



Prophetic Blueprint

Creating a Healthy
Prophetic Culture In
Your Church

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**Bonus Material for: The Gift of Prophetic Encouragement:
Hearing the Words of God for Others**

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Creating a Healthy Prophetic Culture in Your Church

Several years ago, I got a call from a senior pastor of a large church asking me to come and talk with him about how to better implement the prophetic within his congregation. Taking a slow, deep breath, I said a micro prayer and calmly responded "sure..., not a problem". I say this with all the love in the world, but this pastor is intense. He takes "make it quick" to a whole new level. I read my "ten-word essay" to my husband to get his feedback on my brevity. John, who also appreciates a "less is more" approach, patiently listened then said, "Why is this blueprint just for them?"

God was giving me a direction to help restore the prophetic back to His church.

Before you get too excited, the first step can be a back breaker. For a healthy prophetic ministry to exist in a church, it must first be evident within the leadership and valued by the members. This means those who carry the gifting or mantle of prophet need to be acknowledged and given a place to minister and operate in their gifts. I am advocating an environment where the prophetic is balanced and allowed to move freely within the church but is not out of control. If prophets are not honored and allowed to function within their gifting, all other attempts to embrace the prophetic move of the spirit will be wasted.

Here is a list of questions to help you gauge your church's current prophetic health:

What role, if any, does the prophetic play in your church?

If we want to implement the prophetic back into the church, we first need to understand what role it currently holds.

Are you utilizing the prophetic in your church's decision-making process?

The prophetic needs to be utilized in the decision-making of the church. If it isn't, you're missing a vital component for your body of believers. This is particularly important for vision casting.

Have you recognized prophetic individuals to serve within your leadership?

In order to be of any value to the church, the prophetic must have a representative or a voice within leadership. The reality is most churches simply have the pastor wearing all of the hats.

Does your church have a designated person who is the prophetic overseer?

This is the individual who is your church's "go to" person. This would be a trustworthy individual who has the ability to discern what is God and what is not. This person would be able to oversee all aspects of prophetic ministry. He or she will champion the prophetic being released within the church. This is probably the same individual you would have be the representative voice in the decision-making process and be on the leadership level of the church.

Does your church utilize intercessors?

These can be prophetic individuals who sense and see what direction God is moving. I call these people watchmen on the wall. They are paying attention to what is going on at all times. They are vitally important and should be meeting regularly with the prophetic overseer.

Is the prophetic released to freely move?

The gift of prophecy is given to encourage, strengthen, and comfort. When it is integrated into the body and given a place, the prophetic reveals God's heart and desire for our lives. The prophetic has the power to break bonds and build a closer relationship with God.

Each congregation is unique and its needs are different, yet at the same time they are similar. Once you have finished your assessment, take a look at the four steps listed below and evaluate if your church might need some minor reworking or a total overhaul.

Step 1: Leadership must place value on the prophetic in order for it to operate within the church structure.

The first step is for pastors, staff, and those leading ministries to be trained to operate prophetically. This needs to be evident to the entire congregation. A healthy prophetic environment exists in the light. This is not a secret society that meets behind closed doors.

Step 2: Create a prophetic environment.

There needs to be mutual respect of the different giftings within the leadership team. As each leader begins to fully operate in their gift of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, it will create an environment for the Spirit to move.

Step 3: Teach and train. Once the leadership has been trained and is operating in the prophetic, then it is important to create a safe environment for others in the congregation to be trained. We must teach and train the prophetic at all levels – leadership, congregation, youth and children. Churches must teach and train what is and isn't acceptable in the prophetic.

Step 4: Release the people to flow in the prophetic. Create space for people to be a blessing and encouragement towards one another, speaking life and hope. God wants us to interact and have a relationship with one another. This can be done in a safe and respectful way.

How does a church grow a healthy team?

The secret's out – a healthy model of prophecy within today's church is rare. Paul tells us prophecy is subject to the prophet.¹ When prophecy is given within the walls of the church, we are to submit it to the prophets. It is for them to judge and test whether it is a true word from the Lord. When Paul instructed the Corinthians on orderly worship, he gave us the model for healthy prophecy in the church today.

For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people (1 Corinthians 14:31-33).

Pastors often share with me their frustration with the well-intended prophetic words they receive. How should they filter and test? What is the good? What is the bad? It's very hard for most of us to discern the voice of God in our own life, so imagine the challenge of receiving dozens of emails, letters, texts, and calls saying, "God told me to tell you... yada, yada, yada"? Is this craziness really the voice of God?

I encourage leaders to seek out individuals who first speak from a perspective of life, hope and encouragement. Team members must be trustworthy, mature believers who hear from God and who can discern whether a word is from the Lord or not. They need to be in the Word and know what the Scriptures say. If at all possible, the group needs to be comprised of individuals who carry a mantle for the prophetic or have the calling of prophet. Remember, these are two separate giftings. I recognize some churches do not have those who operate under the mantle of prophet, but there may be prophetically gifted individuals whom God has sent to be a part of your body of believers. These are people who have the ability to pick through the "rubbish" and find the fruit.

Proceed with prayer and caution. This is not the Xerox Corporation, and it is hard to fire volunteers. The individuals you place on the team need to practice a zero tolerance for gossip and place a very high value on confidentiality and honesty, and exhibit a healthy heart attitude. Focus on establishing a foundation of trust and encourage the team to build solid relationships with God, one another, and

¹ 1 Corinthians 14:32

leadership. This will serve them over time when they suffer with doubt or receive challenging words. Ultimately, it's not the team's job to force pastors to believe a word or push them to take action. Their job is to filter out all the "stuff" that is not from the Lord. This is especially true when words are viewed as corrective or go against the current direction of the church. Once the team receives the word, they should pray over it, seek God, and begin to discern and test its validity.

In no way am I suggesting this is a quick and easy process. To succeed you will need good leadership, participation from all levels of the organization, and a serious commitment to see it through. Be patient and be prepared to give and accept grace. The reward is absolutely worth it. I promise.