

# The Robert Elgin Dinner: Texas Cryptic Table Council Ritual

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# Introduction

One of the most amazing things about the York Rite community in Texasd is how tight-knit we are. It is not far-fetched to say that nearly everyone knows nearly everyone else. This Table Council ritual is another way for us to express our affection for each other, and practice the four most important facets of Masonry: Fraternity, Philanthropy, Ritual, and Education.

We practice Fraternal Masonry by breaking bread together and sharing our happiness with each other. Philanthropic Masonry is put into action by donating proceeds from the dinner to charity. Performing the formal toasting program allows us to practice Ritualistic Masonry in a new and relaxed setting, while inviting a guest speaker as the focal point of the dinner further develops our appreciation of Educational Masonry.

The target audience of this program are all Royal & Select Masters in Texas, as well as visiting Companions from other regular Cryptic Jurisdictions. The suggested attendance should be targeted at fifty participants, including the officers. The ritual itself supports a party as intimate as ten, but it is highly recommended that this program be executed as a combined effort of multiple Councils in a Cryptic District, or a county-wide organization, as opposed to an individual Council.

Every year, one in four Texan children will struggle with going hungry. It is strongly suggested that any proceeds from the dinner, or accompanying fund-raisers such as a silent auction, sponsorship, raffle, etc, be donated to a local food bank. It is also highly encouraged to use this event as an opportunity for a canned food drive. The average cost of providing a meal for a hungry child in Texas is \$2.53 — we can make a real difference, right now, and there's no reason not to try.

Ideally, this will be an annual event in each Cryptic District. The current plan is to begin testing this program in Tarrant County and the surrounding areas, with a hope that it will soon be a state-wide function.

## Special Thanks

Special thanks is given to the *General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons, International* and to *Saint Paul Council #1, Cryptic Masons, Minnesota*. This ritual was written to fit Texas work, but was inspired by Table Council rituals from those two organizations.

# Table Council Ritual

## Opening

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companions, we are about to open a Table Council of Royal and Select Masters and will thank you for your attention and assistance. [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — are you satisfied that all present are Select Masters?

**CG:** [*Slight bow.*] I am satisfied, Thrice Illustrious Master.

**TIM:** What is your duty?

**CG:** To see that the Secret Vault is secure.

**TIM:** You will see that the Sentinel is at his post and the Secret Vault is made secure.

**CG:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Steward — you will see that the Sentinel is at his post and the Secret Vault is made secure.

**Stew:** Companion Sentinel, we are able to open a Table Council of Royal and Select Masters, and you are directed to guard accordingly. [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**Sent:** [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**Stew:** Companion Captain of the Guards, the Sentinel is at his post and the Secret Vault is secure.

**CG:** [ \* ] Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], the Sentinel is at his post and the Secret Vault is secure.

**TIM:** [ \* ] Thank you. [ \*\* ] / Companion Conductor of the Council — your duty?

**CC:** [*Slight bow.*] To see that all the Companions are in order, Thrice Illustrious Master.

**TIM:** You will see that all the Companions are in order.

**CC:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Steward — you will see that all the Companions are in order.

**Stew:** [*Circumnavigates the tables, ensures that guests are in order, and reports back to CC.*] Companion Conductor of the Council, the Companions are in order.

**CC:** [ \* ] Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], all the Companions are in order. By your leave, I would like to read the proclamation adopted at the last Table Council of Royal and Select Masters.

**TIM:** You may proceed.

**CC:** Companions, our present company is assembled for the purposes of festivity, charity, and the good of Masonry. Let every heart be warmed and every mouth smile. The rules provided are meant for the purposes of levity, and your participation is earnestly solicited. [*Sits down.*]

**TIM:** Right Illustrious Deputy Master — why are we met here together?

**RIDM:** To erect temples to virtue and dig dungeons for vices.

**TIM:** How long must we work?

**RIDM:** From the third to the sixth hour of the night.

**TIM:** How long a time is required before one can be greeted as a Royal and Select Master?

**RIDM:** Nine years.

**TIM:** How long a time have you labored?

**RIDM:** Nine years.

**TIM:** Illustrious Principal Conductor of the Work — what is the hour?

**IPCW:** It is the third hour of the night, when all prying eyes should be closed in sleep.

**TIM:** In consideration of the hour and time spent laboring, it is my order that a Council of Royal and Select Masters be now opened, after which we will resume our labors.

