

“Remember, it is the internal qualifications, not the external, which recommend a man to be a Mason”.

Companions,

Each month during my year in office, I will be highlighting one of the qualities which Masons should possess, and it is important for each of us to examine ourselves to ensure that we continue to possess and display these qualities.

For February the virtue is **Fidelity**: Faithfulness to something to which one is bound by pledge or duty. **Fidelity** implies strict and continuing faithfulness to an obligation, trust, or duty.

The word **Fidelity's** original meaning regarded duty in a broader sense than the related concept of fealty. In medieval Europe, the swearing of fealty took the form of an oath made by a vassal, or subordinate, to his lord, to remain faithful. "Fealty" also referred to the duties incumbent upon a vassal that were owed to the lord, which consisted of service and aid.

The oath of fealty usually took place ... by the symbolic act of kneeling before the lord and placing his hands between the hands of the lord, the vassal became the "man" of the lord. Typically, the oath took place upon a religious object such as a Bible or saint's relic, often contained within an altar, thus binding the oath-taker before God. Fealty and homage were key elements of European feudalism.

So why is **fidelity** used within our Chapters and Lodges? When you look at the definition of the word, it states that it is faithfulness to something which one is bound by...an obligation, trust or duty.

All masons and companions take an obligation for each of our degrees, and an obligation for each officer position we assume. In most cases, the oath is also taken on the Volume of the Sacred Law. So too, our oath or obligation is then binding before a supreme being. The words in each one of our obligations states what we agree to undertake as a duty, when becoming a mason or becoming a Lodge or Chapter officer.

Prior to being open in a specific degree, when we are being addressed by a senior officer, or when responding to a question or direction, we give the Sign of **Fidelity**. The companion or mason will come to the sign of **fidelity** at the closing of the volume of the sacred law. In most cases we also state that we are doing so, with **Fidelity**.

By showing the sign of **fidelity**, whether it is when addressing the First Principal, showing respect to the Volume of Sacred Law or when showing faith to a prayer, a mason indicates his strict and continuing faithfulness to his obligation, his trust and his duty which he has sworn to do, on the volume of the sacred law, and before the supreme being in which we believe. This faithfulness and **fidelity** is what binds us to our duty and the trust imposed in us.

M. Ex. Comp. Ken

REF: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fealty>