**PROPHETS – Are They Worth The Pain?**

Why do we need prophets?  Determining who is a prophet?  How do prophets function within the local church structure? Challenges and cautions that come with the prophetic office.

**Prophets are they worth the Pain?**

**Four levels of Levels of Prophecy:**

**1) Spirit of Prophecy** **- Rev 19:10** - The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. When believers share what God has made real to them, what He has spoken to them, it becomes a word of prophecy, a testimony of Jesus to those around.

show it unto you.

**2) Gift Of Prophecy**

* 1 Cor 12:10
* 1 Cor 14:3 – edification, exhortation, comfort
* Other Gifts of the Spirit **-** Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Discerning of Spirits.

**3) Prophetic Ministry** – This is more than just a one-off, occasional ministry of the gift of prophecy. These have a stronger prophetic ability, a deeper revelation than the Gift of Prophecy.

**4) Office of a Prophet**

* Eph 4:11. Is one of the ministry gifts of Christ to the Church – the person is the gift, not a Gift of the Spirit, it is not that an individual has the gift of being a prophet, the prophet is the gift.

**God makes prophets** - **Is not self-appointed**

* Hebrews 5:1-4 -

**The fivefold ministry are public ministries. They are to equip people for the work of the ministry.**

* **Prophet is to be a father to the developing of the prophetic within the church**. **To be a guardian for the functioning of the Holy Spirit in the congregation.**
* **Model a lifestyle and provide an environment and atmosphere where the Spirit of God touches lives**

**How do I know if a person is a prophet or just ministering strongly in the prophetic ministry?**

1. **Prophet should strongly function in all the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are based out of hearing what the Spirit of God wants to do, the prophet should readily function in all nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.**
2. **Prophet has a resident anointing to hear from God –** “a prophet can prophecy at any time”
3. **Helps lay the foundation of the church**

* *Eph 2:19,20 church is build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*
  + **Faith**
  + **Awe and fear**
  + **Anointing**
  + **Love of God** - 1 Cor 13:1-3
  + **Experiential connection with God**, as opposed to intellectual

1. **Accuracy in ministry**

* *Deut. 18: 21,22*
* I Corinthians 14:6,7,33 - Not confusing, clear direction

1. **Impartation and activation**

* *1Ti 4:14*

1. **Has predictive aspect**

* *Acts 11:27*

1. **Is concerned about the holiness and purity of the church.**
2. **Help people and churches to wage warfare and to stand firm**

* *1Ti 1:18*

1. **Help people to understand God’s perspective of the situations around them,**
2. **Live a life of Servanthood**

* *Mark 10:42-45*

1. **Godly character – no arrogance or pride**
2. **Part of a local church that are accountable to**

* **Are Correctable**

1. **Holds the words that they deliver lightly** 
   * not trying to force the words upon people,
   * not trying to prove that the words are correct,
   * not trying to force the application of the words.

**Three key distinguishing points about prophets**

**Failing to work as a team seeing all members as essential to obtaining the purposes and direction for the team.**

1. **Are they recognized as prophets by other leaders?**

* *1 Cor 9:2* Paul’s apostolic ministry
* *1 Sam 16:13;* *2 Sam 5:11-12*

1. **Prophets are part of the five-fold ministry – would you want them on your pastoral team? Prophets have a leadership function attached to their ministry – 5 fold ministry is different from other areas of ministry – there should be a high leadership quotient.**

* 1 Tim 3; Titus 2 Must meet the qualifications of an elder but also the maturity and leadership grace of an elder.

1. **Do they function with a team spirit? - Team person**

**Must work as a team seeing all members as essential to obtaining the purposes and direction for the team.**

* *Eph. 5:21* – having an attitude of submitting to one another

**Challenges and cautions that come with the prophetic office.**

1. **Danger of thinking that hearing from God is a sign of spirituality. Spirituality is seen by fruit, not the Spirit working through you**

* *Matt 7:15-20* You shall know them by their fruit
* *Gal 5:22,23* the fruit of the spirit – of which love is a primary one
* *1 Cor 13:1-3* - if have not love accomplish nothing, am nothing,

1. **Challenge – I hear from God I should be the head leader - Pride and arrogance**

* *Numbers 11, 12*

1. **Challenge of forcing weight or application upon words** instead of letting the Spirit impose weight. Then become wounded because word was not received.
2. **Challenge trying to use prophecy to direct the church**
3. **Challenge of clarity**
4. **Challenge of time,** prophetic people think that the most important thing is what they hear from God and they speak what God has said.

1. **Challenge of congregational size**
2. **Challenge of misplace focus** - placing too much focus upon the prophet or the prophetic for direction.

* Failure to draw upon all aspects through which God speaks and through which he gives direction.