**IPCW:** [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ] Companions, in consideration of the hour and age, it is the order of the Thrice Illustrious Master that a Council of Royal and Select Masters be now opened, after which we will resume our labors.

**Chap:** Supreme Grand Architect of the Universe, by whose knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew: We yield Thee hearty thanks and praise for all the blessings of Thy merciful providence bestowed upon this gathering and the Companions present. We pray for the hungry, the cold, and the destitute. We beseech Thee, let Thy presence be among us tonight, nourishing our souls as this food will nourish our bodies, and may the wine of fellowship and brotherly love flow freely. *Amen.*

**Companions:** So mote it be.

**TIM:** [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**RIDM:** [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**IPCW:** [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**TIM:** All together, Companions.

**Companions:** [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**TIM:** In the name of the Supreme Grand Artificer of the Universe, I now declare a Table Council of Royal and Select Masters opened in due and ancient form. Let us resume our labors. [ \* ]

## Salad

### 1<sup>st</sup> Toast: to Our Country and Our Flag

**TIM:** [ \* ] Right Illustrious Deputy Master — have you anything to offer?

**RIDM:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** [*Fill cannons.*]

**CG:** Ready.

**Companions:** [*Reach for cannons.*]

**CG:** Aim.

**Companions:** [*Raise cannons for toast.*]

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Right Illustrious Deputy Master, you will proceed.

**RIDM:** May freedom reign forever in our land. To prosperity, peace, and love of fellow countryman. **To our country and our flag.**

**Companions:** To our country and our flag.

**CG:** Fire!

**Companions:** *[Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in "Aim" position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.]*

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Toast: to the First Grand Council**

**TIM:** [ \* ] Illustrious Principal Conductor of the Work — have you anything to offer?

**IPCW:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** *[Fill cannons.]*

**CG:** Ready.

**Companions:** *[Reach for cannons.]*

**CG:** Aim.

**Companions:** *[Raise cannons for toast.]*

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Illustrious Principal Conductor of the Work, you will proceed.

**IPCW:** To our three Ancient Grand Masters: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abiff, the widow's son. **To the First Grand Council.**

**Companions:** To the First Grand Council.

**CG:** Fire!

**Companions:** *[Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in "Aim" position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.]*

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Toast: to Our Grand Lodge and Most Worshipful Grand Master**

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companion Treasurer — have you anything to offer?

**Treas:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** *[Fill cannons.]*

**CG:** Ready.

**Companions:** *[Reach for cannons.]*

**CG:** Aim.

**Companions:** *[Raise cannons for toast.]*

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Companion Treasurer, you will proceed.

**Treas:** To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas; to Most Worshipful \_\_\_\_\_, Grand Master of Masons in Texas; and to his Grand Officers. **To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas**

**Companions:** To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas.

**CG:** Fire!

**Companions:** *[Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in "Aim" position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.]*

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## Main Course

### 4<sup>th</sup> Toast: to our Past Thrice Illustrious Masters

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companion Recorder — have you anything to offer?

**Rec:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** *[Fill cannons.]*

**CG:** Ready.

**Companions:** *[Reach for cannons.]*

**CG:** Aim.

**Companions:** *[Raise cannons for toast.]*

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Companion Recorder, you will proceed.

**Rec:** To sweat running down one's brow, and the soreness after a day of work. To the honor of good men working towards a better future and the sustainment of ancient traditions. To selfless labor in the quarries and the wisdom acquired therein. **To all Past Thrice Illustrious Masters.**

**Companions:** To all Past Thrice Illustrious Masters.

**CG:** Fire!

**Companions:** *[Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in "Aim" position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.]*

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## 5<sup>th</sup> Toast: to the Memory of our Departed Companions

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companion Chaplain — have you anything to offer?

**Chap:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in a solemn toast.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge your cannons and hold them at the ready for a solemn toast.

**Companions:** [*Pour drinks, hold cannons at the ready for a quiet toast.*]

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Companion Chaplain, you will proceed.

