

# ENCOURAGING THE USE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

*“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.”<sup>1</sup>*  
Corinthians 14:1-5

## THE GIFT OF PROPHECY: A NORMAL EXPRESSION OF THE SPIRIT’S ACTIVITY

*“In 1 Thessalonians 5:20 we find the earliest mention of prophecy or prophetic utterance in the NT. Although not a frequent term in the Pauline corpus, it occurs in the earliest and latest of the letters: Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10; 13:2, 13:8; 14:6, 14:22; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:14 strongly suggests that this was a normal expression of the Spirit’s activity in the early Christian communities.”<sup>1</sup>*

## SIX WAYS TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

### 1. Have A Biblically Informed Definition for The NT Gift of Prophecy

- **Definition of prophecy:** *Prophecy is the human report of a divine revelation*

*“What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.” 1 Corinthians 14:26a*

*“If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged.” 1 Corinthians 14:30-31*

*“The ‘revelation’ which comes...is thought by Paul to be of divine, not human origin. This is evident, first from the fact that the word Paul uses for ‘revelation’...occurs forty-four times in the New Testament and never refers to human activity or communication. Rather whenever the New Testament speaks of a ‘revelation’ it is always given by the activity of God.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, Hendrickson Publishers 1994, pages 59-60

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the NT and Today*, pgs. 116-117, 2000

## 2. Be Convinced of God's Desire to Edify Your Church

- Six times in this chapter the language of the “church being built up” is used (vv. 3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26)
- These verses capture God’s heart for His people, that through the work of the Spirit, God desires to manifest His presence and build your church up as He speaks to you and your church through the gift of prophecy.

## 3. Keep the Gifts Connected to the Gospel

## 4. Use the Gift of Prophecy Aware of its Limitations

- **First Limitation:** The gift of prophecy is affected by our finite and fallen humanness.

*“For we know in part and we prophesy in part.” 1 Corinthians 13:9*

Practical implications:

1. Need to take any word you receive today and submit it to Scripture, prayer and wise counsel
2. We don’t want people making decisions about their lives based on prophetic words alone

- **Second limitation:** The gift of prophecy has no authority if its own.
- Practical implication is that you must evaluate prophetic words in light of Scripture.
- In light of these limitations, the gift of prophecy is to be governed.

*“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.” 1 Corinthians 14:29*

*“But all things should be done decently and in order.” 1 Corinthians 14:40*



Practical implication:

1. Government doesn't constrain those with prophetic gifting, it actually releases them into their gifting.

## 5. Have A Biblically Informed Understanding of Personal Prophecy

*“While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, this is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” Acts 21:10-11*

*“This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience.” 1 Timothy 1:18-19*

## 6. Pray for the Gift of Prophecy to be Used in Your Church

## CONCLUSION