



Prophecy with the Laying On of Hands
By the Presbytery

BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL
INSTRUCTION
FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

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PROPHETIC ASSEMBLY

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PROPHECY, ITS IMPORTANCE AND FUNCTION

I. WHAT IS PROPHECY?

- A. Definition: Prophecy in the Biblical sense is the method God uses by which He communicates and reveals his mind and purpose through a spirit-filled human vessel.
- B. Prophecy contains either or both of these two things:
 - 1. A message of duty, instruction, encouragement or warning, concerning God's will
 - 2. A prediction of future events

It may involve "forth-telling" and/or "foretelling."
- C. In God's dealings with Israel, the majority of it was done through the ministry of prophecy functioning in the lives of prophets (Hebrews 1:1; II Peter 1:21).
- D. Prophecy is one of the gifts given to the church by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:10).
- E. Until the complete canon of Scripture was formulated, the ministry of prophecy in the New Testament prophet was largely used to bring the divine revelation or unfolding of the truth concealed in the Old Testament concerning Jesus Christ and the church. This was the foundation for New Testament revelation.
- F. Now that we have the complete Bible, both Old and New Testaments, we have a "more sure word of prophecy" (II Peter 1:19). We need to take special care to see that all prophecy given now be judged in light of the written word of Scripture.

Four levels of prophecy:

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| 1. The prophecy of Scripture | | Infallible |
| 2. The Office and Ministry of the Prophet | | All are fallible & must be |
| 3. The Gift and Ministry of Prophecy | | judged by the infallible |
| 4. The Spirit of Prophecy | | written Word of God |

- G. Are we guaranteed that every time a prophetic utterance is given that it is totally God? No. Although the gift is divine, it operates in a human, imperfect vessel and error may occur. I Corinthians 13:9 & 10 teaches us that we know in part and we prophesy in part. If the prophecy is not in harmony with the written word, it must be rejected. There are three spirits that may enter the stream of prophecy:
 - 1. Holy Spirit - Acts 13:2; Luke 1:67-79; Acts 11:27, 28
 - 2. Hellish Spirit - II Chronicles 18:20, 21, Deut. 13:1-3
 - 3. Human Spirit - Ezekiel 13:2, 3, 17; Jer. 14:14 (both satanic and human)

Notice the two different sources in the life of Peter: Matthew 16:16-17, 21-23.
- H. Does the word "Prophecy" mean to preach as it is commonly translated in several modern versions of the New Testament? No. They are different Greek words altogether. Some preaching may have a prophetic touch to it, especially if the one preaching is a prophet; but to prophesy is in a unique realm different from preaching.

To prophesy - *proph-et-eu'-o*
 To preach - *ke-rus'-o*
 or
eu-ag-gel-iz'-o

- I. Prophecy serves to bring:

1. Edification – builds up
2. Exhortation – stirs up according to I Cor. 14:3
3. Consolation – cheers up

It is not a substitute for the written word, but it is used to fulfill God's purpose, as does preaching and teaching.

- J. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10; Revelation 1:2, 3, 10). Jesus, the faithful witness (Revelation 1:5).

II. AS CHRISTIANS, WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD PROPHECY?

We should:

- A. Quench not the Spirit (I Thessalonians 5:19)
- B. Despise not prophesyings (I Thessalonians 5:20)
- C. Prove all things (I Thessalonians 5:21)
- D. Hold fast that which is good (I Thessalonians 5:21)
- E. Covet to prophesy (I Corinthians 14:39)
- F. Be careful not to prophesy out of your own heart (Ezek. 13:1, 3)
- G. Believe God's prophets (II Chronicles 20:20)
- H. Not follow the words of a prophet even if they come to pass, if he is leading you away from God (Deut. 13:1-3)

III. HOW DOES PROPHECY WORK?

Real prophecy is not self-initiated, but is, rather, initiated by the Holy Spirit. God moves in the prophetic realm in the midst of praise and worship. Then God anoints us to speak (Revelation 19:10). Worship brings a release in our spirit to be more sensitive to God's presence. The prophetic gift in a prophet, however, may function at times apart from corporate worship.

- A. We learn to prophesy (I Corinthians 14:31)
- B. We learn from prophecy (I Corinthians 14:31)
- C. We prophesy according to the proportion of faith (Romans 12:6)

In prophecy, God usually conveys His thoughts using our vocabulary.

IV. WHO MAY PROPHECY?

When the spirit of prophecy is present in a meeting, any spirit-filled Christian who is yielded may prophesy (I Cor. 14:31; Numbers 11:25).

- A. Does this mean all can be prophets? No, not all are prophets; yet all may prophesy (I Corinthians 12:29).
- B. Is everyone then to have the gift of prophecy? No (I Cor. 12:11, Rom. 12:6).
- C. There are degrees, or levels, of prophecy:
 1. Prophecy of Scripture
 2. Office of ministry of a Prophet
 3. Gift of Prophecy
 2. Spirit of Prophecy

- V. WHERE SHOULD PROPHECY BE GIVEN?
- A. Basically, prophecy should be given in the local church setting, especially when a presbytery-type ministry is involved.
 - B. Prophecy may also be given at special meetings, conferences, etc., where there is supervision by qualified church elders.
 - C. It may also be given in small group fellowship meetings with qualified, mature leadership present to judge the prophecy.
 - D. As Christians, we are likened to sheep. EVERY SHEEP MUST:
 1. Have a shepherd (recognizing that Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd over us all, we acknowledge that there must be under-shepherds or pastors).
 2. Be identified with and committed to a local sheepfold, or local church.
 - E. For several decades now, these principles have been observed carefully in relationship to prophecy, and when they are broken, tragedy and spiritual shipwreck set in. Without the safeguard of a local pastor and other elders, the following things happen:
 1. There is no one to assume responsibility for the prophetic word given.
 2. Without seasoned ministry present, the prophetic word cannot be judged.
 3. Innocent people act on wrong personal prophecy, and usually they end up in confusion and/or a super spiritual attitude or become deeply injured and far less effective to the Kingdom of God. If true prophecy does come in a home or any place else where no elders of the local church are present, it is most certainly an exception to the general rule set forth in Scripture. In such a case, the local church elders need to be fully informed and counsel needs to be given by them.

