



Prophetic Function in the Church

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Throughout this year we're walking through a significant aspect of ministry and leadership in the Church. Often referred to as the Five-Fold Ministry, or APEST, it's the description of roles given by God to equip and build up the Church for its mission which is found in Ephesians 4. Last month and today, we're dealing specifically with prophetic ministry.



You can read the initial article about apostles, [Prophets: Tuned Into God, in the Advocate here](#).

And you can read last month's blog post, [Helping Prophets Relate to Their Community here](#).

In the latest issue of the Advocate and last month's blog post, we took time to explore the second vocation of the Five-Fold Ministry – the prophet. The prophet is one who is especially tuned into the voice and the heart of God. They are like moral compasses that know the right thing and the right way. Prophets are oriented towards social justice, worship, and calling God's people back to Him.

While the role of a prophet is important, as all of the Five-Fold Ministry roles, their purpose is to help the whole body of Christ grow and mature into the image of Christ. Every church and every network of churches needs to function in all five of the ministries, including the prophetic. We need to evaluate our ministries and Kingdom work to see if we're functioning prophetically, imitating Jesus as he functioned prophetically.

So here are three ways in which your church or ministry can aim to function prophetically:

1. **Maintain God-Orientation.** It may sound obvious that every church should be God-orientated, and I think that's the desire of every church, but just like our own walks with Jesus, churches can wander away from God being the center and come back. Mostly this happens when something that is good because something that is "ultimate" (Tim Keller's definition of an idol). For example, a church may be engaging missionally to their neighborhood through a variety of programs, all done with the intention of spreading the Good News of Jesus and bring God's Kingdom here on earth. If, however, that becomes their ultimate focus and they lose sight of God being their center because their work becomes their center – then there's a need for a reorientation towards God.

Having a prophetic function means constantly evaluating whether God's at the center of everything you do – and then maintaining that position through worship, listening prayer, and responsiveness in obedience to God.

2. **Take on a Posture of Confession and Repentance.** Within every church should be a focus on doing the right things the right way. When, as a community, you get off track, then the church as a whole needs to seek confession and repentance. Maybe you haven't disciplined people like you should; maybe you haven't evangelized as you should; maybe you've been overly concerned with what's happening inside the body and not what God's calling you to outside of the body. In each instance, there's a need for confession from the community for what's been missing and repentance – a turning towards God – so that the right things can be done in the right way.
3. **Champion Justice.** Every church should be concerned with the cause of the marginalized - the widow, the orphan, the stranger, and the poor, amongst others. Seeking to bring the pain and wrongness of life into the peace of God. Having the prophetic function as a church or ministry means going to the places that most people won't go and being an advocate for those with whom no one associates. We need to bring justice and righteousness like rivers and streams so that it flows into every corner of our communities and no one is left untouched by the love and redemption of the Lord.

Do you see these functions in your church or ministry? If not, how can you take a next step towards functioning prophetically?