

History of Blest Be the Tie That Binds

The hymn "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" holds significant meaning within the Order of the Eastern Star (OES), a Masonic-affiliated fraternal organization open to both men and women. While the hymn's message aligns with core Christian beliefs, its use within the OES is not confined to religious dogma but rather emphasizes the strength of the bonds of friendship, love, and loyalty within the Order.

The hymn's lyrics resonate with OES principles:

- "Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above." These lines refer to the camaraderie and connection shared among OES members, emphasizing their shared values of friendship, kindness, and charity.
- "Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one; our comforts and our cares." This highlights the mutual support and empathy that OES members extend to each other, bearing each other's burdens and offering solace in times of need.
- "When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain; but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again." This underscores the enduring nature of the relationships formed within the OES, acknowledging the sorrow of separation, but affirming the lasting spiritual connection and the hope of future reunion.

The hymn's emphasis on unity and enduring connection aligns perfectly with the OES's vision of fostering a supportive community for its members, promoting mutual respect, service, and membership engagement. The five points of the Eastern Star, symbolized by biblical heroines, further reinforce these values through their associated principles of fidelity, constancy, loyalty, faith, and love. "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" serves as a powerful anthem for the Order, symbolizing the lasting friendships and commitment to humanity that characterize the organization.

REV. FAWCETT'S DILEMMA — TO GO OR STAY?

Imagine it! Rev. John Fawcett (1739-1817) was a young preacher in Wainsgate, which seemed then to be the middle of nowhere. (Think *Wuthering Heights*.) The Yorkshire countryside in Northern England was barren and cold.

The people — goodhearted, hardworking, mostly illiterate — had next to nothing. They supplemented their pastor's meager stipend with wool and potatoes. Nor was there a parsonage. Instead, Fawcett, his wife and four children were passed from one family to the next, a few months here, a few months there, no place to call their own. They suffered chilly drafts and ate porridge with their host families.



Poverty was nothing new to Fawcett. Orphaned at 12, he became an indentured servant at 13, worked 14 hours a day, and taught himself to read at night. When he was 15, he stood in an outdoor crowd of 20,000 to hear a sermon by George Whitefield, "the marvel of the age," and set his mind on becoming a preacher.

One day in 1772, after seven years of pastoring in Yorkshire, 33-year-old Fawcett got the call. He had established a reputation as a theologian, inspiring preacher, and serious scholar and was now wanted in London. London!

It seemed a dream come true, to move to lively London where his family's standard of living would vastly improve. The city had good schools, libraries, sophisticated music and art, churches with stained glass, and educated colleagues for deep conversation. Fawcett agonized over the tempting offer and finally said YES!

The family packed up, climbed into a wagon, and waved to people who had come many miles to say goodbye. The scene was so wrenching, however, that Fawcett realized he couldn't leave. He turned the horses around, unpacked, and stayed in Yorkshire for another 45 years.

Out of this experience, he wrote the most famous of his 160 hymns, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." It became a favorite hymn for Christians facing separation, an affirmation that friendship and community are the true measures of wealth.

John Fawcett passed from this life on July 25th, 1817, at the age of 77.

*1. Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love.
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

*2. Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one
Our comforts and our cares.*

*3. We share each other's woes,
Our mutual burdens bear
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.*

*4. When we asunder part
It gives us inward pain,
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again...*

Our code book was changed a while back, so the lyrics are more inclusive. "Christian" was changed to "steadfast".

***Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in steadfast love.
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.***

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Source: Website – www.askherabouthymn.com