**Chap:** To those we love who are no longer with us. Though the hand of Death has broken a link in the bright chain of friendship, we know that our deceased Companions have gone to stand before the Supreme Architect of the Universe. May he grant them everlasting peace and comfort. We too, will someday die. Let us follow the example of those who have gone before us, and serve others as best we can during the time we have on this Earth. **To our departed Companions.**

**Companions:** To our departed Companions.

**CG:** [*Silently raises cannon high in the air, brings it back to his mouth, and drinks.*]

**Companions:** [*Drink.*]

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## 6<sup>th</sup> Toast: to this Table Council

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companion Captain of the Guard — have you anything to offer?

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Conductor of the Council — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CC:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** [*Fill cannons.*]

**CC:** Ready.

**Companions:** [*Reach for cannons.*]

**CC:** Aim.

**Companions:** [*Raise cannons for toast.*]

**CC:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Companion Captain of the Guard, you will proceed.

**CG:** To each Council of which there is a member present. [*Reads list of Councils represented.*] To unity, brotherhood, and breaking bread. To our visiting brethren, and those who have traveled far. **To this Cryptic Table Council.**

**Companions:** To this Cryptic Table Council.

**CC:** Fire!

**Companions:** [*Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in “Aim” position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.*]

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## Dessert

*Before toasting begins, the guest speaker will stand as he is able, and give his address.*

### 7<sup>th</sup> Toast: to Cryptic Masonry

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companion Conductor of the Council — have you anything to offer?

**CC:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** [*Fill cannons.*]

**CG:** Ready.

**Companions:** [*Reach for cannons.*]

**CG:** Aim.

**Companions:** [*Raise cannons for toast.*]

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Companion Conductor of the Council, you will proceed.

**CC:** To the circle of perfection that completes Ancient Craft Masonry. The Cryptic Rite leads us to meditate on the most solemn thought of death and inculcates in us a most profound respect for secrecy. In it, we witness some of the most beautiful lessons in the Craft. **To Cryptic Masonry.**

**Companions:** To Cryptic Masonry.

**CG:** Fire!

**Companions:** [*Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in “Aim” position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.*]

**TIM:** [ \* ]

### 8<sup>th</sup> Toast: to Our Grand Council and Most Illustrious Grand Master

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companion Steward — have you anything to offer?

**Stew:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** [*Fill cannons.*]

**CG:** Ready.

**Companions:** [*Reach for cannons.*]

**CG:** Aim.

**Companions:** [*Raise cannons for toast.*]

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Companion Steward, you will proceed.



**Stew:** To the Most Illustrious Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Texas, to our Most Illustrious Grand Master \_\_\_\_\_, to his Grand Officers, and to the propagation of Cryptic Masonry in our great State. **To the Most Illustrious Grand Council of Texas.**

**Companions:** To the Most Illustrious Grand Council of Texas.

**CG:** Fire!

**Companions:** *[Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in "Aim" position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.]*

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## 9<sup>th</sup> Toast: to all Companions Everywhere Around the Globe

**TIM:** [ \* ] Companion Sentinel — have you anything to offer?

**Sent:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, I would like to propose a toast.

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — you will lead the Companions in firing cannons.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* ] Companions, charge cannons.

**Companions:** *[Fill cannons.]*

**CG:** Ready.

**Companions:** *[Reach for cannons.]*

**CG:** Aim.

**Companions:** *[Raise cannons for toast.]*

**CG:** Thrice Illustrious Master *[slight bow]*, the Companions are in Order.

**TIM:** Companion Sentinel, you will proceed.

**Sent:** To all Cryptic Masons, wherever dispersed on this habitable Earth, and to the love, support, and steadfast companionship we all share. **To all Companions everywhere.**

**Companions:** To all Companions everywhere.

**CG:** Fire!

**Companions:** *[Drink toast, and in time with TIM, bring cannon to left breast, draw squarely across to right breast, bring cannon out in "Aim" position, and simultaneously slam cannons down to create loud rapport.]*

