

## Developing homegroups - the prophetic

February 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, evening

Teaching such as this, is relevant to small and large church meetings. Fundamentally: what is prophecy, the prophetic, and prophesying? It is the Spirit enabling a person to hear God in some way, and then they speak that out that 'word'. Prophecy can be a prediction of future events, but normally it is about God saying something in the NOW, and its relevance to a person's life. Clearly the Word of God/Bible has authority above everything, so any word/prophetic word needs to be checked and tested.

It is not easy to teach a person 'how' to prophesy – to decipher a method would reduce it from its supernatural state! But maybe we can help aid the prophetic dimension of the faith?

### 1.

#### 1 Corinthians 14v1

*'Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy'. Literally this reads: 'Pursue love, and be emulous of spirituals, especially that you may prophesy'.*

To become increasingly able to prophesy and be prophetic – we must pursue love! We must follow the 'way of love'. If we want to be able to prophesy and hear from God, love should be the base fundamental of our lives. Love is the means by which spiritual gifts – all of them - are made effective. Love here is agapao – a commitment love (against all the odds) in any situation, towards anyone. Not a 'feeling' love, necessarily. If we want the Holy Spirit, and the holy gifts, then he will be attracted to holiness, which includes love.

### 2.

The Greek word behind 'eagerly desire' or be 'emulous of' literally means: fervent or ardent. It is also where we get the word 'zealous' from, and more literally it means 'to boil, to be hot'. If you want to prophesy and hear God, then you need to have a red hot zeal for the gift. Many Christians do not feel this way for the prophetic! Maybe it's because they fear they'll get self-glorifying, or it'll take them out of their place of preference?

But prophecy is a gift – it is of grace – no one has the right to boast and besides if a person is pursuing the way of love, they will not easily become self-exalting anyway.

So, do you earnestly boil within, for the gifts of God – indeed prophecy? Surely one who desires the gift, will more likely receive it! Indeed if it is the Spirit who gives these gifts, then you must eagerly desire and be boiling for the Spirit *himself* as well.

### 3.

It is so important to saturate yourself in the word of God – to read the bible, write down verses, try to recall parts of verses etc and any thoughts or reflections you have about certain verses. If you want to have a word for someone – a prophetic word - then knowing *The Word* is fundamental. So often God will speak through a verse.

To become prophetic requires 'behind the scenes' discipline!

Ongoing prayer, abiding in Christ, openness to the power of the Spirit in your life and Bible reading are all vital components. Any word one gets, must reflect the character/spirit of the Bible, if it is not a direct word from the Bible itself.

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In the New Testament we have the term Logos – The WORD – as in Jesus. But logos can also be used about the Word of God – the Bible - generally. But another term is used for 'word' in Greek as well. It is rema – the 'spoken word'. Examples of its use would be: Matthew 4v4, John 6v63 and Romans 10v17.

Many people have said to me that when they have been reading the Bible, a particular verse suddenly jumps off the page at them – a word through which they know God is speaking to them. That is a rema word to you. A word from the Bible that 'speaks' to you. It is a 'word from the Word'.

So a prophecy may often be a rema word – the word you feel God is speaking to a person, or to yourself, to a situation. It may come as a picture or vision of course. So we need to saturate ourselves in the Bible – the whole logos – and in Jesus himself - so that we can hear the rema word! Such words need to be tested, as I have said before.

### 4.

Many of us have experienced God speaking to us in our lives. Maybe the term communicating is best... But I think this receiving of words occurs, not in a loud booming way, but often in quite an ordinary way. This is often the opposite of our presuppositions.

To help hear the prophetic word, I think all of us need to develop a *sensitivity to our own spirits*. In our spirits, The Spirit indwells, Romans 8v9ff, John 1v13, 3v8. We have the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2v16 and we know the voice of Jesus, John 10. Now we believe these things... but the issue seems to be that we don't know that we know the voice of Christ, when he speaks! We don't recognise it always. Our heads are so full of everything that we can so easily miss what he might be saying.

When you are at church or homegroup, ponder on what you are sensing within yourself. Is there a thought that's in your mind – is there a hunch about something or someone? Sometimes we need to not quickly dismiss a thought, but wait and see if it means something.

Ask yourself questions: 'how does God feel about this person/thing?' Ask yourself: what would God say here, at this time? These sorts of things may release into you a verse, a picture, a phrase or something you need to do. And that, when spoken out, is prophetic.

We need to hear God speaking! We are blind men without knowing his way and we'll die without it. How needy it is for our homegroups to become places for the presence of God.

### **Practicalities in services and homegroups**

We have got to make space for God to speak. We have to try this prophetic stuff out – to do it! And not worry about perfection! Often we rush to the group, and we are not prepared for God. It is important that everyone in your group has the mindset on preparedness and readiness for the meeting. Time for people to confess their sins, get right with God and to begin to get the sense of God's presence must be a priority.

When people arrive, create space and time for worship, for reflection, for praying the Word. Create a spiritual atmosphere conducive to the Spirit. Do not be scared of silence too.

There is a reluctance in many groups to be free in worship – people are often not as free as they are in Church. It is so important that people understand – homegroup is Church. Our expectations for homegroup, should be the same for Sunday Church! In that environment, people are more likely to hear God speak.

How many shopping lists of prayer do you and I have in our meetings? Do we listen to God during those request times? It is important not to let certain individuals dominate, if you have them.

Expect God to speak - people actually, often, don't. Developing the prophetic in our Church and in our homegroups is such a wondrous thing. Wouldn't it be great to see us a whole church moving in this area, and by 2013 seeing our groups more and more like the Acts 2 model. Amen.