

Prophetic Approach Reflection

I have been challenged over last months to deepen and mature a functioning and basic prophetic ministry at St Mary's.

Valuing Prophetic Ministry

- We want to welcome and affirm prophetic ministry (1 Thessalonians 5:19). It is given to build up the body (Ephesians 4:11).
- Prophetic people see what God is doing now and in the future. They discern spiritual realms and atmospheres and can bring correction and challenge as appropriate; to see things put right. (Isa 29:10, 1 Sam 19:19, 1 Cor 14:24-25)
 - Spiritual realm activity & discernment – understand what is happening.
 - Seeing what God is doing now and to come – forthtelling an foretelling.
 - Correction and alignment – understanding of calling and destiny.
- Every Christian can hear God speak (John 10:27, Acts 2:16-18), but there is also a separate prophetic gift of the Spirit (Rom 12:6).

Current practice

- We have over 30 people who I can identify as people who would be comfortable in sharing a prophetic word with me or the church. People who share what they feel they hear from the Lord.
- People sometimes email a word to me, for me to discern. On an annual basis I reflect on these with the staff team to seek out patterns of what the Lord is saying.
- People often share at our Sunday morning service. We can have a few words regularly, which we pray into as appropriate at the time.
- We have not developed much in the way of words of knowledge before a service, which are shared during the service. Most 'words' come during the worship time and the person approaches the service leader who discerns what to do with it – we try not to break the flow of worship, so often share words at the end of the worship.

Building on this for the future:

- We need to start by encouraging a deep love for Jesus and for encountering God. Prophetic people love their Bible and have a place of prayer in their lives.
- Teach more on the prophetic ministry and build a culture of both valuing it and better discerning. Also the truth that every Christian can hear God speak to them.
- Building up prophetic people through coming to prayer meetings.
- Continue to gather prophetic words for leadership to discern.
- Encouragement and training is huge in this ministry. We will create a 'prophetic community' bringing people together for training, practice, encouragement, growth, development and discernment. This community is a good place for people to learn to prophesy in a safe and accountable environment. Big problem for prophetic ministry is isolation. Bring people together.
- Develop a good relationship of church leadership with prophetic people, where there is healthy openness, challenge, accountability and authority.
- I want to reflect on our practices and protocols so we can have healthy ministry.

- *How should we ask people to share words?* People can share a word via email, at the prayer meeting or in person with church leadership on a Sunday. Having shared it, they then leave the word with the church leadership. (1 Timothy 5:17).
- *How should we discern them?* There should be discernment, testing or weighing of the word. (1 Cor 14:29, 2 Peter 1:20). This could be via the church leadership, church congregation or prophetic community; as appropriate. Any correction will be done in private.
- *What to do about too many words?* We will usually seek not more than 2-3 words at one time. (1 Cor 14:29).
- *What best practice or good protocols are helpful to help us values the prophetic more, give people good boundaries for sharing, and also stop any misuse or poor use of the prophetic?*
 - In a public setting, a word will be shared first with the service leader or church leader (elder / 1 Tim 5:17)
 - People who prophesy should love the Bible and be of good character.
 - It is important to discern the difference between revelation, interpretation and application of a word.
 - Humility and gentleness of tone is important. (Not “God told me...”)
 - Words must be in line with scripture.
 - Love is the key (Eph 4:15, 1 Cor 13)
 - A word may have different timing, so may not need to be offered immediately (1 Cor 14:30).
 - We can evaluate prophecy by its fruit (Matt 7:15)