Temple in the area served by your Commandery. The size of this Committee is governed by the needs of your Commandery and your own considered judgment as to whether a small and compact committee or a large and diversified committee would be the more productive. Either way, it must have as Chairman an active Mason who will not allow the members of the committee to forget or neglect their duty to the Commandery.

Other committee membership requirements are sometimes apparent. Examples: the Religious Activities Committee should be comprised of Templars who are ministers, lay leaders and others interested in religious programming and observance; the Patriotic and Civic Activities Committee should include judges, municipal officials, members of the police, civic leaders and others who have shown interest and concern in community activities; school men, youth workers and those with some knowledge of young people and education generally will make the most appropriate members of the Knights Templar Educational Foundation Committee.

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation Committee could be composed of such persons as doctors, welfare workers or others who have concern and knowledge of the public's need and the Foundation's operations.

One of the most important committees at any level is the Committee on Public Relations. Almost every activity can be hindered or helped by the personnel on your Public Relations Committee. Make use of this committee not only for the usual kind of newspaper, radio and television "publicity," but also to help promote among your own members your various programs and projects for the year. In other words, the work of the Committee on Public Relations applies both internally and externally. To be most helpful, the membership should include newspaper men, photographers, writers, speakers and others who are acquainted with or have a flair for self-expression generally and whose contact with members and the public will represent Templary not only with dedication but also with intelligence.

THE COMMANDER AS PROGRAMMER

Since you are not appointing these committees simply to fill the roster of appointments, it becomes quite clear that your first and foremost consideration is to plan your program for your year as Commander. You should not necessarily go off on a tangent just to be different from your predecessors, but if changes are needed you should try to institute them. It is to be remembered, however, that no one man in one year can change the entire course of the

Commandery. You need "continuity" in your theme and in your programming for the year, the kind of continuity that will foster a continuance, through consultation and agreement among your Junior Officers, of projects for years to come.

Interesting programs for all Stated Conclaves are extremely important. You need to plan programs that will attract and inspire members to be present. Once your membership becomes aware that the Commander has arranged a series of truly worthwhile programs for the year's Conclaves, you will find attendance automatically increasing. Planning programs of this type takes serious thought, lots of work and the cooperation of your fellow officers and committee members. It is something that cannot be done "as you go," but must be planned well in advance.

It is suggested that at the beginning of his term of office the Eminent Commander should know what his programs will be specifically for at least the next six months — preferably for the full year. It is especially important, both for your own benefit and that of the Commandery, that your other officers be kept well informed of your plans and your aims. In other words, you as Commander should plan your work and work your plan, and keep the Junior Officers so well advised that they could keep the plans in operation if something should prevent the attendance of the Commander at any Conclaves.

In selecting programs for your Conclaves you will find a wide and diversified field. Those which are herein enumerated and briefly described are only a few. Your own ingenuity and imaginative ability will find many others which might be particularly helpful in your Commandery. Please remember that these are only suggestions and that you are encouraged to seek others.

1. *Anniversaries*: An anniversary program might commemorate the granting of a charter or some other special event in the history of your Commandery. The celebration could take the form of a dinner meeting or appropriate ceremonies in the asylum — or both.

2. *Past Commanders Night*: For such an occasion an Order could be conferred with a Past Commander in each station. Different Past Commanders could be designated to speak briefly on their recollections of Commandery activities of the past. A Memorial Service could be held for deceased Past Commanders.

3. *Patriarchs Night*: This could be a program to salute members who are 70 years or more of age, or those with 25 or 50 years of membership as a Templar, all of whom could be invited guests at a dinner or meeting in their honor. One, perhaps two or more, could be scheduled to speak in the open Commandery.

4. *Class Night*: On this night each Past Commander would be asked to

have present as many as possible of the members who were Knighted during his year as Commander. There could be a special "blue ribbon" award for the Past Commander having the greatest percentage (or number) present of those Knighted during his year.

5. *Open Forum*: Select three or four well-informed Sir Knights to form a panel to answer any questions on Templary. This may be a difficult assignment for the panel but it does create interest and it does result in the dissemination of some helpful information. The questions could come from a "question box" set up in the anteroom for several Conclaves prior to this particular night, or cards or sheets of paper could be distributed at the opening of the Conclave so that any member could jot down questions which might be in his mind. These could then be collected and presented to the panel by a Moderator, who probably should be a Grand Commandery officer or an Inspection officer. It may be necessary to have a few "planted questions," especially if you are planning for the questions to come from the floor.

6. *Recognitions*: There is always an opportunity to give well-deserved recognition to some member or members, particularly those who have achieved honor and recognition in Templary, in Masonry, in charities or in the general community. Honor those who have been of service to DeMolay, to Job's Daughters or Rainbow Girls. Honor those members who are Knights of the York Cross of Honour. And certainly recipients of the Knights Templar Cross of Honor should be recognized in their own Commandery.