The spirit of antichrist is at work in the world today and does its best to creep into the church to destroy the lambs. There are false prophets going around to deceive God's people (Deuteronomy 13:1-5); but if there are false prophets, then there must also be the true.

**BASIC COMPONENT PARTS OF THE MINISTRY OF PROPHECY
WITH THE LAYING ON OF HANDS BY THE PRESBYTERY**

- A. The local church
- B. A strong foundation of prayer in the church
- C. Sincere, committed and qualified candidates
- D. Proper teaching and preparation
- E. A qualified prophetic Presbytery. In some cases local prophetic elders minister with the visiting team.
- F. Worshipful atmosphere
- G. The dynamics of Holy Spirit power such as prophecy, words of knowledge and wisdom, etc.
- H. The laying on of hands and prayer of impartation and empowerment
- I. Pastoral follow up

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND, SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE OF THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

- I. **First reference** - Jacob lays hands on and prophesies over two of his grandsons
Genesis 48:13-22
Before Jacob dies he prophesies to and blesses each of his twelve sons
Gen. 49:1-33
- II. **Moses lays hands on Joshua** - Impartation involved with the laying on of hands
Numbers 27:18-23, Deuteronomy 34:9
- III. **One of the principles of the doctrine of Christ**
Hebrews 6:1, 2; see also Hebrews 5:12
- IV. **The Levites were brought before the Lord to prepare them for service** - the children of Israel laid hands on them
Numbers 8:9-11
- V. **Paul lays hands on Timothy** - Impartation involved with the laying on of hands
I Timothy 4:14-16, II Timothy 1:6-7
- VI. **Ananias lays hands on Paul and prophesies to him confirming what God had already spoken to him**
Acts 9:15-18; see also Acts 22:10-16
- VII. **The Hebrew connotation and application**
Responsibility and Obligation: A new weight of responsibility comes to bear on the candidate receiving this ministry. With our ministry having been somewhat confirmed to us we must take heed to fulfill it.
Colossians 4:17
- VIII. **The Greek connotation and application**
Contact and Identification: The whole picture here suggests that through the administration of the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit is strengthening the candidate's identification and relationship with the local church.
Both the Hebrew and Greek give us a beautiful picture of the believer assuming this God-given ministry responsibility within the context of the local church, and being mutually confirmed as a team, the members work together to fulfill their God-given vision.
- IX. **Basic scriptural significance of the hand**
 - A. Authority and direction (*I Chronicles 25:2, 6*), Direction Heb. open hand, not closed
 - B. Ministry and preparation for such (*I Chronicles 6:31*) Heb. open hand - service, *II Chron. 7:6* ministry
 - C. Consecration (Exodus 29:9, 10; I Chronicles 29:5) set apart as holy unto the Lord; hands were involved
 - D. Confirming or strengthening the believers (*Acts 15:41; 15:32; 14:22, 23*); the laying on of hands is sometimes used for this purpose as well as for the appointment or ordaining of elders
- X. **The New Testament purposes for the laying on of hands**

- A. For simple prayer and impartation of blessing
Mark 10:13-16
- B. For the Holy Spirit baptism
Acts 8:5-17, 9:17, 19:1-6
- C. For healing
Mark 16:18, Acts 28:8, Luke 4:40, Mark 6:5
- D. For impartation of spiritual gifts and graces
II Timothy 1:6
- E. For prophecy
I Timothy 4:14
- F. For ordination or “setting people in” to specific ministry
Acts 6:6, Acts 14:23
- G. For special commission to a specific mission
Acts 13:1-4

PROPHETIC ASSEMBLY - WHY?

1. The Prophetic Assembly ministry is a biblical *present truth* being restored to the church
2. The prophetic ministry brings a needed balance or blending between the *subjective and the objective* - the *Spirit and the Word*
3. The prophetic ministry (and sphere) is one of the major aspects of our vision and organizational structure
4. The prophetic ministry builds and strengthens individuals by confirming their divine gifting, calling and direction
5. The prophetic ministry often brings special insight, confirmation and direction to the local church
6. The prophetic ministry creates an atmosphere for dynamic faith to arise
7. The prophetic ministry helps to lift the local church into the supernatural realm where God does supernatural things

DYNAMIC - (as a noun) A force, producing motion or change. It implies productive motion or change.

ATMOSPHERE - A pervading or surrounding influence or spirit; the general mood or social environment.

The atmosphere in the corporate gathering of the local church is generally determined by:

1. What the Holy Spirit is speaking to the church at the particular time or season
2. The influence of leadership
3. The spirit, attitude & responsiveness of the people present
4. The measure and manner by which God’s presence is being manifested

PROPHETIC: 1. of or having the powers of a prophet, 2. having the nature of or containing prophecy, 3. the operation of divine revelation and power through the Holy Spirit

