CITYWEST CHURCH
08.11.2026 - 10 AM
DON'T SCOFF AT PROPHECY

"His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. **28** For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your[g] own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

Acts 17:27-28 (NLT)

Presence people 2026, church being a place where his presence marks us, new people experience something out of this world.

16 Always be joyful. **17** Never stop praying. **18** Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

19 Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. **20** Do not scoff at prophecies, **21** but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. **22** Stay away from every kind of evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 (NLT)

Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. **2** For if you have the ability to speak in tongues,[a] you will be talking only to God, since people won't be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit,[b] but it will all be mysterious. **3** But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. **4** A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.

1 Corinthians 14:1-4 (NLT)

Prophecy or prophet.

THe OT is full of prophets who at the time were not always warmly welcomed by their fellow man. It is only that their words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, stood the test of time and became part of what we call the canon of scripture.

Not everyone in the OT was a prophet but those who were, spoke on behalf of the Lord to the people at the time in which they lived.

Think Elijah, Jeremiah, Amos and John the baptist who came in the spirit of Elijah.

Then Jesus comes along, he is a prophet yes but he is not a mouthpiece for God, he is God. He doesn't speak on behalf of God and his redemptive plan for his people, he speaks as God and demonstrates God's redemptive plan by going to the cross for our sins and being raised on the third day. The first fruits of resurrection life.

Jesus was God, the fulfillment of prophecy, the realization and culmination of the OT prophets

Prophecy today isn't the adding too of God's word, his plan and human involvement. It can be the confirmation of it for the new believer and it also can be the strengthening of the specific role one has to play in the body of Christ.
The football field and rules are set and the outcome of the game is set, prophecy lets us in on our part in God and his story.

1. **PROPHECY IS POSITIVE.**

[3] But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them.

1 Cor 14:3 (NLT)

All positive, adding value to the one in which the prophecy is shared. Its not for stages and microphones only, its for the everyday conversation that has the nudge of the Holy Spirit telling you to say something that encourages, strengthens and comforts.

Lets break these down a little more:

Strengthen - Edification. *A construction term that builds the building of our lives, we are building a Godly life and a prophecy adds strength or fortification to what we are building.*

Encouragement - Exhortation. *Like a coach in the locker room before a big game, they encourage you to see that overcoming is possible. Encouragement comes when we can't see a way through, or we need a reminder that God is working in our lives.*

The opposite of encouragement is discouragement, and its counterfeit is flattery.

Flattery gives compliments for self-gain; encouragement gives courage because God says.

Comfort. *Not just consolation but strength, shouldering the load alongside to see someone through.*

Your conviction is not someone elses prophecy.

NT Prophecy strengthens the person, not weakens the person

4 A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.

1 Cor 14:4 (NLT)

Prophecy strengthens the the church, its does these three things in the life and mindst of the church

Because prophecy can be understood by all, a true word of prophecy builds up everyone.

1 Cor 14 is not about personal devotion but about public gatherings and Paul is not saying chose one or the other here, he is saying toughes builds you up, prophecy builds us up together.

2. **DON'T STIFLE THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

[19] Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. [20] Do not scoff at prophecies,

1 Thess 5:19-20 (NLT)

Stifle is the word that gives us the picture of pouring water over a fire.

How do we stifle the Holy Spirit?

- *Doubt*
- *Indifference*
- *Rejection*
- *Distraction.*

By scoffing at prophecy we stifle the spirit.

By not praying in tongues in our devotional life, we stifle the spirit.

Doubt can stifle. Doubt comes when we receive a prompt from the Holy Spirit but dont say it because its too "normal" but sometimes it exactly what the person needs to hear.

3. **TEST IT.**

but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. [22] Stay away from every kind of evil.

1 Thess 5:21-22 (NLT)

Between the time Paul last saw the Thessalonians and the writing of this letter, he had spent time in Berea (Acts 17:10-12). There, the Christians were of a noble character because they heard Paul's preaching and diligently searched the Scriptures to see if what he said was true. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to have more of the heart and mind of the Bereans.

People can have good intentions but get it wrong, sometimes prophecy is the right word at the wrong time. We dont elevate the prophecy over everything else God is saying but we add to what God has said and we undergird it with scripture.

Testing it is linked to not stifling it, if we have a culture in our church where we test prophecy people will be more likely to speak it out as it's not treated like it is the only word from God that they or we have.

4. **SPEAK IT.**

Be safe not sorry.

The worst that can happen is you will be guilty of being kind.

Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy.

1 Cor 14:1 (NLT)

Questions to ask yourself around prophecy:

1. ***Is it biblical***
2. ***Does it align with God's word?*** *2 Tim 3:16 All scripture is God breathed.*
3. ***Is it consistent with God's character***
4. ***Does it strengthen, encourage or give comfort. ?***

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

1. **Paul teaches that prophecy should build others up, encourage them and bring comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). What might this look like in everyday life, and can you think of a time when someone's words helped strengthen or encourage your faith?**
2. **What are some things that might cause us to hesitate, dismiss or ignore the prompting of the Holy Spirit? How can we become more open and responsive to His leading?**
3. **What are some practical ways we can test whether something is genuinely from God? How can we create a church culture where people feel safe to share what they sense the Holy Spirit saying, while keeping Scripture and love at the centre?**