**Defining Prophetic Ministry At The Cincinnati House of Prayer**

**".., for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," (Revelation 19:10, NIV)**

A. Prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (the thoughts on his heart) being communicated to us by the Holy Spirit.

B. Prophecy takes place when God communicates thoughts to our mind (revelation) and we share those thoughts with others.

C. Most prophecy contains a mixture of our words with God's words. The revelation that God gives us is always 100% true, however, it is filtered through human communication and perspective, so that by the time it is given through us it contains a percentage of our words as well as God's. We can learn how to share prophetic words more clearly as we mature in our gifting. A mature word will have a higher percentage of God's words; a weak word will have a higher percentage of our words. (**\***)

 God’s Word Man’s word

 Strong Prophetic Average Prophetic Weak Prophetic

 (Maturity) (Immaturity)

(**\***) Illustration taken from *Growing in the Prophetic* by Mike Bickle on page 37.

**LEVELS OF PROPHESYING**

A. Simple Prophecy: Any believer can do this type of prophecy. Not all believers who prophesy are prophet (I Cor. 12:29), but all can prophesy. We mostly teach and train our staff how to operate at this level of prophetic ministry. Simple prophecy usually takes place one on one, in small group settings, or given individually during ministry times and not in a public setting.

B. Prophetic Gifting/ Ministry: One who has a prophetic gifting/ministry that is recognized for ministering in the church regularly. The person will have dreams and visions regularly, and will often have encounters (angelic visitations, etc.), will often prophetically get detailed information (names, dates, places, etc.), and sometimes be used in other areas of gifting as well, such as healing and deliverance. The person regularly receives unusual amounts of revelation but is still being trained in their gifting.

C. Office of Prophet: Only believers who function as Old Testament prophets are those who have the office of a prophet. They have a regular flow of revelation, including open visions, predicting natural events, and sometimes having words confirmed with supernatural signs. A prophet must have a proven ministry (not only in level of gifting, but in fruit, character, and wisdom), which could take years, and must have a consistent track record of great accuracy before they should be recognized by the church as a prophet. A prophet also must be under the authority of the church.

**OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY**

A. Old Testament prophets prophesied by direct revelation. In the New Testament, we learn to prophesy by faith. Our words have mixture, but we can grow and mature in our prophetic gift.

***"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith." (Romans 12:6, NIV)***

**CHARACTER**

A. Gifting doesn't equal character, and anointing doesn't equal maturity. Just because someone is gifted doesn't mean that God is endorsing every area of his or her life or their ministry style. Character is much more important to the Lord than gifting.

***“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its fruit" (Luke 6:43-44, NIV)***

***"But the fruit of the Spirit is lore, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,***

***faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV)***

**THE PROCESS OF PROPHECY: REVELATION, INTERPRETATION, APPLICATION**

***"For we know in part and we prophesy in part," (1 Corinthians 13:9, NIV)***

A. Revelation: is the divine information you receive from the Lord. It comes in many ways, including impressions, thoughts, feelings, dreams, visions, pictures, inner audible voice, etc.

B. Interpretation: is gaining understanding of God's perspective of the revelation. Interpretation comes from the Lord, not from our own reasoning or 'figuring out'. This is where many often miss it in giving a prophetic word. The revelation might be correct, but their interpretation might be completely other than what God was really saying.

***"Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams." (Genesis 40:8, NIV)***

C. Application: regards how to apply a prophetic word once it's been interpreted. It's what you do with it. Here are some questions to ask: Who do we tell? How much of it do we tell? When do we tell it? Is it corporate or personal? Do we tell it or is it meant for prayer? The point is to use wisdom in applying the word in a way which will bring about the most effective edification.

**DELIVERING A PROPHETIC WORD**

At C-HOP we have expectations for those ministering to others regarding how to and pray and share prophetic words in a way that is most edifying. We want our words *and our actions* (the way we share) to be edifying and safe for those being ministered to. Keep in mind that we are speaking of simple prophecy here, and that exceptions will follow those who have matured in the prophetic giftings, have recognized prophetic ministries or have the office of a prophet.

