

Lesser-known lessons of the Encampment

Description

Brotherhood Herald

Have you noticed that the main symbol of the Encampment is not a hulking impenetrable fortress made of stone? Instead, the emblem is a humble tent.

The tent may sit on solid ground but the shelter itself is changeable, moveable, and built for constant progress. It reminds us that we are all travelers in motion, on lifeâ??s roads.

The doors of a tent open easily, a reminder that even though members might hold special stations, the stranger is also welcomed to receive hospitality.

A tent, even one filled with warmth and hospitality, does not provide flawless comfort against the hard ground, or the harsh wind. Likewise, members enjoy some protection and community, while remembering not to become complacent about those in need of hope and charity.

A tent itself is vulnerable to piercing attacks. But knowing that weakness, a greater number of lookouts, sentries, and guardians stand vigilant â?? allowing members to feel safe enough to be vulnerable with one another.

Even well guarded, the tent is not depicted behind swords or spearsâ??but shepherdâ??s crooks. The crooks are tools to pull precious lives closer, and to preserve them. They symbolize guidance toward places where growth and thriving are possible. The crooks are symbols of protection through thoughtful communal direction.

Itâ??s amazing how much unsung strength lies in the tools that preserve rather than destroy. And how much wisdom there is in structures that can sometimes yield, rather than those which are only hardened and inflexible.

In these symbols alone, the Encampment reminds us that moving higher in our maturity, wisdom and purpose is not about outward displays of strength, but thoughtful acts of wisdom, guidance and flexibility.

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If youâ??re a third degree Odd Fellow in good standing, have you considered what other lessons and opportunities your local Encampment might offer? Have you considered what good you might do for your Odd kin by both giving and receiving mentorship? I hope that you have, or that you will!

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