

Pythian Principles

The Fraternal Order Knights of Pythias promotes cooperation and friendship between people of good will.

Pythians know one way to happiness is through service to mankind.

Pythians believe that friendship is an essential ingredient in every walk of life.

Pythians make Benevolence, Kindness, Generosity and Tolerance a reality in their lives. Pythians place home ties at the top of their priority list.

Pythians are interested in public affairs on the local, state or province, national and international levels.

Pythians are eager to enhance the communities in which they live.

Pythians respect and honor the law of the land in which they live.

Pythians seek to expand their circle of influence by association with people of like interests and energy.

Peace Through Understanding

The Fraternal Order Knights of Pythias and its members are dedicated to the cause of universal peace. Pythians are pledged to the promotion of understanding among men of good will as the surest means of attaining Universal Peace.

We believe that men, meeting in a **spirit** of goodwill, in an honest effort of understanding, can live together on this earth in peace and harmony.

We seek those who agree with this belief, and have a belief in a personal Supreme Being, to join our ranks to reach "Peace Through Understanding".

What Do Pythians Do?

Members of the Fraternal Order Knights of Pythias are involved in their communities.' Their activities are directed towards enhancing the principles of Friendship, Charity, and Benevolence. These principles are supported by contributions of money, labor, and supplies to Pythians and non- Pythians.

The Pythian Order has chosen Special Olympics International as its primary charity. The Pythian family takes an active role in sponsoring and conducting the local competitions, which lead up to the international games.

Local Pythian Lodges support and sponsor youth groups such as the Boy Scouts, organized sports, and youth camps. A strength of the Pythian Order is its ability to meet the needs of the local community as seen and accepted by the local members.

Each year the Pythian Order sponsors a Poster Contest for junior high and high school students throughout the United States and Canada. The annual contest is used to emphasize safety and concern for others. Prizes are awarded on the local, state, and international level.

The Pythian Order provides opportunity for personal growth and development of individual talents and skills. Leadership development opportunities abound throughout the local and international levels. These opportunities are available in local lodges as well as in Leadership Seminars sponsored by the international offices of the Fraternal Order.



The Pythian Story

(An Invitation)



Damon and Pythias

Brief History

The Order Knights of Pythias is a great international fraternity which was founded in Washington, D.C. on February 19, 1864, by Justus Henry Rathbone.

The primary object of any fraternal organization is to promote friendship among men and provide for the general welfare of its membership. Each organization adopts some particularly outstanding principles as its objective. The distinguishing principles of the Fraternal Order Knights of Pythias are "FRIENDSHIP, CHARITY AND BENEVOLENCE". It bases its ritualistic work largely on the story of the friendship between Damon and Pythias, who were historical characters circa 500 B.C. They were members of a school, founded by Pythagoras, who is known as the Father of Philosophy.

To become a member of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, certain rigorous tests were demanded. Some were very similar to the ritual of initiation of our Order today. It was a maxim of Pythagoras that the two most excellent things for men **were** "to speak the truth and to render benefits to each other". The outstanding feature of the society, however, was the marvelous friendship and loyalty which bound the brotherhood together.

These attributes were remarkably demonstrated in the story of Damon and Pythias. Damon, a Senator, was opposed to the pretensions of the King of Syracuse, who had attained the throne by fraud. Because of this opposition, the king, a pure tyrant, condemned Damon to death. Pythias volunteered to be a hostage in place of Damon, who was permitted his liberty to bid his wife and child farewell. Each was willing to die for the other. This story, handed down through the centuries, forms the basis for one of the most beautiful events of history as exemplified in our ritual.

The Drama - Damon and Pythias

John Banim, Irish Poet and dramatist, wrote a play, first produced in London in 1821, based on this friendship. Familiarity with the play prompted Justus Henry Rathbone to organize a fraternal order on the basis of such friendship.

The Rathbone Bible

The first members took their vows in the new order with their hands placed upon a pocket Bible that had been given Mr. Rathbone by his mother. This Bible is still a treasured relic of the Order, and thousands of men have been privileged to become members with the original Bible being used to obligate them.

Abraham Lincoln

The Order began during the Civil War, and its founder believed that it might help to heal the wounds and allay the hatred of civil conflict. President Lincoln, when made aware of the principles and aims of the new Order, heartily approved, and encouraged the members to go ahead with their plans. Later the Pythian Order became the first fraternal organization to be chartered by an Act of the United States Congress.



Putting It All Together

In the Order's ritualistic work, every sentence has a meaning and every paragraph a beautiful and inspiring lesson. The flag of the country has an honored place at every meeting and the Holy Bible is the Supreme Book of Law.

The Order does not seek to shape any man's beliefs, but Pythianism is the practical application of spiritual and charitable principles of everyday life. We have a heritage of which we are proud and our precepts and teachings lead men to higher ideals of life. We invite like-minded men of all races, creeds, and colors who are of good character, to join us in making these ideals a dominant factor in modern living.

Our Organization and Auxiliaries

The Pythian organization consists of the Supreme (International) Lodge which is composed of representatives from Grand (state or provincial) Lodges, each of which is composed of representatives from the various Subordinate (local) Lodges.

There are three recognized auxiliaries: The Pythian Sisters, The Dramatic Order Knights of Khorassan, and the Junior Order Knights of Pythias.

The Pythian Sisters organization, in addition to its ritualistic work, is engaged in altruistic efforts second to none among women's organizations. The Pythian Sisters maintain a junior organization with like purposes called the "Sunshine Girls".

The Dramatic Order Knights of Khorassan is the "playground" of the Fraternal Order. Its mission, in addition to conducting substantial altruistic work, is to encourage a more intimate Pythian acquaintance and closer brotherhood. Only Pythian Knights are eligible for membership. This group has a recognized women's auxiliary called the Nomads of Avrudaka.

The Junior Order is an organization for young men which affords preliminary training in the principles of fraternity. It is maintained to promote patriotism, health, character, and clean living. It strives to gather in common fraternity young men of high ideals.

This Pythian Story presented by

Telephone Number



www.pythias.org



www.pythias.org/invitation