



Becoming a Prophetic Community

Prophetic protocol for Charlton & Blackheath Christian Fellowship

- I. We believe that all believers can hear God's voice.

We take Jesus seriously when He said, "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10).

We believe that God meant it when He said, "Call on me and I will answer you" (Jeremiah 33:3)

We believe Jesus' promise that because He had much more to tell us, He would send His Spirit to guide us into all truth, even as to what is coming (John 16).

We take seriously the truth that God's Spirit has indeed been poured out on all people so that men and women, adults and children, the privileged and the lowly all have access to hear from heaven (Acts 2).

Thus, we have confidence that members of CBCF can expect to hear from God and that what we hear should be taken seriously.

Just as not all are evangelists, but all can share their faith, so too, not all are prophets but all can prophesy.

- How would you like me to share this message? Do I share it as is? Or does it need to be delivered in another way? E.g. As a question; as an invitation; as a prayer; as a song; as a picture; as a written letter; in first-person or third-person language; by phone or face-to-face? Don't figure it out—just ask.
- Who should I give this message to? When should I give it to them? Should it be in public or private?

CBCF's experience with the prophetic has been very good. When love comes first, there is space for us to experiment and take big enough risks to make mistakes without wounding each other. So let's begin: what is God saying to you?



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- Please encourage those to whom you prophesy to weigh what you are saying for themselves. Rather than saying, "God is telling me" (which makes it very awkward for them to test since you are already telling them it is God), we suggest something like, "As I prayed for you, here's what came to mind: _____. Would you please ask the Lord if it's true?" This gets them listening to God for themselves rather than depending on you for the next word.

- When bringing a personal word to some one try to do it with some one else there who is pastorally responsible for them and wherever possible write it down or have it recorded.

- Once you have delivered a prophetic message, please let it go. You can leave it with God—you don't need to make it happen. "Faithful is He that called you, and He is able to do it." (1 Thess. 5).

C. God's love discerns which prophetic words are meant strictly for prayer and which are to be shared. Once you've heard from the Lord, ask Him:

- Would you like me to share this message or merely to pray for it?

II. We believe that all believers are required to weigh carefully what we hear.

We believe in Jesus' confidence that we will learn to distinguish the Shepherd's voice from the enemy's voice as it becomes familiar to us (*John 10*).

We honour the biblical call to weigh prophecy carefully (*1 Cor. 14*), testing rather than despising prophetic messages (*1 Thess. 5*).

We ask each member of CBCF to take to heart words from the Lord, but only after testing them via the following criteria:

A. *Test the prophet:*

We do this primarily by relationship:

Does this person have a relationship with me? With CBCF? With our leadership team? With God?

Am I confident that they love God? Love me? Love CBCF? Do I know them to be trustworthy?

CBCF members are asked to be slow to receive prophetic words from those you don't know for a fact love you.

Remember, we can't control the prophets, but you can and should always test them.

B. *Test the prophecy: We do this with what we call the three-legged stool:*

1. Does the Bible confirm this message?
2. Does the Body of Christ confirm this message?

3. Does the Spirit of God in my heart confirm this message?

If the prophecy conforms to these three tests, and you are abiding in the Lord, then you can have confidence that God has spoken.

Prophecies are to be strengthening, comforting, or encouraging (*1 Cor. 14*). God's messages bring hope. The Father's words usually bring the love, joy, and peace of God's Spirit. They promote mercy, justice, and peace. They speak of love for God and compassion for people.

Occasionally, prophetic words are very challenging and may even take the form of rebuke or correction (*Heb. 12*). But they may not contain any condemnation (*Rom. 8:1*).

At CBCF, prophetic words of rebuke or correction are to be submitted to the leadership, who will then weigh them and deliver them pastorally as the Spirit leads. If you receive a harsh word under other circumstances, do not take it to heart until you've prayed about it with people in leadership.

III. We believe that prophetic messages are to be shared.

We encourage CBCF actively to seek God's voice and generously share what He's telling you (*1 Corinthians 14:1*).

CBCF offers many venues for you to give and receive words from the Lord. Just a few examples:

- All are welcome to pre-service prayer on Sun. at 10:15 a.m. where what you're hearing for the morning can be shared.

- All are welcome to share words with the Meeting Leader throughout the service. Though not all words get shared publicly, they are all taken seriously.
 - Time is often made in our services for listening and sharing
 - House Groups offer a great opportunity in a safe environment to grow in the giving and receiving of prophetic words.
 - We encourage you to take God's voice beyond the church walls. With love and responsibility let's be prepared to be marketplace prophets.
- IV. We believe that prophetic messages can be shared without hurting people. Love is far more important than prophecy (*1 Corinthians 13*) but the two are meant to work together.

How does prophecy look when cloaked in love? The following protocol describes how God's love rules our prophetic community:

- A God's love must "baptize" both the content and the tone of our prophetic messages. Even correction is to be delivered with tears rather than anger.
- B God's love will bathe our ministry in humility.
- Please do not introduce yourself as a prophet. Such introductions only communicate arrogance or the desire to be put on a pedestal. If you are indeed a prophet, others will know it by the fruit of your words (*John 4*).