Fifteen Benefits of

PROPHECY WITH THE LAYING ON OF HANDS BY THE PRESBYTERY

1. It stimulates the whole church into seeking God in fasting and prayer, which brings dynamic results when done with the right motive. *Acts 13:2, 3*
2. It helps to establish the will of God for the individual by:
 - a. Confirming the person's ministry in the body of Christ. Confirmation to the candidate, the eldership, and the congregation. *I Corinthians 1:4-7, Acts 15:32, II Corinthians 13:1*
 - b. The impartation of spiritual gifts and graces. *II Timothy 1:6, Romans 1:11*
 - c. Giving special help or guidance by divine revelation. *I Corinthians 14:6, 12:8*
 - d. Strengthening the person's relationship to the local church. *Acts 2:41, 42; 13:1 "... there in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers..."*
 - e. Providing a tremendous guide to the elders in further counseling. *Acts 20:28*
3. It enables the person to war a good warfare. *I Timothy 1:18*
4. In some cases, it brings liberation from bondage and/or deliverance from satanic power. *II Corinthians 3:17*
5. It reveals special needs to be prayed for. *I Corinthians 12:8; 14:6*
6. It helps to develop confidence when believers know God's will. *Acts 26:12-18; 9:10-15*
7. It helps to develop our gifts and ministries when we know God has given them to us. *I Timothy 4:14-15*
8. It helps to reveal and emphasize the various ministries and functions of the Body. (No one person has it all!) *I Corinthians 12:3-8*
9. It helps to eliminate ineffective activity or ministry in the church brought about by congregational voting on the basis of "popularity" or "rotation." *Psalms 127:1; I Corinthians 3:10-11*
10. It helps to make the person more submissive to God and the ministry of the local church. *James 4:7; I Peter 5:5; Hebrews 13:17*
11. It greatly lifts the enthusiasm of the whole church, which in turn affects our ministry to God, to the Body, and to the world. *I Corinthians 14:3, 12*
12. By having the laying on of hands and prophecy by the presbytery in the local church under proper supervision, the individual's cry and hunger for God is met in a healthy environment. This acts as a safeguard for the one that might seek such experiences apart from his own church family. *Psalms 36:8, Deuteronomy 12:4-14, Acts 20:28*
13. Greater revelation as well as safety comes through the "team" ministry rather than the "one man" ministry. This demonstrates and helps to establish the "body" ministry principle within the leadership. *I Corinthians 14:29-30*
14. Team ministry provides an opportunity for less experienced ministers to learn while flowing with the more seasoned ministers (good safety factor). *Acts 20:4*
15. In churches where there have been previous presbytery meetings with the laying on of hands and prophecy, the recurrence of this ministry acts as an automatic reminder to believers to evaluate their progress and take heed to the ministry they have received in the Lord that they fulfill it. *Colossians 4:17, Hebrews 2:1*

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE PROPHETIC ASSEMBLY

YOU CAN ANTICIPATE:

- I. A personal counseling session with an elder of the church regarding the prophetic word given you. This helps to provide understanding and clarification. Receiving counsel from someone who lacks understanding may bring confusion.
- II. Making some mistakes as you endeavor to respond to what God has spoken to you through prophecy. Remember, the one who makes no mistakes does nothing; so don't be discouraged when you flounder a bit in the process of trying to be obedient. Be teachable. God is faithful.
- III. God's unchanging faithfulness to do His part. He will not fail you. One of the main non-moral attributes of God's nature is His immutability. In His essence, attributes, consciousness, power and purpose, God is unchangeable. *I Cor. 1:9; Psa. 119:89, 90; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8, Jas. 1:17*
- IV. Spiritual warfare - but in Christ we are victorious. *I Tim. 1:18, 19; II Cor. 10:4, 5; Eph. 6:10-18*
- V. The testing or trying of your faith. *I Pet. 1:6, 7; 4; 12, 13; Jas. 1:2-4*
(Lesson 12 will concentrate entirely on the issue of testing and its purpose.)
- VI. Developing greater confidence. The key to confidence is security. Having God's will confirmed to us gives us a greater basis for being secure in our divine placement and function in the local church. Confidence is the key to initiative. *Rom. 12:1-8, I Cor. 12:18, II Cor. 13:1, Acts 15:32* (Confirmation serves to help provide security. Security is the basis for confidence, and confidence produces initiative.)
- VII. God to expect a good return on His investment in you. We need to be good stewards of the things God has entrusted to us. God expects us to faithfully serve Him and others for the extension of His Kingdom and for His glory. *I Tim. 4:14, 15; II Tim. 4:5; Lk. 12:35-38; Lk. 16:1, 2; Matt. 25:14-30.*
- VIII. Opportunities to demonstrate faithful service (faithfulness is the key to promotion).
Gal. 5:13; Lk. 16:10-13; Matt. 20:25-28. Note that Jesus uses seven adjectives to describe servants:
 - A. Evil servant *Matt. 24:48*
 - B. Wicked servant *Matt. 25:26©*
 - C. Slothful servant *Matt. 25:26*
 - D. Unprofitable servant *Matt. 25:30*
 - E. Good servant *Matt. 25:21, 23*
 - F. Faithful servant *Matt. 25:21, 23*
 - G. Wise servant *Matt. 24:45*The description of the servant is determined by the quality of his stewardship. *I Pet. 4:10; I Cor. 4:1, 2; Lk. 16:10-13*
- IX. To exercise faith and patience. *Heb. 6:11, 12, 15; 4:2*
- X. Spiritual growth, reward and increase (if you have a positive response to God's will). *Heb. 11:6; Matt. 13:12, 25:21-23*

GOD'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY OR HIS PROMISES

Although Christians fail at times to respond properly to the Word and will of God, we can be totally assured that God will **always** fulfill His part of the responsibility. *He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it, 1 Thes. 5:24.*

- I. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE.. His very nature guarantees truthfulness, because He and His Word are truth. God's ways are just and true. *Titus 1:1, 2; Heb. 6:18; Rev. 15:3; Psa. 33:4; Num. 23:19, John 14:6*
- II. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO FAIL. He always performs His Word.
1 Ki. 8:54-56 Solomon blesses Israel at the dedication of the temple and refers to God's promise to them through Moses.
Gen. 21:1, 2 God's Promise was faithful to Abraham and Sarah.
Rom. 4:17-21 The Apostle Paul describes Abraham's faith in God's promise to him.
Josh. 21:43-45; 23:14 Not one word of God's promises fail. All come to pass.
Isa. 55:10, 11 God's Word will not return to Him empty or without fruit. It will accomplish what He pleases.
Jer. 29:10, 11; 33:14 God will perform His good Word
Luke 1:37, 38 Nothing will be impossible with God.
Heb. 10:23 We are to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful!
- III. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO CHANGE. He is immutable. *Mal. 3:6; Ja. 1:17; Heb. 6:17, 18*
- IV. GOD WILL COMPLETE IN YOU THE GOOD WORK WHICH HE HAS BEGUN. *Phil. 1:6; Phil. 2:12, 13; Heb. 13:20, 21*
- V. God's investment and interest in us goes beyond us because His objective is a strong church established in "Kingdom Principles." Therefore, what He has given us is not basically for our benefit, but for His. *Matt. 16:18, Eph. 3:10, 11*

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

Consecration Theology is a solid foundation for Gift Theology.

