

Core Values: Prophetic Community

Aim

To begin to understand more about the nature of prophecy in the Bible, and how we might apply that within our own church community and become a prophetic people.

You will need...

A Bible

A few magazines and newspapers (including local ones), a marker or highlighter pen.

Starter

Circle or highlight words and pictures from the magazines & newspapers which strike you in response to the question What grieves God?

- What do the words and images reveal about our primary concerns?
- It could be said that what has been chosen frames the context of prophetic action for our particular community, for that which we believe grieves God, as revealed in scripture, should also grieve us.
- Now reflect - how much of your church life deals with such issues?
- What does this tell us about our priorities?

An Old Testament Prophet

Imagine that you are in the court of King Uzziah in Jerusalem. A group of well-to-do people, such as court officials have gathered together for a staff event, when one of the shepherds from the out-lying hillsides says he has a message from God. As they snigger, he proclaims:

Amos 5:1-24

- As court officials how do you feel about the statement? How would it have been received?
- In the passage, what is it that makes Amos a 'prophet', rather than an angry young man?
- Try to identify God's main grievances against his people. List a few of these below

- Does this list vary from the contemporary list the you made with the pictures and words from the newspapers? What are the similarities and differences?
- What does Amos' call have to say to our church life and our involvement, or lack of it, in the world around us?

Jesus: Prophet?

Do you think of Jesus as a prophet? Any examples?

John 2:12-22

Jesus spoke with authority that came from being God's Anointed One (Mark 1:22). He frequently challenged the religious authorities of his day and exposed their double standards (Mt.23). Here in John 2 we see him fulfilling this prophetic role in this dramatic outburst at the Temple.

- What was it that made Jesus so angry?
- Is it OK for Christians to be angry?
- What do you feel about disrupting a gathering and even damaging property?
- Jesus' prophetic action was essentially a call to repentance, and an invitation to display God's righteousness. Is this the nature of all prophecy?
- We often think of prophets as lone voices. What could be the strength of being a prophetic community? What would a prophetic church be like?

Acting prophetically today

- What situations locally or nationally do we feel so angry about as individual Christians or as Churches that we need to speak or act prophetically?
- Alternatively, what kind of things do we wish to promote and commend? (To speak prophetically doesn't mean you have to be negative. There should be things that we want to be positive about.)

Closing Prayers

Look back at the words and images you highlighted earlier, compare these with God's grievances found in Amos. Use this comparison as the basis for prayer