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Prophecy
With
Laying
on of
Hands
of the
Presbytery



Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

1 Timothy 4:14,15

There is great need for local churches to have prophetic presbyteries that will strengthen, release, and help the church move into a greater level of breakthrough and ministry. I am surprised by the number of churches that have never had a time for prophetic presbytery, although this was practiced in the early church, and has been restored to the modern church for over fifty years. Churches must have a revelation of the power of prophetic presbyteries and set aside time for them periodically. David Blomgren's book, *Prophetic Gatherings In The Church*, is a classic on the subject of prophetic presbyteries, but unfortunately, is now out of print. Steve Schultz has recently released a practical manual on prophetic presbyteries, and has a vision to see this practice restored to the church. I recommend that churches in the I.M.P.A.C.T. Network of churches have prophetic presbyteries to release potential candidates into their place in the Body of Christ, and help release them into their destinies.

Prophetic presbytery is a time when presbyters (elders) lay hands on and prophesy over selected believers to speak the will of God over them, impart gifts, and release them into their membership ministries. A presbyter is an elder who has the resident gift of prophecy. Ideally, a presbytery should consist of apostles and prophets who are elders of a local church. The presbyters do not have to be from the local church where the presbytery is being held. In other words, local churches can call in presbyters from other churches to

conduct the presbytery.

Bill Hamon defines Prophetic Presbytery as a time when two or more prophets and/or prophetic ministers lay hands on and prophesy over individuals at a specified time and place. Prophetic presbyteries are conducted for several reasons:

- 1 . Revealing a Saint's membership ministry in the Body of Christ.
- 2 . Ministering a prophetic rhema word of God to individuals.
3. Impartation and activation of divinely ordained gifts, graces, and callings.
- 4 . Revelation, clarification, and confirmation of leadership ministry in the local church.
- 5 . "Laying on of hands and prophecy" over those called and properly prepared to be an ordained fivefold minister.

Prophetic presbyteries are governmental because they are conducted by the authority (elders) of the church. This is different from receiving prophetic words from a prophetic team. Presbyteries have more of a setting and releasing aspect for those receiving ministry. Candidates are chosen by the leadership of the church. Prophetic presbytery is not a time for anyone and everyone to receive a word.

The presbytery team can consist of two or more presbyters. Three or four presbyters are ideal. Each presbyter takes time to prophesy over the candidates before the entire congregation. Each presbyter has a part

to release, and no one presbyter will have all of the Word of the Lord. Presbyters must work together as a team. There is no competition between the presbyters. They should all be mature (elders). The presbytery is lead by a senior presbyter (usually an apostle with the most experience and maturity among the presbyters). Apostles will be able to prophesy with authority and revelation from their apostolic office. They also have an anointing to set. Prophets, however, are much needed in a presbytery, because they bring detail and clarity by releasing the Word of the Lord from the prophet's office. Apostles and prophets make a powerful team in a presbytery.

Presbyters with a resident gift of prophecy can prophecy on a regular basis to God's people. They do not have to wait for a special anointing to prophesy, but can prophesy because of the resident gift of prophecy. The simple gift of prophecy is for edification, exhortation, and comfort. Apostles and prophets can speak direction, correction, and revelation, because of other gifts (e.g. word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith) that operate through their offices. A prophetic presbytery will go beyond edification, exhortation, and comfort, and include impartation, direction, confirmation, and revelation, because of the resident gift of prophecy in the presbyters, and the strength and anointing of their offices.

The strength of a prophetic presbytery will depend upon the presbyters and candidates. The more mature and gifted the presbyters, and the more qualified the candidates, the stronger the prophetic flow will be. The

faith of the church, and an atmosphere created through prayer, fasting and worship will also determine the strength of the presbytery. God desires for churches to have strong prophetic gatherings. Strong utterances and impartations should be expected if a presbytery is conducted properly. These should be times of great refreshing and blessing for the entire church. Even those not receiving ministry can rejoice and be blessed by seeing others in the body receive. As others in the body are strengthened and released, the entire church is blessed. We should rejoice with them that rejoice.

The entire leadership of the church should be present during a presbytery. They need to hear the prophetic words spoken over people who are under their leadership. The leadership of a church is responsible to oversee the members, and have a responsibility to help guide the candidates after they receive prophetic ministry. Members should also be encouraged to come and give their support. The corporate anointing is needed to have a strong presbytery. Those not receiving ministry are not to sit idly by and be spectators of what is transpiring. They should help create an atmosphere, through their faith and prayer, which will assist the presbyters and candidates to receive the full blessing of the Lord.

It is wise to invite presbyters who are new to the church, and not too familiar with the people receiving ministry. It is also good to have a presbyter return, who has functioned as a presbyter before (if this is not the first presbytery). There may be leaders within the local church

who can function on a presbytery, but is recommended that the leadership brings in presbyters from outside the local church, who are not familiar with the candidates.

