

7 Ways to Develop a Prophetic Culture in Your Church

A prophetic culture is an exciting and much needed element for a cutting-edge local church.

By “prophetic culture” I am referring to having a sense of anticipation among the attendees that God is going to manifest His presence and speak directly to His people, either through the preached Word of God or through the worship experience. There are several things needed to bring this kind of atmosphere into a local church.

The following are some of the ways to develop this culture:

1. Minister to the Lord instead of entertaining men. Often when I observe local-church worship services, it has more of a performance orientation than a worship orientation. When the focus is on performance, the goal is to entertain the attendees rather than minister to the Lord. Acts 13:1-2 teach us that the Antioch Church ministered to the Lord. This is much different than merely attempting to drum up enthusiasm and hype the people emotionally. A church that learns to minister to the Lord will also have regular seasons of God speaking corporately to their local church regarding their destiny and calling. This will release a powerful prophetic culture in the congregation!

2. Have regular seasons of congregational fasting and prayer. Our local church has had a weekly prayer meeting for over 30 years. It is often during these meetings that God has spoken to the leaders and myself about what He is saying and doing during that season of our church life. Furthermore, we have set aside three times per year when we consecrate days for corporate fasting and prayer. During these times people are empowered, lives are changed and the church experiences a time

of cleansing and repentance.

A church that doesn't have regular, vibrant prayer is not allowing God to speak clearly and drill down deep to get at the root issues of sin and lethargy. Churches like this may have a great organizational flow and many good programs, but lives are not being transformed, and disciples are not being made. Like Samson of old, many churches like this would not even know it if the Holy Spirit left them

3. The elders should have a lifestyle of seeking God. Leaders who do not live to seek God will not be able to lead the church into their prophetic destiny. Leadership not surrendered fully to living in the presence of God is left concocting mere strategies and programs that leave their congregation empty and powerless. Only leaders who seek God can usher in a prophetic culture.

4. The worship team should have a lifestyle of seeking God. Many musicians and singers I have met in the body of Christ have no personal prayer life. They are committed to the church only because it gives them a platform to express their skill. Only worship leaders and musicians that seek God as a team and in private can be sensitive enough to usher in a prophetic culture in their congregation.

5. The gift of prophecy should function among the members. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 14:1 to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially to prophesy. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20 instructs the church neither to quench the Spirit nor to despise prophesying. Prophecy is the greatest gift when it comes to edifying the church according to Paul the apostle. Prophecy can come forth through the anointed and authoritative preached Word, or it can be an anointed exhortation expressing the heart of God from any believer present in the congregation.

First Corinthians 14 gives rules for the use of this powerful

gift so everything is done decently and in order, but in the name of biblical order many churches have shut down this gift totally! One of the greatest ways to create a prophetic culture in the church is to encourage use of this gift with biblical guidelines every time believers come together. (Whether in small groups or in during altar calls when people are being prayed for.)

In large congregational gatherings it is difficult for non-leaders to use this gift corporately, and when it is used to minister to another individual, there should always be a designated leader present to judge the word.

6. The congregation should be equipped to commune with God.

God has given the church many doors to enter into His manifest presence. Many believers understand just one kind of prayer (mostly intercession or petition prayer). The greatest way for the church to be equipped to commune with God is to observe how the leaders seek God during corporate prayer gatherings. This is because this kind of anointing is better caught than taught. Believers can learn from mature God seekers the various movements of how God draws us into His presence and orchestrates corporate seeking. However, for the prophetic culture to permeate the church there should also be congregational instruction.

Instruction should include topics such as; how to wait upon the Lord, the difference between worship and praise, meditation upon the word of God, intercession, supplication, spiritual warfare, and the prayer of faith. The more versed a church is regarding these various ways of interacting with the Father, the more the prophetic culture will permeate that church.

7. The Word of the Lord should be preached every week.

The lead pastor should be a voice for the Lord and not merely an echo of men. Too many pastors are too busy to seek God. The result is they often retrieve their sermons online or from

commentaries. (These commentaries are good tools to inform a sermon but should not be mimicked in its entirety.) When a lead pastor is primarily a “God seeker,” he will not only study and pray to prepare to preach, but will teach out of the overflow of their robust private devotional life. Perhaps nothing creates a prophetic culture in a local church more than when people know they are going to “hear what the Spirit is saying to their church” through the preached word every Sunday.

May the Lord help every true church in the world develop a prophetic culture so that we can disciple the nations. After all, it is not by power or by might but by His Spirit says the Lord (Zech. 4:7). {eoa}

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