

Prophetic Presbytery

"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbytery."
- 1 Timothy 4:14

A presbytery (πρεσβυτεριον, presbuterion) is a council of elders, or a group of ministers who have gathered to work together. Two areas of ministry that a new testament presbytery could function in were: 1) imparting spiritual gifts, and 2) prophesying over a person or group of persons. As we seek to work with our Lord to see the restoration of the Church to the Bible pattern, we can also pray that the Lord will again raise up these powerful spiritual ministries.

1) Imparting Spiritual Gifts- Paul said that a gift (χαρισμα, charisma) was imparted to Timothy by a prophetic presbytery. Paul spoke more about the impartation of charismatic gifts in 2 Tim.1:6 and Romans 1:11. We also read that men of God were able to impart anointings from the Holy Spirit, as when Moses imparted the spirit of wisdom to Joshua (Deut.34:9 & Num.27:18-23) and when Elijah gave the anointing of the mantle of a prophet to Elisha, 2 Kgs.2:9-15.

2) Prophesying Over a Person or Group of Persons- This is also shown us in Acts 13:1-2 and in 1 Tim.1:18. Samuel did this among the elders of Bethlehem when he prophetically anointed David to be the next king, 1 Sam.16:1-13.

Preparation and Procedures

1) The Presbytery- should be composed of those who can minister together by the Spirit, Acts 13:1. They should prepare themselves by fasting, ministering to the Lord (in praise and worship), and prayer, Acts 13:2-3.

2) The Candidates- should be born-again Christians with sanctified lives, 2 Tim.2:21, 1 Tim.5:22. Being filled with the Spirit is also an important preparation to receive more from the Holy Spirit, Num.27:18, Acts 6:3. Fasting, ministering to the Lord, and prayer are important, Acts 13:2-3.

3) The People in the Presbytery Service- also have an important ministry. By their continued prayer, praise, and exercising faith, they can help to create an atmosphere where the Spirit of God can move. Even our Lord Jesus Christ had His ministry hindered by the unbelief (Mk.6:5-6) and wrong motives (Mk.11:27-33) of those around Him.

4) The Ministry of the Local Church- have a responsibility to a) protect, and b) guide the members of their church. As a result, it is good to have the pastor or a member of the ministry leadership to either be at a prophetic presbytery, or to listen to a recording of it afterward.

a) To protect the church against error, we are taught "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good." -1 Thess.5:19-21. Three ways we can test or judge spiritual things are:

* by the written word of God, Is.8:19-20, 1 Jn.4:1-3.

* by the witness of the Spirit, Jn.16:13, 1 Jn.2:27.

* by the fruit, Mt.7:15-20.

It is also important that we are careful about who is allowed to minister by the laying on of hands, because this can be a spiritual channel of both good and evil impartation, 1 Tim.5:22.

b) The ministry of each local church should also guide their church members in their spiritual development, so that any good thing imparted by a prophetic presbytery will be encouraged to grow and mature in the timing of God, 1 Tim.4:14, 2 Tim.1:6.