

Scripture encourages us to weigh up what has been said when a prophetic word is given. This is not in order to be critical or pull to pieces, but to discern if what has been given is authentic and is of God.

**1 Cor 14: 39** *'Let two or three prophets speak and let the others weigh what has been said.'* It is not a matter of considering the opinion of different individuals and seeing which is the best option. It is not good to have folk give a Word that is not checked out in a number of ways. When we are judging prophecy we are not judging the individual who has spoken but are testing out what has been said. It is a sharing of the ministry that God gives to us. The implication of Paul is that the 'weighing up' is done by those who themselves have been used to give prophetic words. As well as checking out what others have said, I have also found it a useful thing to check out anything that I have personally been given before taking it to others.

**Scripture:** Anything that is said must agree with Scripture. It is the person of the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures. He is also the inspiration of prophecy, so the two must tally. Sometimes a person can stand up and quote Scriptures, which can give the effect of being a genuine prophecy, but this need not be so and needs to be considered alongside other checks.

**Obedience:** Consider if the prophecy is in obedience to both God and the Scriptures. A true prophecy will not encourage people to be disobedient to either God or what is written in His Word.

**Jesus:** Both the person and the prophecy should ultimately glorify Jesus. Someone giving out new ideas and teaching must have Jesus central in their own lives, which will come over in their prophetic word, otherwise it is a false prophecy. It is not any particular person or denomination that should take the most important place.

**Feelings:** Think about how the prophetic word makes you feel in your spirit. When we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit God has placed a certain discernment within us to feel if something that is said is true or false. Does the prophecy make us feel confused or fearful or does it give a sense of peace and freedom? **1 Cor. 14: 33** *'For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.'*

**Pressure:** True prophecy does not put pressure on us to do what has been said. The Holy Spirit will always give us that freedom of choice.

**Purpose:** A genuine prophecy will build us up, strengthen us, stimulate positive thoughts and feelings or give us comfort; it will never condemn, pull us down or be negative leaving us feeling low and depressed. Jesus called the Holy Spirit 'Comforter' or 'Counsellor'. **John 14:15** *The Father will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth.....He dwells with you and will be in you.'* Since it is the Holy Spirit who gives us prophetic words this Scripture also applies to them.

**Prophecy and services:** Does the prophecy fit in with and is in line with the rest of the church meeting? If it is of the Holy Spirit it will lift the meeting and give it a vitality. It will harmonize with the rest of the service. If it deadens the meeting then it is not a true prophecy, even if it sounds good and contains Scriptures.

**In order:** Paul gives guidance about seeing that everything is done in an orderly manner. He puts a limit of three prophetic words being given in a service. Even if we feel we have a Word to give, Paul says to be silent if three have already been given. We can all learn and be encouraged by what we hear.

**Timing:** I have found that this is not always easy, partly because it depends on the convenor of the service as well as on yourself. I have sometimes gone into a service being ready to give a Word that I felt God had laid on my heart, but it had not been the right day to speak it out because it did not fit in with the rest of the service. If a prophecy is from God you will not forget it, even if sometimes you have to hold onto it for another week or two weeks. The right thing to do is to tell the convenor of the service beforehand that you have a Word and give a gist of what it is about. It is then up to him/her to ask you to give it at an appropriate time in the service. Obviously this means that the convenor too has to be guided by the Holy Spirit about the timing and whether or not it is OK for that particular service. God puts us into a situation where we have to work together to achieve His overall purpose.

**Other Gifts:** There are times when God combines the Gift of Prophecy with other Gifts, such as a Word of Knowledge or a Word of Wisdom. More than one of the Gifts can be operating at the same time so it is not always easy to say which of the Gifts is in operation.

I pray that you will find the following mnemonic helpful for judging prophecy.

### **Judging Prophecy**

- T** Tally with Scripture
- E** Edify, exhort, comfort
- S** Stimulate, stir up
- T** Timing OK
- I** Inside God's boundaries
- N** No confusion, pressure
- G** Glorifies Jesus