Rom. 12:1-8

I. BASIC FOUNDATION

Maintain the five elementary principles of the Christian life. Be faithful in:

- A. Worship
- B. Word
- C. Prayer
- D. Fellowship (church attendance, etc.)
- E. Evangelism

Acts 2:41-47

- II. CHEERFUL GIVER
Be a cheerful giver of:
- A. Time
 - B. Treasures (tithes, offerings, etc.)
 - C. Talents
- II Cor. 9:6-8, Acts 20:35b*
- III. TEACHABLE AND ADJUSTABLE
Remain teachable and adjustable - key to achieve spiritual maturity.
II Cor. 3:17, 18; II Pet. 3:18; Eph. 4:11-16
- IV. SERVANT'S HEART
Develop and maintain a servant's heart - key to greatness in the kingdom of God.
Matt. 20:25-28, Gal. 5:13
- V. SUBMISSION, OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY
Develop and maintain a submissive spirit. Submission, being the *attitude*, must be absolute; obedience, being the action, is *conditional*. Absolute only to God. Be open to instruction and, if necessary, correction.
Heb. 13:17, I Pet. 5:5, 6
- VI. FAITH
Believe and declare what God says about you and the ministry He has given you.
II Chron. 20:20; Heb. 10:23, II Cor. 4:13, Philemon 6; I Tim. 1:18, 19
- VII. PATIENCE
Let patience have her perfect work that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.
Jas. 1:2-4; Heb. 6:11, 12; 2 Cor. 6:3, 4
- VIII. FAITHFULNESS
Be faithful - key to promotion.
I Cor. 4:2, Matt. 25:21, Lk. 16:10-12
- IX. HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP AND INTERDEPENDENCE
Recognize your continual need to receive from other members of the body.
I Cor. 12:12-27, Rom. 12:3-5
- X. RESPONSIVE HEART – GET INVOLVED
Take heed to your ministry - fulfill it, stir up the gift - war a good warfare. "Use it or lose it" principle. Be involved in the opportunities to serve.
Col. 4:17; II Tim. 1:6, 7; I Pet. 4:10; Matt. 13:12
- XI. WALK IN THE 'KNOWN' (WILL OF GOD)
And God will reveal the "Unknown" (aspect of His will)
Psa. 119:105
- XII. GRATEFULNESS
Be grateful for what God has given you.

- Psa. 100:4; Col. 3:14, 15*
- XIII. MAINTAIN A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE
Character (Holy Spirit control) and Charisma (Holy Spirit gifting)
Eph. 5:15-21, Matt. 5:1-9, Acts 1:8
- XIV. EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
Acts 1:8; Lk. 4:1, 14, 19, 19; Acts 10:38
- XV. ENCOURAGEMENT
 Receive encouragement from God, from fellow believers, encourage yourself in the Lord and be an encourager of others.
Josh. 1:6, 7, 9; Jud. 20:22; I Sam. 30:6 (strengthened-encouraged); Isa. 41:6, 7
- XVI. FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
 Allow the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Gal. 5:22, 23

**THE LOCAL CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY
 IN ASSISTING THE PROPHETIC CANDIDATES**

- I. ACCEPT AND BELIEVE THE WORD
 ... regardless of whether or not we feel the word is appropriate for the individual or couple. God has the ability to effect necessary changes to accomplish His purposes. *Rom. 4:20, 21; 5:13, 14*
- II. BE AN ENCOURAGER - ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S GIFTING
 Honest, sincere appreciation expressed is certainly one valuable way of edifying one another. People grow and develop much more in this type of environment. *Isa. 41:6-7, Prov. 16:24*
- III. MAINTAIN A MATURE AND WHOLESOME ATTITUDE
 Each of us is unique, different, and equally important as a member of God's family. Don't make unwise comparisons for the purpose of estimating a person's worth. We must not become jealous or envious when God uses or blesses someone else; nor should we have a competitive spirit or mentality. Our motive should be to help make our brother or sister successful rather than endeavoring to "outdo" them or to "put them down." *I Cor. 12:4-27, Phil. 2:1-4*
- IV. PRAY FOR THEIR SUCCESS
 It is amazing what happens when we truly and lovingly pray for one another. It builds and cements a meaningful relationship between us. The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's people cannot be sufficiently maintained without prayer.
Eph. 1:15-16, Col. 1:9-10
- V. TRUST GOD TO GUIDE THROUGH CHURCH LEADERSHIP
 Leadership of the local church should be alert to the various ways in which people can be assisted in their pursuit of God's calling and direction:
- A. Discuss possibilities and what is stirring in the candidate's heart
 - B. Consider God's priorities and timing
 - C. Provide structures and opportunities for development and function
 - D. Provide ongoing teaching, training, and equipping
 - E. Balance necessary correction with genuine commendation
 - F. Evaluate progress and communicate conclusions

G. Delegate responsibility and corresponding authority to the degree the principles of faithfulness are being practiced.

Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:2-3, Titus 1:5 (Paul to Titus), Luke 16:10-12 (Jesus' teaching)

VI. ALLOW FOR MISTAKES

Fear of failure is a devastating and crippling bondage. We must guard against any harsh judgment and criticism. People grow when given freedom to learn. *Eph. 4:1-3,*

Matt. 7:1-5

VII. SUPPORT LEADERSHIP DECISIONS

Government and directing the affairs of the local church is their responsibility. Their appointments, conclusions, and actions, while containing the possibility of human error, must be held with honor and respect. To "side in" with a dissident member who is in disagreement with leadership regarding "his ministry," is to be in direct violation of God's order for the local church. Encourage the person to be open to the leadership's wisdom and perspective. Remember that people have a Biblical right to make an appeal to the leadership, if necessary, but if they sow discord among others over the issue, they grieve the Holy Spirit and cause injury to themselves and to other members of the church. When elders or other local church leaders do err on a judgment call or decision, they must be willing to humble themselves and ask for forgiveness. *1 Thess. 5:12, Heb. 13:17*

TESTING AND ITS PURPOSE

I. INTRODUCTION

History has repeatedly proven that when any people live in prosperity, ease and pleasure, without the challenge of testing, discipline, conflict, need and sacrifice, they become a weak and decadent society. If we are to be the strong and dynamic church that brings great pleasure to the heart of God, we must develop a healthy concept regarding His purpose in the testing and pressures of life. Learning to cooperate with God in the process will, to a large extent, enable us, by His grace, to achieve our full potential in Christ.