After each presbyter has prophesied (it is not necessary for all the presbyters to prophecy over each candidate), it is time for the presbytery to lay hands on and pray over the candidate (or candidates, if a couple). This is a time of impartation and transfer of gifts and anointing. The candidate will be encouraged, confirmed, strengthened, and released into a greater sphere of ministry as a result of prophetic presbytery. The church will also be blessed by hearing the word spoken over the candidates. This will help the church and leadership to discern the gifting and calling upon the candidates. The church will be built up because key people (candidates) have received prophetic presbytery.

Candidates should be members of the local church selected by its leadership. They should be saved, Spirit filled, and evidence spiritual maturity. Prophetic presbytery is not a time to fix problems that believers may have. It is unfair to the presbyters to select people who are not qualified for this kind of ministry. It is recommended that the candidates be members of a local church for at least a year, to prevent people from joining a church just to receive this kind of ministry.

We believe that all believers can receive prophecy. Churches today are raising up prophetic teams to accomplish this. However, prophetic presbytery is a time in which only a select few can receive in depth prophetic

ministry. It is recommended that the number be limited to between three and seven settings. The presbytery can take place over several days. It takes time to minister in prophetic presbytery. This is not a time to call in prophets to prophesy over everything moving in your church. After candidates receive prophetic presbytery time can be given to call people from the congregation and prophesy over them. This is to encourage believers, but it is not the main reason why the presbyters have come. The church can also receive corporate words during a time of prophetic presbytery.

Believers of a local church can request to be candidates for presbytery. However, the leadership bears the responsibility of selecting the candidates. Those who are chosen should be told beforehand, in order to prepare spiritually for the presbytery. Fasting on the part of the candidates and the presbyters will always enhance the strength and accuracy of the prophetic word. The whole church can be encouraged to fast prior to a presbytery. This will create an atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to speak to the church.

People who do not desire prophetic presbytery should not be forced to receive it. If a spouse desires presbytery and their mate does not, the spouse should not necessarily be excluded. If one mate is not as qualified as the other, it is advisable for them still to receive ministry as a couple (providing both are saved). If a mate is unsaved, the believing mate can still receive presbytery.

Candidates can be potential leaders or potential

ministers of the church. They can be people whom the leadership feels are about to enter into a new level of ministry. Large churches will have an abundance of candidates, and they must be chosen carefully and prayerfully. There may be a tendency for some people to feel overlooked, but the time frame must be understood by all, and no one should take offense if they are not chosen. A church can have a presbytery yearly or bi-yearly depending on the need. Leaders should spend time teaching and preparing the church if they have never had a presbytery. The church needs to have revelation and understand the importance of such a time.

The presbytery should occur in the local church setting. This is not to be done in a cell group or home meeting. The entire church should know the importance of this time and participate if possible. A short message can be given before a presbytery, and worship should be done at intervals to keep the prophetic spirit strong. All prophecies should be taped and later reviewed by the leadership. The candidate has the responsibility to take heed to the word spoken.

The foundational scripture for prophetic presbytery is First Timothy 4:14. Paul admonishes Timothy not to neglect the gift that he received through prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbytery. Timothy would be able to profit as he meditated upon the prophetic words and gave himself wholly to them.

This practice remained absent from the church for many generations until the Latter Rain Movement of the

1940's. Many churches began to operate in presbyteries during the Latter Rain Movement. However, the practice has again declined significantly. One of the reasons for this is that very few books were written by leaders of the Latter Rain Movement. It is a spiritual technology that the enemy desires to keep from the local church. I have a heart to see it restored fully. I have seen firsthand the benefits of prophetic presbytery in CRUSADERS CHURCH, over which I am the apostolic overseer. Leaders cannot introduce this to the church unless it is understood and believed in.

Prophetic presbytery is a part of restoration truth that present truth churches should receive and operate in. We are living in times of restoration. Restoration churches are recovering truth, revelation, and ministry that has been absent or neglected in the church for generations. With restored truth comes a greater ability for breakthrough and release of ministry.

David Blomgren mentions nine (9) benefits of prophecy in a presbytery as follows:

1. Edification (1 Corinthians 14:3).
2. Exhortation (1 Corinthians 14:3).
3. Comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3).
4. Direction (Acts 13:1,2).
5. Conferral (1 Timothy 4:14).
6. Confirmation (Acts 15:32).

7. Correction (1 Corinthians 14:31); learn is Greek word mathanéo meaning corrective learning.

8. Judgment (Hosiah 6:5).

9. Equipping of the saints (Ephesians 4:11,12).

And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Acts 20:32

Prophetic presbytery releases great grace to the hearers. The prophetic word is able to build us up and release our inheritances unto us. Believers need grace to serve God. An abundance of grace is needed to reign in life (Romans 5:17). An abundance of gifts is a sign of abundance of grace (1 Corinthians 1:4-7). Gifts and grace are imparted during a prophetic presbytery.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Ezekiel 37:10

The prophetic word is more than information. The prophetic word releases life (breath). Prophetic presbytery is a time in which life is breathed into the recipient. The gifts and destiny of the candidate are revealed and activated. It causes believers to rise up (stand up on their feet). It is a key to raising up a strong army of believers.