7. *Sojourners Night*: Set aside one of your Conclaves to specifically invite the attendance of Templars who live in the vicinity but who are not members of your particular Commandery. In addition to the general good fellowship this engenders, it is quite possible that you will help to reactivate some Templar who hesitates to project himself but will respond to a personal invitation.

8. *Invitation Night*: On this night Templars from a local industry could be invited to attend as a group. They may be from an oil refinery, from a railroad, from a steel mill, from a manufacturing plant, law offices or from any one of a number of enterprises. One of the benefits is that it enables the individuals to become acquainted with members of other Commanderies with whom they may be associated in their places of employment. Assemble them in the anteroom and admit them as a group. There is a wide range of opportunity for this type of activity. Perhaps one of the group could be scheduled as a guest speaker for the evening.

9. *Father and Son Night and/or Kin Night*: This one calls for an invitation to go to each father-and-son combination in your Commandery or in

the general Templar area. Each such combination attending could be recognized and honored in some fashion. If the father-and-son combinations would not appear to attract a sufficient number to make a program, you may wish to broaden the scope and extend an invitation to a "family combination" within Templary. These might include fathers, sons, brothers, nephews, uncles, son-in-laws, brothers-in-law — and even including cousins if you wish! The family combination having the greatest number present should be especially recognized or perhaps an award given to the senior member of any of the families present.

10. *Personal Anniversary of Knighting*: Certainly every Commandery should recognize the "Templar Birthday" of each Sir Knight. To accomplish this, it is recommended that the Recorder be requested to notify each member whose Knighting anniversary occurs during the month and ask him to be present for the Conclave of the month. The Eminent Commander should plan a special acknowledgment and appropriate tribute to each of those members who are present during their personal anniversary month.

These are but a few of the possibilities. One of the determining factors in the success of any program, whether one of those suggested or one of your own selection, is proper and adequate promotion among the Commandery membership. Your Committee on Public Relations can assist you in this respect, but there are other ways and means of communicating with your membership to encourage their attendance. Give them as much advance notice as possible, and give it to them frequently. The fact that you announce an event once may seem sufficient to you but "advertising" to be successful must also be repetitious. Do your announcing and communicating in a variety of ways. And be sure to delegate specified details to other members so that everything is in readiness for your programs well in advance of the Conclaves themselves. Nothing — but nothing — should be left to be done at the last minute.

THE COMMANDER AS PRESIDING OFFICER

In conducting your Conclaves, keep these elementary rules in mind:

- 1 — Start on time.
- 2 — Close at a reasonable hour.
- 3 — Between the start and the close, have something "special" in the way of Conclave program.
- 4 — Preside with consideration but with authority.
- 5 — Show friendliness and concern for your fellow members.
- 6 — Foster good fellowship during refreshment and social periods.

One of the most illogical statements heard in the majority of Commanderies is, "we have always done it that way." Perhaps in some instances there is a very

good reason for doing something in a particular way, and perhaps the reason has been forgotten. On the other hand, it is quite possible that "we do it that way" because a better way has never been found. Let's look for that better way. Changes should not be made for the sake of change, but if there is something you can do to improve your Conclaves or your attendance, give it careful consideration — then, if you are convinced, try it!

Not everyone is a born leader but everyone can develop interest and enthusiasm and can learn the essentials of leadership if you remember that others would like to work with you if you are optimistic and enthusiastic, if you are capable of instilling the desire to support and cooperate in your plans for the Commandery. The major purpose of a Commander is not to win a popularity contest but, on the other hand, he can accomplish far more if he is thoughtful, considerate, understanding and pleasant with others. Keep in mind that teamwork is essential in everything you do, not only in Templary.

As Commander, don't lose your enthusiasm if things do not go "just right." Don't give up too quickly! In this respect, Templary is no different from business or daily life. You must learn to expect some reverses, but you must also learn to strive consistently and determinedly toward your goals. Most likely, you will have some members of the committees, some officers and others who will disappoint you from time to time, but do not let that disappointment become discouragement. And remember, the more thought you give to your selections or appointments, the more cooperation and assistance you are going to receive from the appointees.

No Commandery, or any other organization, can endure without acquiring new members nor can it thrive unless these new members are assimilated. Well-conceived programs can be a great help in these assimilation process. Make every new member familiar with these surroundings, acquaint him with his fellow Sir Knights, stimulate his interest and his enthusiasm, keep him informed on Templar activities and projects. Only then will he become a working Templar and a real asset to your Commandery. Before he can be truly "sold" on our Order, he must see and recognize the beauty and truth of Templary.

This goal is worthy of your every effort as Eminent Commander.

... AND FINALLY

Good work — and good luck!