- Test:
1. An examination, experiment or trial, as to prove the value or ascertain the nature of something. A method, process or means in making such an examination or trial.
 2. An event, set of circumstances, etc., that proves or tries a person's qualities (The delay was a test of his patience.)

II. VIEWING TESTING AND PRESSURE FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Having God's perspective will enable us to see things in the light of a positive purpose. The most precious and valuable qualities, relationships and possessions in life are often those which have been tested. Nothing is really established or "sure" until it has been tested and endured the test.

III. BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS PRESENT GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

- A. *Isa. 28:16* Prophecy regarding Jesus Christ
- B. *Ex. 20:20* God's dealings with Israel so they would fear God and not sin
- C. *Job 23:10-12* Job's attitude and expectation
- D. *Psa. 12:6* The words of the Lord are tried and purified seven times (Completeness)
- E. *Psa. 18:30* The Word of the Lord is proven (tested)
- F. *Psa. 26:2, 3* David's openness before God

- G. *Psa. 105:17-22* Joseph's testing and triumph
- H. *Heb. 11:17-19* God's promise to Abraham tested
- I. *I Pet. 1:3-7* Our faith, being much more precious than gold, is tested
- J. *I Pet. 4:12, 13* Testing is not strange, therefore rejoice
- K. *Ja. 1:12* Those who endure are rewarded

IV. GOD'S POWER WORKS THROUGH TESTING AND PRESSURE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE

In the midst of the problems and trials of our faith God is at work to perform His will by:

(*Heb. 13:20, 21*)

- A. Increasing our capacity for God
- B. Refining and developing our character - purifying work (heat) - gold & silver
- C. Increasing our competence for ministry - stronger example - more effective
- D. Training us for spiritual conflict and endurance
- E. Revealing our weaknesses - chain is no stronger than its weakest link
- F. Reminding us that it is His grace that enables us which works a greater dependence on God
- G. Demonstrating His power to bring us through the test victoriously

V. COMMON AREAS OF TESTING

- A. The test of motives (are they really pure?)
- B. The test of time (works patience)
- C. The test of contrary influences (counsel, conflicting prophecy or advice)
- D. The test of commitment (The degree of our commitment is not really known until tested)
- E. The test of the wilderness experience (Moses - Jesus - purifies and prepares us for more effective ministry). We need to discern between the "woes" of the wilderness and the "work" of warfare

Ten Typical Feelings (emotions) During a wilderness Experience

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Fear | 6. Discouragement |
| 2. Uncertainty | 7. Temptation |
| 3. Grief | 8. Depression |
| 4. Anger | 9. Unhappiness |
| 5. Doubt | 10. Unworthiness (low self esteem) |

- F. The test of warfare (wilderness is preparation for warfare necessary to realize God's promised land) *I Tim. 1:18, 19; Judges 3:1-4* (it is inevitable)
- G. The test of "seasonal" pressure (principles of agriculture - "cold" of winter, "heat" of summer brings maturity of grain or fruit)
- H. The test of the "birthing" process (bringing forth new life)
- I. The test of misunderstanding - Joseph, *Gen. Chapter 37, 50:20*; Moses, *Acts 7:25*,
- J. The test of success (Remember that God gives the increase)
- K. The test of failure (Remember that failure is not final)

- L. The test of comparison (God requires of us only what He has given us). It is unwise to yield to the temptation of comparing ourselves with others.

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever, Amen. I Peter 5:10, 11

The Supernatural Power of God at Work!

The following words describe the supernatural power of God at work to strengthen the committed believers of a local church, personally and corporately, during a prophetic assembly and the laying on of hands by the presbytery:

1. REVELATION - an unfolding or disclosure of personal need and of the will of God.
2. COMMUNICATION/DECLARATION - the act of making clearly known and openly announcing things regarding God's will and plan.
3. CONFIRMATION - the act of making firm, strengthening, establishing, validating the believer and his ministry.
4. EDIFICATION - the act of building, especially morally or spiritually.
5. EXHORTATION - the act of stirring and encouraging to do what is proper or required by God.
6. CONSOLATION - being comforted and lifted from sorrow or sadness.
7. INSTRUCTION - the act informing or teaching the ways of God.
8. DEMONSTRATION - the act or means of making evident the power of God.
9. CORRECTION - the act of adjusting from wrong to right.
10. DIRECTION - the act of directing or giving guidance to the believer regarding God's purpose.
11. IMPARTATION - the act of God in which he gives something of Himself to the believer.
12. IDENTIFICATION - the act of being associated and closely involved with a particular local church.
13. OBLIGATION - a sense of personal duty imposed by God on the believer.
14. CLARIFICATION - the act of making God's plan for the individual believer easier to understand.
15. REJUVENATION - the act of making new and fresh again, restoration.
16. CONSECRATION/DEDICATION - devoting and dedicating oneself entirely to the will of God.
17. LIBERATION - the act of setting the believer free from various bondages.
18. MOTIVATION - the act of God which personally incites the believer to a positive response regarding God's will.
19. GERMINATION - the act of sprouting or initially developing ideas or the potential for a believer's ministry.
20. VINDICATION - the act of clearing a believer from criticism, blame or guilt.
21. COMMENDATION - the act of commending or giving praise or approval.
22. JUBILATION - being joyful and triumphant, rejoicing.

23. CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION - the act of protecting from spiritual harm, danger or waste.
24. COMMISSION - the act by which a believer is authorized to perform certain duties or tasks, being sent on a special assignment.
25. ORDINATION - the act whereby a minister is set into a particular office and is vested with authority and ability to perform the duties of such office.