...that thou shalt meet a company of prophets...and they shall prophesy:

And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

1 Samuel 10:5,6

Leaders are changed when they come into contact with the company of the prophets. Saul was released as the first king of Israel through the prophetic anointing. Prophetic presbytery is a time to release potential leaders into their callings and ministries. The strength of prophetic presbytery is the joining together of the anointings of the team. The team members strengthen and stir up one another as they minister together.

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

1 Corinthians 14:29-31

Prophetic presbytery is a time for learning the will of God and being comforted. It is a time to allow the prophets to speak. The presbyters minister as a team.

As one ministers, others can receive revelation concerning the candidates. In this way the candidates benefit from the ministry of several prophets.

Prophetic presbytery is a spiritual technology to help leaders build strong churches. This is a day of restoration. Churches must appropriate all the benefits that God's gifts bring to the church.

I believe that churches around the world will take

advantage of prophetic presbytery and move into apostolic strength and power.

David Blomgren mentions thirteen (13) benefits of the Laying on of Hands and Prophecy by the Presbytery:

1. A greater realization of each one's responsibility to function in a ministry.

2. A greater appreciation for the various ministries in the Body of Christ and the need for them.

3. A "setting in" of ministries in the local assembly.

4. Finding one's place in the Body of Christ.

5. Confirming the will of God to the candidate.

6. The further development of ministries within the local body.

7. Specialized assistance through prophetic revelation and individual lives.

8. Strengthening of the whole church in a better understanding of God's ways through a receiving of the prophetic ministry.

9. The spiritual level of the whole church raised through seeking the Lord in fasting and prayer.

10. The whole church receiving prophetic direction.

11. The imparting of gifts and blessings to believers by the laying on of hands.

12. A greater recognition of God's order in the authority of the local leadership as overseers of the lives of the people.

13. A deposit of faith in the hearts of the congregation to see God's purposes to be fulfilled.

The Hebrew word for laying on of hands is *samak*. This word implies

the responsibility and obligation of the person receiving the imposition of hands. The Greek word for laying on of hands is epitithemi. This word implies contact which is a channel for transmission. Timothy received a gift through (via) prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbytery. Prophecy is a channel through which grace and gifts are transferred. The person receiving has the responsibility and obligation to steward the gifts and grace received.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightiest war a good warfare.

1 Timothy 1:18

Fight the good fight in the spirit of those predictions.

1 Timothy 1:18 (TCNT)

The prophecies Timothy received helped him to war a good warfare. Paul reminded (charged) him according to these prophecies. Prophetic presbytery is not to be taken lightly by the recipient. Unto whom much is given, much is also required. The recipient has the responsibility and obligation to war with the prophetic word. Prophetic words recorded during a presbytery should be meditated upon and used by the candidate as a weapon against the enemy.

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

Genesis 49:1,2

Prophetic gatherings are times when destinies are revealed and released. This can be seen when Jacob

gathered his sons together in Genesis, chapter 49. He spoke prophetically to his sons and detailed their destinies and inheritance. It is important for churches and believers to set aside times for prophetic gatherings. These can be times of power and release when accompanied by prayer and fasting. The laying on of hands is one of the principle doctrines of the church (Hebrews 6:1,2). Prophecy has always been a vehicle through which the Lord has given direction, blessing, activation, and impartation to his people. Sometimes the prophetic word spoken during a time of presbytery will not be fully fulfilled until years later. With prophetic presbytery, believers can prepare for the future by aligning themselves with the Word of the Lord. The Word of the Lord will be tested, but a believer walking in faith and fulfillment will see the desired result.

And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

Deuteronomy 33:1

Moses prophesied over the tribes of Israel. The Word of God calls it a blessing. Prophetic presbytery is a time of blessing. Blessing is the Hebrew word Berakah, meaning benediction, prosperity, and present. Moses was a prophet. Prophets have the grace, authority, and ability to release tremendous blessings. This is why presbyteries should consist of prophets as opposed to people with the gift of prophecy. Prophets have more grace and authority to release and bless people concerning their destinies.

Leaders must understand that the purpose of the fivefold ministry is for the perfecting of the saints. This includes preaching, teaching, training, activation, laying on of hands, and prophetic ministry. A lack of quality prophetic ministry can be the difference between success

and failure. Believers cannot advance beyond their leadership.

Each local church is responsible for the development and release of its members. This is not to imply that presbytery meetings are the only way for a believer to discern and understand the will of God. Every believer is responsible to pray, study and seek the will of God (for himself/herself). Prophetic presbytery is not for lazy believers who desire a "shortcut" to understanding God's will. However, it is a tremendous benefit for believers. Prophetic presbytery is a ministry given by God's grace to help us walk in God's will for our lives.

Move Into a Greater Level **N**eglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

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