

## **Living Our Ritual: Building Community During Crisis**

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Some might say rituals, creeds, mottos, and values are the farthest thoughts from most minds considering our current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. I believe the words, values, and promises held in these concepts are the one thing we have to hold onto as fraternities and sororities. Our friendships, brotherhoods, and sisterhoods are based, or should be based, on the commitments we made to one another and our organizations. Let's talk about why this is important and how we can use these concepts to support one another through this time and beyond.

### **Why Ritual?**

Rituals are basically rites of passage which keep us connected, rooted in love, friendship, service, commitment, trust, and yes, even accountability. Rituals are important and many of our members, even though they might not understand the importance right now, feel they have been (in their terms) "robbed" of those rites of passage. Maybe it was initiation, senior farewell, awards ceremonies, and even graduating with their brothers and sisters who they have journeyed with for years. We have to recognize there is grief and loss because of these aspects, and our students will never get this time back. How we help them work through these challenges will determine how we come back from this time. Will our members feel a closer bond to one another and our organizations or have we lost them forever?

### **How Can Ritual Keep Us Moving Forward?**

Rituals are about relationships. Relationships are essential to life. We must check in on one another. We must be about forgiveness, giving one another grace, and loving one another through this. When all of this is said and done, will we create a more dynamic fraternity/sorority experience built on support, connectivity, and engagement or will we go back to business as usual? We, as humans, have a hunger for community. We can create communities where our members and chapters thrive.

### **Little Things Done with Great Love**

Little things have massive impact. Don't try to do it all, just focus on the little things. Set aside the spectacular and do little things with great love. Our rituals were basic concepts written with great love. We need to do our part. Often, we are too wrapped up in the spectacular; we need to get back to the basics. Right now is our time for incredible possibilities. We can change the experience of fraternity/sorority to be more relevant than before — even in very uncertain times. We must do our part. We must focus on what matters most. We must support one another in good days and bad days. There must be a spirit of hope. We can make a difference in one another's lives but how we treat one another matters more than ever. We will get through this time — we just have to do our little bit.

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