



Enhancing Activities When Lodge Ladies Meet

Involvement of wives and partners is encouraged in conjunction with many Freemasons activities. These occasions enable both men and women to mix and mingle however there are particular occasions when the ladies meet by themselves. While these are desirably infrequent, at times when a social event / award ceremony coincides with a Lodge meeting or perhaps a divisional conference, a programme of suitable activities for the ladies is essential. Especially if you are to avoid the number one aspect that puts ladies off attending a ladies event/function being sitting around in a circle with stale chippies, drinking cheap wine, waiting for the men to finish having a business session!

Here are some do's and don'ts:

- Always plan well in advance for the ladies part of the day / evening – don't just ask the Master's wife to make arrangements the day before!
- If ladies are present at a regular meeting then the business session should be kept to a minimum duration.
- Ask the ladies for ideas that might make the gathering interesting. Remember there will likely be a range of women attending – hopefully young and others not so young, some homemakers, others professional women.
- Particularly encourage the younger partners and wives to attend.
- Ask the ladies concerned if they would like a speaker and if so, any suggestions, and encourage a speaker who gets his/her audience involved with the subject of the talk (so the ladies don't fall asleep!).
- On some occasions including an activity instead of a speaker is a good idea.
- Ensure that there is always a nominated and willing host for any event.
- If the Grand Master's wife is present ensure she is introduced and provided the opportunity to say a few words.
- Consider carefully the venue and seating arrangements.
- If seating is necessary because a speaker has been arranged do not arrange chairs in rows or in a big circle, but if possible, in smaller groups (maybe six or seven) which encourages ladies to engage and talk to each other.



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- Where no speaker organised while some chairs are helpful for older attendees others will prefer to stand so they can move around and mingle. That way someone is not captured talking to the same person for the duration of the event.
- Ensure there are both non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks available.
- Interesting ideas that have been used for ladies events include:
 - Dressing for success
 - Dressing with colours
 - Pot luck supper in someone's home
 - Ladies restaurant evening
 - Cheese making night
 - Home decoration / décor
 - Wine tasting
 - Digital photography
 - New technology tips
 - Picture framing
 - Genealogy
 - Biography (or recording family history)
 - Painting 'hope stones' (river stones in bright colours to give to Cancer patients to hold while undergoing treatment – must be smooth and palm sized)
 - Making fascinators (get ladies to bring bits of from their sewing boxes – buttons, lace, ribbons, whatever, and safety pins to attach items. Prizes at the end of the evening.)
 - Bead jewellery (similar to the above idea)
 - Christmas decorations – at the appropriate time – share ideas
- Many ladies have appropriate Masonic ladies name badges however for those who don't, on larger occasions providing a name badge might be appropriate. Ensure they are suitable for fixing to clothing – the magnetic catches are best.
- Always a good idea to have stick-on labels at the ready for those ladies who forget to bring their personal name badges.
- Organise younger participants or lodge members if transport is involved – to help elderly ladies get in and out of vehicles.
- If childcare is an issue and your lodge has family men with younger children consider organising a Nanny on site (could be a couple of teenager)

A big thank you to the ladies who have contributed to this tool.