A. Positive, friendly prophecy is a vital component to edification. It's not just our words, but also our compassion, gentleness and submission that are effective in prophetic ministry. We want those ministered to to feel drawn to the Lord by how we pray and how we share. Positive prophecy avoids pointing out anything negative (sin, past) and focuses instead on building others up.

B. Dial down and be yourself. Prophecy doesn't require hype. Be naturally supernatural. Give only what you got. It's tempting to embellish our words if we feel they will sound too simple. If we embellish our words or get into counseling, we will end up being `soulish' instead of being in line with what the Spirit's doing.

C. We believe here at C-HOP there are a few things to avoid while doing prophetic ministry. This includes prophesying about negative things (sin, the past, correcting, rebuking). Again, the prophetic is for ***"strengthening, encouragement, and comfort"***. This is the measuring line for how to share prophetic words.

D. Another thing to avoid is predicting specific detailed information or giving *specific* direction (dates, time frames, marriages, children, death, life, moving, jobs, etc., or basically, telling people what to do.) The reason why, as we said before, is because of the mixture of accuracy in our prophetic words. Because of the way prophecy works, we can 'miss it’ and give an incorrect prophecy because of our lack of discernment or maturity. You should never act on a prophetic word; a word should only confirm what the Lord has already spoken to your own heart.

E. Because we can 'miss it', it is also wise to not use the words "thus saith the Lord". It's much easier and safer and wiser to say you 'sense' or 'feel' something from the Lord and to give the word humbly than it is to bind someone to your word by being overconfident that it was from the Lord.

**DEVELOPING YOUR GIFT**

A. We can mature and grow in the prophetic as we learn by experience. Every time we prophesy, we are stepping out in faith and taking a risk. Here we learn to differentiate between mistakes and sin. If we take a risk and miss it, it's only a mistake, not a wrongdoing. It only becomes wrongdoing if we are unwilling to be corrected and taught, as well as to take responsibility for our mistakes. It's best Ito learn from our mistakes so that we can grow in wisdom.

B. Practicing and training in the prophetic in a safe place (like a home group setting) is a great way to develop the gift of prophecy, especially if you, as a leader, desire to embrace the prophetic in your church. Part of the responsibility of pursuing the prophetic is the willingness to work with people who are still immature in the way they administrate their gifting (to be patient with the teachable) and frank with the less teachable, and also to clean up any messes made while pursuing growing in the prophetic.

**THE C-HOP USE OF PROPHECY SUMMARY STATEMENT**

At the Cincinnati House of Prayer we affirm that the Bible is the inerrant and sole objective source of direction and wisdom for the life of a believer. We believe in the operation of the prophetic ministry as a source of edification, exhortation, and comfort from the Lord (1 Cor. 14:3). We believe that the subjectivity of the prophetic ministry must be vigorously tested against the inspired and infallible Scriptures that God gave for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

We deny that subjective prophetic experiences are equal to the inspired Word of God. In other words, all personal prophecy must uphold and honor the Scripture.

Explanation: Simple prophecy is limited to edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). It is to enrich our spiritual life, rather than give direction in the domestic areas of our life. Edification speaks of spiritually building or edifying someone’s spirit by confirming their destiny or God’s purpose for their life. The most common way to edify a person through simple prophecy is to give a Scripture that has been previously important to them. Exhortation includes calling people to persevere and to not give up on their promises to God in hard times, and to not give in to sin. Comfort speaks of making known God’s perspective in a great disappointment or setback in a person’s life, by giving God’s perspective in telling them that God has a plan in their time of pressure.

We urge people to avoid giving others prophetic direction in the domestic areas of their life. This includes issues related to spousal designation, bearing children, changing jobs, moving, buying or selling (e.g., a house), leaving one church for another, etc. We may give godly counsel to one another in domestic areas without presenting it as a prophecy. Personal prophecies should be given with others as witnesses (we request that prophecies be recorded when possible). Some people have an over-reliance on dreams for direction in their domestic lives. God never intended to direct people mostly by dreams. Yes, God does use dreams to give some direction; however, dreams are not to be a substitute for gaining wisdom from Scripture. Some people rely on dreams for decisions because it absolves them from responsibility and lacking wisdom if the decision turns out to be wrong (Eccl. 5:3, 7).