

PROPHETIC PRAYER

By Dan Aleksiejczyk

What do you do when you're praying for someone, and you feel a prompting from the Holy Spirit? Maybe it sounds like a still small voice, or a gentle nudge, or simply a gut reaction - but a prompting all the same. Was it the Mexican food you ate for lunch? Is it just your mind helping you subconsciously? Or is it something deeper? Could it actually be a move of the Spirit.

Christians for centuries have called this act *prophetic prayer*.

Prophetic prayer is praying for an individual, with the Scriptures, in faith, under the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

The book of 1st Corinthians explains that God's purpose through prophetic prayer is to build people up in their faith, to instruct and correct, and to speak comfort into someone's life.¹ When that was faithfully stewarded through the prayers of my fellow church members, God's character and heart were magnified.

2 Peter shows us "no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."²

1 John also explains "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."³

Prophetic prayer is about God, from God, and carried through by the Spirit. This has nothing to do with the person speaking except their faithfulness and willingness to be used. If that is disordered, as many of us have seen before, prophetic prayers can be twisted to be about the person praying, or about the alleged power in the prayer they are wielding - this can easily slip into manipulation and hurt. Prophetically praying over someone has more to do with submitting yourself to the will of God than it is actually exerting your own will through prayer.

Personal Experience

I (Dan) became a Christian at a church that was blessed with the gift of prophetic prayer. It was not just a handful of "spiritual" members, but a widespread way that the Spirit moved in the church to actively encourage and disciple people. I have been so blessed to experience the heart of God personally through prophetic prayer spoken over me and through me, and am so thankful for how the Spirit uses this gift for God's work.

I'd love to share an example of this from things that I have seen in those around me and ways I have seen God move through prophetic prayers.

¹ 1 Cor 14:4-5 esv.

² 2 Peter 1:20-21 esv.

³ 1 John 4:1 esv.

Derek

This example is one where God moved in me to pray for someone else. One Sunday during our church gathering, I was in the production booth looking over our congregation near the end of the service. I was praying over folks in general and then felt my prayers be moved towards one person in particular, Derek.

So I just started praying for him. I was serving at the time and my phone vibrated, so I wanted to see if it was related to a role I needed to fill, but instead, it was from my wife. It said "Hey, I think you should go and pray for Derek."

How about that?

Derek wasn't doing anything different at church. He wasn't particularly emotional and I didn't have any tangible needs I knew to pray over. I have no reason other than God moving in us both for my desire to pray. I walked up to him mid-worship and asked if I could pray for him.

Remember earlier when I mentioned humility? I could stand on nothing but God initiating this prayer and I asked for God's work to be done because otherwise, I had nothing to offer. What came out of that prayer was helpful, praise God! Here's what that looked like:

"God, I need you to speak through me to encourage Derek. I trust you to move and not let my words be just me".

I then waited and listened to see if my heart would stir in any direction, then it did!

"Derek, this could just be my thoughts, but I think God may want to show you a couple of things..."

What followed was some words about Derek being very heartbroken, that Derek is storing up a heavy burden on his shoulders, and God's heart towards Derek is hurting because that weight belongs to God. God is the one that has the power to bear it, not Derek. I prayed over Derek and asked God to give him strength and clarity to trust God more and that his anxiety over the situation would be released.

I was careful to not state anything as definitive or declarative, but simply to offer up suggestions and prayers based on promptings from the Spirit.

We were able to debrief the prayer later and confirm how God was moving in Derek.

Conclusion

I hope this testimony to God's living, active voice is encouraging. I have personally experienced many similar stories and have been prayed over and prayed for others in similar ways. I would be amiss to not end with this very clear statement: all prophecy is to be verified by scripture and church leadership. Humility should come first with a willingness to submit yourself to the authority of scripture and church leadership above the authority you may have with your prayers. All so that God may be glorified.