**TIM:** [ \* ]

## Closing

**TIM:** [ \* ] Right Illustrious Deputy Master, have you anything to bring before this Council?

**RIDM:** *[Remains seated.]* Nothing, Thrice Illustrious Master.

**TIM:** Illustrious Principal Conductor, have you anything?

**IPCW:** *[Remains seated.]* Nothing, Thrice Illustrious Master.

**TIM:** Companion Recorder, is there anything on your tracing board requiring attention?

**Rec:** *[Remains seated.]* Nothing, Thrice Illustrious Master.

**TIM:** Has any Companion anything to bring before the Council? *[Pause, then rise.]* Companions, we are about to close this Table Council of Royal and Select Masters. Before closing, I invite you to enjoy the words written by the former Secretary of Hope & Perseverance Lodge #782, in Lahore, India — “Banquet Night,” by Brother Rudyard Kipling:

“Once in so often,” King Solomon said,  
Watching his quarrymen drill the stone,  
“We will club our garlic and wine and bread  
And banquet together beneath my Throne,  
And all the Brethren shall come to that mess  
As Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less.”

“Send a swift shallop to Hiram of Tyre,  
Felling and floating our beautiful trees,  
Say that the Brethren and I desire  
Talk with our Brethren who use the seas.  
And we shall be happy to meet them at mess  
As Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less.”

“Carry this message to Hiram Abif —  
Excellent master of forge and mine: —  
I and the Brethren would like it if  
He and the Brethren will come to dine  
(Garments from Bozrah or morning-dress)  
As Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less.”

“God gave the Hyssop and Cedar their place —  
Also the Bramble, the Fig and the Thorn —  
But that is no reason to black a man’s face  
Because he is not what he hasn’t been born.  
And, as touching the Temple, I hold and profess  
We are Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less.”

So it was ordered and so it was done,  
And the hewers of wood and the Masons of Mark,  
With foc’sle hands of Sidon run  
And Navy Lords from the Royal Ark,  
Came and sat down and were merry at mess  
As Fellow-Craftsmen — no more and no less.

*The Quarries are hotter than Hiram’s forge,  
No one is safe from the dog-whip’s reach.  
It’s mostly snowing up Lebanon gorge,  
And it’s always blowing off Joppa beach;*

*But once in so often, the messenger brings  
Solomon’s mandate: “Forget these things!  
Brother to Beggars and Fellow to Kings,  
Companion of Princes — forget these things!  
Fellow-Craftsmen, forget these things!”*

**TIM:** [ \*\* ] / Companion Captain of the Guard — it is my order that you enlist the assembled Companions to assist in closing this Table Council of Royal and Select Masters in due and ancient form.

**CG:** [ \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\* \* ] Companions, it is the order of the Thrice Illustrious Master that you assist in closing this Table Council of Royal and Select Masters in due and ancient form. *[CG waits until all Companions*

*are standing as they are able.]* Thrice Illustrious Master [*slight bow*], the Companions are ready.

**Chap:** Supreme Architect of the Universe, we offer our humble thanks and praise for the love and protection Thou hast bestowed upon us. We thank Thee for the bright chain of friendship which has been on display so clearly tonight, and humbly ask for the continuation of Thy loving presence amongst us as we disperse to our respective homes. Send us out to do the work Thou hast given us to do, that we may be ever mindful of the great moral lessons inculcated in the Cryptic Council, and reverence Thy laws. *Amen.*

**Companions:** So mote it be.

**TIM:** [ \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**RIDM:** [ \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**IPCW:** [ \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**TIM:** All together, Companions.

**Companions:** [ \*\*\* \*\* \* ]

**TIM:** In the name of the Supreme Grand Artificer of the Universe, I now declare this Table Council of Royal and Select Masters closed. Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord. [ \* ]

# Appendix

## How to Toast, or “Fire Cannons”

The key here is for companions to observe the closest officer, and for all officers to observe the Thrice Illustrious Master. That way, the motions can be down in synchronization.

1. Charge Cannons: fill each “cannon” (usually a shot glass) with the type and amount of beverage of one’s preference.
2. Ready: reach for the cannon.
3. Aim: hold the cannon in the right hand at shoulder height, arm extended to the front.
4. Wait for the toast and repeat the last sentence.
5. FIRE: Drink the toast, then bring the cannon to the right breast, draw the cannon to the right breast (squarely across), and extend the arm forward, thereby forming two sides of a broken triangle. Bring the cannon down onto the table with a loud report.