KEYS OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

1. The Scriptures (the *logos*, objective & infallible) God never leads us to violate the Scriptures.
2. Prayer (the subjective) - usually through prayer, sometimes joined with fasting, we receive an inward impression or conviction from the Holy Spirit, and often does involve a "rhema" personalized word from the Holy Spirit.
3. Godly Counsel – Should always be in harmony with the Scriptures.
4. Personal Prophecy – Given through qualified ministry in the right setting. Is the prophecy in harmony with other confirmed prophecies?
5. Visions and Dreams – Must be properly interpreted.
6. Circumstantial Evidence – A valuable key, but only in conjunction with other keys.
7. God's Internal Peace – Comes from being under God's government and in submission to His will.
8. God's Provision – When God guides, He provides.
9. God's Timing – May be different than ours.
10. Examine our Motives – God looks at the "heart" behind the actions.
11. Husband/Wife Agreement – More than mere "compliance."
12. The Law of Confirmation (2 or 3 witnesses) – God will confirm His will in His time.
13. God's Calling - How does it affect God's personal calling in your life?

FASTING AND PRAYER

by Ernest Gentile

1. WHAT IS FASTING?

The Bible does not define "fasting," but it is a word with a universally accepted meaning. Random House Dictionary says: "1. to abstain from all food. 2. to eat only sparingly or of certain kinds of food, especially as a religious observance." Webster adds: "religious mortification (*Col. 3:5*) by abstinence."

2. DOES FASTING MEAN THAT YOU DON'T DRINK WATER, COFFEE, ETC.?

Fasting means to do without food entirely and does not exclude the use of pure water. Water is in no way stimulating to the bodily appetites. On any fast which continues for more than a few days, the drinking of water is essential. Moses was so supernaturally aided that he neither ate food nor drank water for 40 days, but this was the exception rather than the rule. If you take coffee, tea, etc., you are not really fasting in the primary meaning of the word, but if you do it as unto the Lord, it could be termed a "partial fast." The Bible does not go into the definition of fasting.

3. DOES FASTING INJURE THE HUMAN BODY OR MIND?

Proper fasting does not injure the body or mind. If anything, it will bring you better health physically and enable your mental faculties to function more clearly. For the first few days of a fast, the person feels quite weak. Actually, after about four days, strength begins to return. Many people get a

splitting headache after one day of fasting. This is due to the improper eating habits, excessive coffee drinking, eating of sweets, etc.

4. WHAT EFFECT DOES FASTING HAVE ON A PERSON?

Fasting will have a remarkable purging, revitalizing effect on the body. It will bring an automatic healing to certain types of illness. The power of bad habits will be broken. The power of fleshly lusts will be greatly diminished, and the powers of the Holy Spirit will become profoundly apparent. The realm of the prophetic will be accessible.

5. DID ANY OF THE GREAT MEN OF THE BIBLE CONSIDER FASTING IMPORTANT?

Moses: *Exodus 34:28; Deutoronomy 9:9, 18*

David: *Psalms 35:13, 69:10, 109:24, II Samuel 12:16-23*

Nehemiah: *Nehemiah 1:4*

Daniel: *Daniel 6:18, 9:3*

Elijah: *I Kings 19:8*

Jesus: *Matthew 4:2*

Paul: *II Corinthians 6:5, 11:27*

Cornelius: *Acts 10:30*

Anna: *Luke 2:37*

Even wicked Ahab found favor with God through fasting: *I Kings 21:27-29*

6. ON OCCASION, WHOLE GROUPS PARTICIPATED IN JOINT FASTING

Israel before Sinai: *Exodus 19:10, 11*

Israel before Jordan and circumcision: *Joshua 3:5*

Jehoshaphat called fast: *II Chronicles 20:3*

During time of restoration: *Ezra 8:21, 23; Nehemiah 9:1*

Nineveh's repentance: *Jonah 3:5*

Note these references: *Judges 20:26* *I Sam. 7:6, 31:13* *II Sam. 1:12*
I Chron. 10:12 *Esther 4:3, 16; 9:31* *Jer. 36:6, 9* *Joel 1:14; 2:12, 15*

7. WAS FASTING ONLY FOR OLD TESTAMENT TIMES?

It is a timeless principle. If anything, it has been amplified and given new significance since the cross. *Isaiah 58:3-6*

8. FASTING IS TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A PART OF THE NEW COVENANT

A. Jesus' Teaching

One of the key thoughts in the Sermon on the Mount	<i>Matt. 6:16</i>
Overcoming Satan by fasting and prayer	<i>Matt. 17:21</i>
His answer to John's disciples	<i>Matt. 9:15</i>
His answer to scribes and Pharisees	<i>Mark 2:18-20, Luke 5:33-35</i>

B. The Early Church Practiced Fasting

Saul began his Christian life fasting	<i>Acts 9:9</i>
The early church prayed WITHOUT CEASING	<i>Acts 12:5</i>

What Prophecy with the Laying On Of Hands By The Presbytery Is Not

1. It is not a substitute for the Scriptures, nor does it ever supersede them.
2. It is not infallible (only God and the Bible are infallible).
3. It is not to ever take the place of personal prayer and waiting on God.
4. It is not an option to replace godly counsel by the elders or other church leaders.
5. It is not a platform performance gimmick used by the pastor and elders to impress or entice people for any purpose.
6. It is not to be equated with any form of "fortune telling" or "extrasensory perception."
7. It is not the sole means of divine guidance and is not, therefore, to be acted upon independently from other important Biblical principles of guidance.

8. It is not intended to produce a quick or instant spiritual maturity in the believer.
9. It is not intended to unconditionally bind people for life to their current local church.
10. This ministry is not an automatic guarantee of fulfillment in the believer; faith and obedience must be applied.

