

A WORD ABOUT IMMATURE PROPHETS

Sometimes people try to use their gifting to gain recognition in the Body of Christ. In this church, however, we are more interested in character than giftedness. Giftedness must flow out of wholeness, maturity and integrity.

DIRECTIONAL PROPHECY

Prophecies which give specific dates, times, names for spouses, details of personal relationships and exhortation to do or not to do something are should only be given by persons moving in the office of prophet and have been accepted by the leadership as proven, tested and mature in their gifting. Even then, all of the above criteria apply. In the area of dates and exact specifics, even the most gifted can miss it. Remember the prophetic word could be accurate, but the your understanding of the time frame may not be.

ABOUT CORRECTIONS

Bringing correction is reserved for pastors, definitely not for those starting off in the prophetic or intercessory ministry. The Church is called to work together as a body, and those in leadership have the responsibility of keeping it healthy.

Beware of corrective, judgemental or condemning prophecy, as it is not generally from the Lord. Run it by the pastor if you have any questions or doubts. Remember, you are the one directly responsible to the Lord—to hear from Him and to live your life in the light of what He is saying to you personally.

SCRIPTURE TO CONSIDER

- Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. (1 Cor 14:1)
- Now, about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. (1 Cor 12:1)
- To another, miraculous powers, to another prophecy (1 Cor 12:10)
- And to the Church, God has appointed, first of all, apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those who have gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. (1 Cor 12:28)

- Are you all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? (1 Cor 12:29)
- If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (1 Cor 13:2)
- And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor 13:13)
- Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:4)
- But everyone who prophecies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort (1 Cor 14:3)
- He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophecies edifies the church (1 Cor 14:4)
- I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified. (1 Cor 14:5)
- Do not put out the Spirit's fire (1 Thess 5:19)
- Do not treat prophecies with contempt (1 Thee 5:20)
- Test everything. Hold onto the good. (1 Thess 5:21)



Postal Address

The Vine, Chy an Dinas, Castlegate,

Ludgvan, Penzance TR20 8BG

Tel: 01736 365982

www.thevine-stives.org.uk

email: thevinestives@googlemail.com

CHURCH OF THE VINE, ST IVES

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU RECEIVE PROPHETIC WORDS

*“ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD.... “
Jeremiah 29:13 & 14a*



Prophecy

THE PROPHETS AND THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

The New Testament mentions both the gift of prophecy, which all believers may aspire to (1 Cor 12), and the office of a prophet which is one of the five fold ministry offices (Eph 4:11).

Personal prophetic words are Scriptural when ministered by a recognized leader who is released in the office of a prophet and has a track record of accuracy and accountability in the Church.

There are several examples of prophetic ministry in the New Testament. Peter received a word for Cornelius in Acts 10:20. The prophet Agabus had a word for the whole church in Acts 21:10, predicting a famine. In Acts 11:28, Agabus also warned Paul of his coming arrest. Paul gives a prophetic warning in Acts 27:22, that the ship in which he is traveling will be wrecked, but that everyone on board will be saved.

The information in this brochure is to assist those who have received a prophetic word for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort (1 Cor 14:3), or for those thinking about receiving prophetic ministry.

A word of prophecy can be a source of tremendous blessing and encouragement. It can be a pivotal event in your faith walk, inspiring you to believe God for new and greater things. It can, however, also be an opportunity for misunderstanding and difficulty in certain instances.

This pamphlet offers some Scriptural guidelines, safeguards and words of caution to enable God's people to get the maximum benefit from the prophetic ministry. Please note that the purpose of prophecy is to build up, encourage and comfort people (1 Cor 14:3)

PROPHETIC WORDS IN THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people, as He determines (1 Cor 12:10). In the Body of Christ, the gifts are different yet complimentary, just as the parts of our bodies are different, but all work together to ensure good health.

We are taught to eagerly desire the greater gifts (1 Cor 12:29-31). We are to excel in the gifts that build up the church (1 Cor 14:12). When prophecy is delivered to the whole church, it is a great encouragement (1 Cor 14:22) and strengthens God's people (1 Cor 14:26).

In a public meeting, two or three prophecies are enough and should be carefully weighed by the leadership (1 Cor 14:29). People should prophesy in turn, being encouraged to mature in exercising this gift.

"Prophets" are to be self controlled and responsible with their words. Thus, only those who are well known in their community, who are mature and are people of integrity, are released to function in this office.

PERSONAL PROPHETIC WORDS

The Bible emphasizes the testing of prophecies, rather than the prophets, though the integrity of both these are commanded. At The Vine, some individuals have been released to a prophetic Ministry Team, and a program is being developed for the training, equipping and extension of this team as the church grows.

People can be assured that this team, who may minister personal words of prophecy to individuals, is under the authority and observation of the pastor and leadership team responsible for the spiritual oversight of this church. People can be confident of their relative maturity and of the leadership's trust in them as loving and able members.

All prophecy should be tested by the Holy Spirit and by God's Word, since we prophecy in part (1 Cor 13:9). No prophecy or prophet is infallible or equal in authority to the Bible. Here are some good guidelines for handling prophetic ministry:

* **Don't stifle or despise prophecy, but test it.** (1 Thess 5:19-22)

Though the prophecy may come in words or in a style of delivery which is not your choice, or through a person to whom you may not relate well, consider their words as instruction from God (1 Peter 4:11)

* **Does the prophecy conform to Scripture?** The Spirit of God will always agree with His previous revelation on the Bible.

* **Does the prophecy "ring true" "with you?"** (John 10:2-5)

Usually, a prophetic word will confirm what God has already spoken to you in various ways. It will confirm in you a certain direction and build your faith.

* **If prophecy contains prediction, is it becoming reality?** If there are factual elements which can be verified, are they accurate?

* **Will the prophecy bear good fruit in your life?** It is the principle of Scripture that a tree is judged by its fruit (Luke 6:43-45). If the prophecy is from the Holy Spirit, it will serve to glorify Jesus by producing good fruit in your life.

* **Wait on God for confirmation and clarity.** Sometimes a prophetic word requires further guidance regarding interpretation and timing. Pray about it and seek guidance from the Bible and from those who are mature in the Lord. The latter are the two primary means of guidance from God. Revelation about a situation does not automatically supply the power to change it. Pray for further confirmation, especially where the prophecy involves major change or impact on your life. Remember that prophecy is a diving board from which you plunge into a pool of prayer. If you are not sure about a prophecy, put it on the shelf for the time being. God will confirm it to you.

* **When the interpretation is clear, act in faith.** If you agree that the word is from God, pray that He will fulfill the prophecy in your life. Have an attitude of expectancy!