## Important Table Council Terms

Plain	Table Council	Plain	Table Council
Bottle	Cask	Bread	Rough Ashlar
Room	Crypt	Tea	Brown Powder
Chair	Stall	Coffee	Black Powder
Table	Tracing Board	Red Wine	Red Powder
Table Cloth	Standard	White Wine	White Powder
Plate	Tile	Soda	Seafoam
Dish	Great Plate	Water	Weak Powder
Fork	Pick-Axe	Salt	Sand
Knife	Sword	Pepper	Cement
Spoon	Trowel	Meal	Material
Glass	Cannon	To Carve	To Hew
Napkin	Flag	To Drink	To Fire
Light	Star	To Eat	To Masticate

Layout of the Table Council

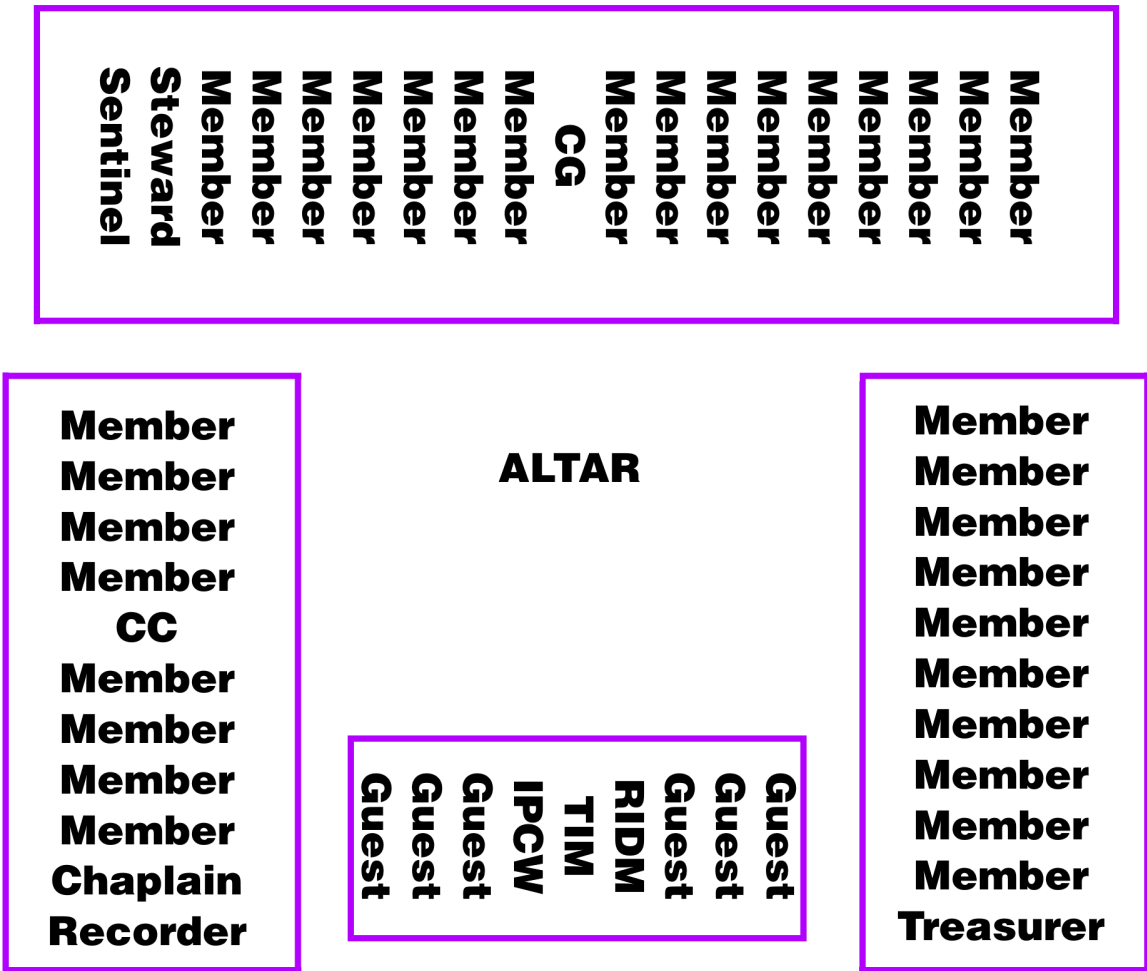


Figure 1: Suggested table layout for a Table Council