***Quench not the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies.
Test all things; hold fast what is good. (I Thessalonians 5:19-21)***

SIGNS OF A PROPHETIC CHURCH

1. People willingly and joyfully participate in prayer and fasting
2. Corporate gatherings are marked by high levels of worship in an atmosphere charged with the presence of the living God
3. Ministry of the Word challenges people and produces positive changes
4. Leadership confronts sin and teaches people to love righteousness and hate lawlessness
5. Leadership will call people to repentance and to make a total commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
6. The leadership and people have an "ear to hear what the Spirit is saying unto the church" and respond in faith
7. The church will have the ability both to see and prepare for the future
8. A healthy "prophetic state" exists in the church, and people are encouraged to operate in the gifts of the Spirit, especially in prophecy. Ideally, one or more resident prophets are functioning or are being equipped to do so.
9. The leadership periodically, when the church is ready, will call for a "prophetic assembly" to confirm and encourage its members in their divine calling.

PREPARING FOR

PROPHETIC ASSEMBLY

Dear CLC Family:

In preparation for these special meetings, every member of our congregation who can possibly do so is asked to participate in the designated times of prayer and fasting. For those of you who may not be familiar with the biblical teaching on fasting, there will be a Bible study included in this Sunday's bulletin.

There is an increasing sense of anticipation regarding God's plans for our church family, personally as well as corporately. God's best is usually associated with conditions He expects us to meet. Remember, we must believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Here are the two conditions: **Believe God and what He says**, and **diligently seek Him**. So, for the welfare of our CLC Family, I implore each of you to sincerely do the best you can to be involved. I realize that this requires a sacrifice of our time, but we will be encouraged if we view the sacrifice as a *short-term pain* (if so) for a *long-term gain*.

Corporate prayer meetings at the church are scheduled for the following nights prior to the Prophetic Assembly:

Sunday	6:00 – 8:30 PM
Friday	6:00 – 8:00 PM
Saturday	6:00 – 8:00 PM

Designated fasting days are Wednesday, April 5 through Sunday, April 9. Please select at least three consecutive days best for you, if possible, or select two consecutive days plus one other day. We are calling a solemn assembly to really wait on the Lord, but the degree to which you participate cannot be mandated by the leadership. That choice is between each one of you and the Lord. If we all do what He says, He will be pleased with our obedience, and our church will reap the benefits.

Prayer alone, without fasting, is a tremendous spiritual exercise; but there are times when the Holy Spirit leads us, personally as well as corporately, to combine fasting with our prayer. It is a proven fact that there are spiritual and physical benefits gained from one to three days of prayer and fasting.

Both Old and New Testaments of the Bible contain numerous references to God's people giving themselves to this kind of commitment. Prayer and fasting have been associated with virtually every revival and visitation from God, and nearly all the main church leaders and fathers from the Book of Acts up to the present have participated regularly in this manner of seeking God.

During the history of Christian Life Church we have usually set aside special times like this at least once a year, sometimes two or three times. Results are usually quite evident individually and corporately. The general spiritual level of the church is significantly intensified and the various "releases" that are experienced are refreshing. Healing, deliverance, release of finances, greater joy and liberty in God, and answered prayer are some of the things that commonly happen. And we can expect God to do great things. He is a rewarder of those who "diligently" seek Him!

As you participate in this special time, please remember:

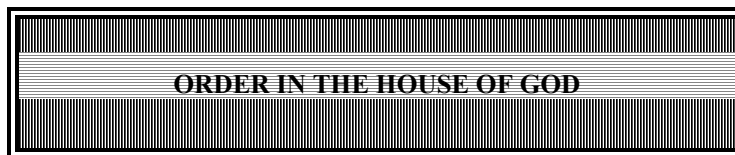
1. Fasting alone, without prayer, brings very little, if any, spiritual benefit. So we need to determine when we are going to lay aside everything else each of the three days for concentrated prayer.
2. Children can participate, too. Train them when they are young, but old enough to understand words of explanation. Most can fast one or two meals a day. Some can fast all three meals, and others can fast totally for the three days. Discuss it with them, pray about it together, and then help them decide.
3. In some cases, persons with certain physical disorders should not attempt to fast completely unless they receive a very clear Word from God. The same applies to pregnant or nursing mothers.

4. It is highly advisable during the fasting that we refrain, as much as possible, from all activities not directly related to building the spiritual man. Some things we cannot usually avoid, such as employment obligations; but what we can, we should. If we plan ahead and concentrate on our purpose, we can give ourselves to seeking God diligently without such things as eating, shopping, reading non-related material, watching TV, household chores (except the minimum), visiting, etc. Everyone is to carefully determine God's personal leading for this time of seeking Him.
5. The purpose for the corporate prayer meetings is to spend as much time together as possible at the church seeking God.
6. Those who must work on the job during any of this time should also participate to the extent that God enables them to do so without jeopardizing their work performance. One man fasted for seven days straight and performed well his job as a produce manager in a supermarket. He received a word (Rhema) from God to fast seven days and he obeyed.
7. A three-day fast is scriptural. Let God lead you as to the extent or degree of your fast.
8. Fasting does not change God or "twist His arm" to do things for us. When accompanied by prayer, it changes us and makes us more sensitive and receptive to Him and what He desires to do.

Remember, if fasting is relatively new to you or you have never had a Bible study on this subject, there are some printed notes in this Sunday's bulletin. God is moving by His spirit! Let's move with Him and allow Him to move in us and through us.

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor Bradley

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CLC FAMILY DURING OUR PROPHETIC ASSEMBLY



**Everyone's cooperation in the following guidelines
will greatly help in the effectiveness of this prophetic ministry.**

