

Prophecy

1 Corinthians 14.1-5

Key Points:

- Prophecy can be defined simply as **hearing God speak**. God speaks through the Bible, but the Bible is also in itself a record of God speaking prophetically to His people. Paul includes prophecy in the list of gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12.4-11) and Jesus talks about hearing God (e.g. John 10.3-4).
- There are two types of prophecy. 1. Foretelling - *to know the future* (e.g. Acts 11.28) and Forthtelling - *to cause the future by declaring God's truth* (e.g. Ezekiel 37.10). Jesus alludes to these to aspects in John 16.12-13. The gift of prophecy should be eagerly desired (1 Cor 14.1) and should be to **strengthen, encourage and comfort** (1 Cor 14.3).
- God speaks to us in ways we can understand - through words, pictures, physical sensations, dreams, visions etc. - we need to make the space to listen. I've learned if I share what I think God might be saying and it's wrong - nobody dies. But if I don't say it, and it was Jesus, then someone is going to miss out on getting blessed.

Questions:

1. What's the worst prediction you've ever made?!
2. What do you think of when you hear the word 'prophecy'? How does hearing the word make you feel? What are your (good and bad) experiences of prophecy?
3. Have you ever felt like your choices/decision/actions have been limited by your experience, expectations or faith? (e.g. *have you ever been inspired/called to do something new or stop doing something, only to be held back by fear of failure, or lack of self-confidence, or lack of faith that God would come through?*)
4. What are some of the ways that people in the bible 'hear' God speak?
5. Why is prophecy a gift to be eagerly pursued?
6. How might forthtelling prophecy strengthen, encourage and comfort?
7. How might you be more prophetic on a day-to-day basis? (e.g. *practising hearing from God in restaurants, shops, bus-stops; prophetically praying - asking God what He wants you to pray for; before making a decision, ask for God to speak His truth into your situations*)
8. Prophecy is a gift, not an award. Have you ever asked to receive the gift of prophecy? Why not spend a few moments in prayer and ask God for it now?
9. Give it a go! Split into groups of three, and take turns praying for each other. Ask God for His truth to speak into their life - remember it should be to encourage, strengthen and comfort, and be consistent with God's word, but it's also important to realise that it doesn't have to be profound to be powerful!