

Basic Guidelines for Prophetic Ministry

Prophetic ministry in the local church includes public or semi-private utterances of the simple gift of prophecy, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, messages in tongues with interpretation, spiritual dreams, inner visions and impressions.

It is not unusual for believers who spend significant time with the Lord to receive revelation. This can range from impressions and mental visions to face-to-face encounters. Also included are less common means of seeing, hearing and perceiving through the enablement of the Holy Spirit, such as visitations of angels, hearing God's voice audibly, experiences in trances, translations, etc.

All revelation is valuable and should be given proper consideration, but there is a distinction in clarity and authority among the many forms of revelation. For example, an open-eyed vision is an experience in which the receiver is more passively involved and therefore less likely to influence the message with personal mindsets or ideas. For this reason an open-eyed vision has greater authority than a mental vision.

These basic guidelines are offered to help faithful praying believers build up their churches and avoid common snares that turn prophetic gifting from the benefit that it should be into trouble and confusion. Many local church will have their own positions and guidelines for prophetic ministry in the church that should be honored.

Lessons from 1 Corinthians 14

1. The simple gift of prophecy in the body of Christ is expected and encouraged (v. 1).
2. The purpose of prophecy is strengthening, encouragement and comfort (v. 3).
3. Our motivation in prophetic ministry is to build up the church (v. 12).
4. There must be accountability (v. 29)
5. Operating in prophetic gifting does not make one a prophet (v. 31)
6. Everyone may prophesy. Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we are all a "prophetic people" (v. 31).

Accountability in Prophetic Ministry

1. All prophetic revelation is subordinate to the revelation of Scripture.
2. Prophetic revelation is not to establish doctrine.
3. Stay within the confines of edification and encouragement.
4. Operate within the prescribed protocol of your church.
5. If you are a guest in another church consult the leadership before giving a public word.
6. If you believe you have a negative word from the Lord to give to an individual, share it with a pastor first, then follow his directions.
7. If you believe you have a prophetic word that is directional or correctional for an individual or the church, tell a pastor/leader first, then follow his or her directions. Believers must judge whether a directional word is valid.
8. After publicly giving a specific word of encouragement, ask the person in the presence of a leader or accountability figure for their response. "Did that make sense to you?" or "How was that word to you?" Prophecy is to be open to the discernment of the leadership and church.

9. If a prophetic word to an individual is to be spoken in private, take a responsible leader with you. After giving the word ask for a response as above.

Specific Revelation and “Words”

1. Do not share revelation if you have any offense in your heart toward anyone, as it may not be trustworthy.
2. If you believe the Lord has revealed something to you in a dream in your private prayer time that applies to the body, write it down and give it to the prayer/prophetic ministry leader. That way it can be put together with other forms of revelation and guidance for a more complete message. They may or may not direct you to share it with the church.
3. Open-eye visions or audible voice are high level revelation and should be shared with the leadership directly.
4. Share your revelation on specific issues with the leadership, then let the leadership decide how/when/if to apply it. Entrust it to God as to how or whether it is acted upon. The leader has the authority and anointing to discern timing and general direction, not the person giving a prophetic word. Prophetic believers should never use revelation to manipulate, intimidate or control.

Ministering in Prophecy

1. Seek to excel in clarity.
2. Seek to excel in love.
3. Realize that not all revelation is to be shared. Some is personal. Some is for prayer only.
4. Most predictive prophecy (negative or positive) is conditional. Negative revelation is often a glimpse into the plans of the enemy and should be considered a warning, not inevitable. Positive revelation is to be considered an invitation, not inevitable.
5. Prophetic gifting does not make an individual more important than anyone in any other place of function in the church. However, a prophetically gifted individual can potentially cause more damage in the church than those with other gifts if he/she does not maintain humility and a teachable spirit.
6. Prophetic revelation, properly shared, can be a great help to leaders and the church. For this reason believers are urged to seek after spiritual gifts, and prophecy in particular.