1. Please do your very best to be on time for the pre-service prayer and praise, and participate earnestly.
2. Times set aside for corporate pre-service prayer and praise are very important in our church, and we ask that our members be present in the main auditorium with full participation. Please refrain from counseling and other conversation unless it is really necessary.
3. In the best interest of all involved, we request that there be no tape recording of the personal prophecies. This is handled by authorized personnel.
4. We are depending on the visiting presbytery to minister the Word of the Lord to us, and the meetings are specifically geared in that direction. We will not be opening the meeting to congregational song of the Lord and prophecy unless the Lord impresses the leadership to do so. In that case, instruction will be given. If any of you receive a definite prophecy, word of wisdom, or a word of knowledge for a presbytery candidate, please write it down as briefly as possible (include your name and the candidate's name), and hand it to Pastor Bradley.
5. Be sure you and your whole family get your drink of water and use the restroom prior to the services. In this way we can virtually eliminate all of the distractions of moving about during the service. In fact, this word should be reverently followed for all meetings. It has been proven that nearly all children can be trained to remain through a two-hour service without going to the restroom or getting a drink. Following these guidelines helps to instill into the life of the child a proper reverence for the presence of God, and for our corporate gatherings.
6. Praise and worship is a great key to maintaining the strong presence of God and a free flow of prophecy. Let's all be strong worshippers.
7. If you are a candidate, please do not converse with the presbytery team until after they have ministered to you. It is best if they don't have any natural knowledge concerning the candidates' personal lives. However, please feel free to warmly greet them.
8. Be friendly to our guest ministers and express thanks and appreciation to them for their ministry.
9. Remember to uphold the meetings and the ministry with much prayer each day.
10. Please leave personal prophetic counseling to the eldership. This type of counseling requires a significant depth of understanding and wisdom, and counsel without that can cause a number of associated problems.
11. Child care service for infants to age 3 will be available.
12. The second and third rows on both sides of the sanctuary will be reserved for the candidates.

Let's all believe God together for a great time of visitation so we as a church will be more effective in our ministry to God, to the Body, and to the world. AMEN!

REMEMBER: *Do not quench the Spirit* *I Thes. 5:19*
 Do not despise prophecies *I Thes. 5:20*
 Test all things; hold fast what is good *I Thes. 5:21*

Thank you for your cooperation! Pastor Bradley

**PROPHETIC CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS
To Be Considered**

The candidate should have experienced the three foundational stones of *Acts 2:38*

1. Repentance
2. Water Baptism
3. Holy Spirit Baptism

Exception: A person may be a candidate without having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit if he or she has an open heart to receive this from God.

The candidate should have a strong identification with the local church, having demonstrated his commitment by his attendance and participation. *Acts 2:41, 42, 47*

The candidate must have successfully completed the Church Orientation course and attended the church for at least six months to a year. (The elders may determine an exception.)

The candidate agrees to attend all the pre-presbytery and post-presbytery teachings to the best of his/her ability.

The candidate completes the Candidate Questionnaire for Prophetic Ministry.

The Elders will review and prayerfully consider this request.

Greatest consideration is given to those who agree with and have a heart to:

1. Embrace the Vision of the local church
2. Give himself/herself through his/her time, talents and financial resources (including tithe), thus strengthening the local church.
3. Demonstrate loyalty and submission to one another as well as the leadership.
4. Willingly assume and perform responsibilities in the church with a servant spirit as God directs.
5. Live a life in the power of the Holy Spirit and be governed by the Word of God.
6. Participate in Life Group ministry.
7. Participate in opportunities for corporate prayer.

Prophetic Ministry

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____ DATE _____

Preparing and presenting yourself for prophetic ministry is an indication that you desire to be more of a vital part of the "life flow" of the Holy Spirit within the vision, direction and structure of this local church. The information given will be kept in your personal file.

1. How long have you been attending CLC?
2. Have you been baptized in water by immersion?
3. Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit?
If not, are you seeking to be?
If not, explain
4. Are you involved in a Life Group? If so, who is your Life Group leader?
5. Have you successfully completed the CLC Church Orientation Class?
Have you been received as a member?
If not, explain.
6. Please indicate the services or meetings you regularly attend:
____ Sunday Service
____ Sunday Prayer ____ Life Group Meetings & Activities
____ Saturday Prayer ____ Wednesday PM Ministry & Equipping Classes
7. Have you ever been ministered to by prophecy with the laying on of hands by the presbytery? If so, where? When?
8. Why do you desire this ministry at this time?
9. Are you consistent in giving of your tithes (and offerings) to support the ministry of CLC? If not, explain.
10. In what specific ministry or related capacity are you serving at CLC?
11. Are you willing to participate in the designated times of prayer and fasting at CLC?
If not, explain.
12. Are you willing to receive and honor spiritual oversight in your life from the elders of the church?
If not, explain.
13. Are you willing to assume personal responsibility regarding any prophetic words spoken over you?
14. Are you comfortable with and supportive of the vision of CLC?
If not, explain.
15. Are you in agreement with and supportive of the major doctrines of CLC as set forth in our "Statement of Faith?"
If not, explain.

16. While not expecting sinless perfection at this point in our lives, do you honestly believe that from God's perspective you are living a life consistent with Biblical standards for Christians?

If not, explain.

Would you like an appointment with an elder of CLC for prayer and discussion of any important issues?

Note: Mere negligence to walk together in the context of a local church in a mutually agreeable fashion is an issue that can be easily resolved. On the other hand, disagreements as to vision, philosophy of ministry, standards and doctrine have the potential for creating division in the church, if not handled with proper respect to the eldership and for the welfare of the whole local church. **We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**



SPECIAL EVENT CHECKLIST
Prophetic Assembly

Event Date _____

- Schedule Classes
- Room Request Form
- Compile List of Candidates
- Presbyters: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
 - Confirmation Letter & Schedule
 - Lodging
 - Transportation
 - Meals
 - Welcome Basket
 - Honorarium & Thank You Letter
- Schedule Days of Fasting & Prayer
- Publicity – Office
 - Bulletin Inserts
 - Congregational Letter
- Ushers/Greeters
 - Attendance
 - Offering
 - Juice & Water
- Musicians/Worship
- Overhead/PowerPoint Projectionists
- Video
- Sound
 - Individual-size tapes
 - Back-up Recorder
 - Log Ministry to Candidates
 - Personal Prophecy Tape to Candidate
 - Tape to Office for Transcribing
- Altar Workers

- Childcare
 - Ages
 - Where
 - Volunteer or Paid
- Nursery
- Refreshments
 - What
 - Where
 - Tables/Chairs Set Up & Take Down
 - Clean Up
- Janitorial
- Transcribers
 - Words to Individuals (tape only for those who do not attend CLC)
 - Words to CLC
- Follow-up Appointments
- Financial Report