

21 DAYS
— of —
BREAKTHROUGH
PRAYER

The Power of Agreement

JIM MAXIM
with Cathy Maxim and Daniel Henderson


WHITAKER
HOUSE

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21 DAYS OF BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER:

The Power of Agreement

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all of the pastors who labor in God's vineyard to strengthen His saints. Our desire is for this book to be a tool to assist pastors in mobilizing their churches in the renewal of corporate and personal prayer.

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Foreword

Prayer is the source of the Christian life, a Christian's life-line. As I wrote in my book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, "Otherwise, it's like having a baby in your arms and dressing her up so cute—but she's not breathing! Never mind the frilly clothes; *stabilize the child's vital signs.*" We all need the Spirit's help and practical encouragement to make prayer the vital organ God intended it to be in our lives.

As we grow in prayer, we soon learn that one of the most important areas of focus is that of praying for church leaders. The apostle Paul often implored the early churches to pray for him. (See Romans 15:30–33; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1.) If the great apostle needed prayer, how much more do today's church leaders need our intercessory support? Pastoring in the twenty-first century means facing immense and often mean-spirited challenges. The best thing we can do for our leaders is not to scold them, or even

take them out for Sunday dinner. What is better by far is to pray for them, daily and fervently.

I am grateful for this valuable resource compiled by my friends Jim and Cathy Maxim and Daniel Henderson. This guide will inspire your prayer life through the daily readings and the accompanying audio prayers. Beyond this, you will be equipped to pray effectively for your church leaders with biblical understanding and Christian love.

Jim Maxim is a successful businessman with an extraordinary passion for prayer. He mobilizes pastors to pray together and leads citywide gatherings of powerful intercession on behalf of church leaders through his Acts 413 Ministries. Pastor Daniel Henderson and I have partnered together to challenge our pastoral colleagues all across America to lead their churches in prayer. Daniel and I partner in a fellowship of praying pastors. The 6:4 Fellowship calls church leaders to make prayer and the ministry of the Word truly vital in their lives and churches.

In this helpful volume, Jim, his wife Cathy, and Daniel have combined their passion and teaching to give you an essential “kick-start” in your prayer life, leading to a deeper conviction about praying for your church and ministry leaders. I am thankful for the friendship of these treasured brothers and sister, and I know that this new tool will help you to honor Christ as you experience a greater focus and fruitfulness in your life of prayer.

—*Pastor Jim Cymbala*
The Brooklyn Tabernacle

Introduction

Are there things in your personal life, your loved ones' lives, or your church life that need to change for the better? Are you ready to discover a real breakthrough in these challenging situations? Have you ever considered that God is just waiting for His people to cry out to Him in prayer together?

The prayer of agreement is one of the most powerful gifts that God has provided for victory in our Christian lives. Jesus Himself boldly proclaimed, *“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them”* (Matthew 18:19–20).

God has declared that His power resides in the center of our prayers of agreement. God is our Father, and we can always go to Him in prayer. But He strongly encourages us to pray with one another in powerful agreeing prayer. God has promised us that

He will respond to this time of focused prayer as we seek His face together. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, *“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

Thankfully, anyone who is already God’s son or daughter has the privilege to spend time with Him in prayer any day at any time. But during this next twenty-one days, things will be very different as we go to God together and experience a time of intimacy and intercession that will forever change the way we pray, think, and act regarding the gift of prayer.

During these twenty-one days, you will see a dynamic change in your personal prayer life and in the prayer life of your church. You will discover the power in the prayer of agreement and how it will bless you and those you love for eternity. More can be accomplished through prayer than all the efforts in our own strength!

How can you participate in these twenty-one days of prayer? We have made this prayer time interactive so that you can read through it with a prayer partner to agree with you for God’s answers. At the end of each devotional reading, you can visit www.acts413.net and join me (Jim Maxim), Cathy Maxim, and Daniel Henderson in a powerful time of agreeing prayer. We will enter God’s presence together daily, praying for the power of the Holy Spirit to sweep through your circumstances with the breakthrough that you need in your life and the lives of those you love.

Daniel, Cathy, and I are convinced that this next twenty-one days of prayer will be a defining moment in your relationship with God. It will change your personal life because your “Dad,” God Almighty, is going to wrap His arms around you in a way that you need right now or that you have never experienced before. Together, we will go before His throne with your prayer concerns and your loved ones’. We will take Him at His Word and enter into the intimacy He has reserved for all His family. We will learn to pray the Scriptures together by the leading of the Holy Spirit. As God’s people, when we recognize that He is not only true to His word, but also that He *is* His Word, we will begin to see what prayer can really do!

We will also pray earnestly together for our pastors and their families. We will lift the “shield of faith” over them and call their names out before almighty God, asking Him to bless, encourage, and strengthen them. Our pastors are under tremendous attack in today’s culture, and they need our prayers and encouragement in every area of their lives. God will be very pleased with His church as we selflessly take this time to intercede for them. Remember, a healthy pastor is a healthy church. A healthy church changes the world!

Each day of prayer will be different as we focus on a particular Scripture, on an area of fellowship with God, on prayer concerns and spiritual encouragement. Our desire is for you to enter into a life of communion with your heavenly Father; with Jesus, His Son; and with the Holy Spirit. We pray earnestly for God’s presence in your life to be so contagious that He will use your newfound passion for prayer to ignite your pastor, your church,

your personal life, and your loved ones, setting them all on fire for His glory!

Please join us on this twenty-one-day journey as we enter God's presence and discover the limitless power of the prayer of agreement to bring change in our lives for eternity.

—*Jim and Cathy Maxim and Daniel Henderson*

Join the Interactive *21 Days of Breakthrough Prayer* Experience!

To help you in this prayer journey, go online to access a daily playlist of prayers to be used alongside this book.

Here's how it works:

- ✦ Read the devotional for that day.
- ✦ Go online to www.acts413.net/21days and listen to the corresponding prayers for that day.
- ✦ Pray in agreement with us for the Almighty to *break through* in your life for His glory and for your good.
- ✦ Share this resource with your brothers and sisters in Christ that we all might agree.

Our hope is that this will be a powerful tool to change your prayer life and help usher you in to the daily presence of God.

Part 1: Background

Chapter 1

Prayer in the Church: A Tale of Two Ships

“Isn’t it possible that prayer is the missing link that
God has provided for us?”
—*Jim Maxim*

Two ships of the same size leave the harbor and head out to sea. They sail off in the same direction, but then one of them begins to veer off course, listing starboard, moving in a different direction.

From the bow, both ships seem to be identical, like many churches today. They have the same departments; each has a worship team, a children’s program, a youth ministry, nursery facilities, a sanctuary, pastors’ offices, a café, and so forth. Each reaches out to the community, sponsors missions trips, holds Bible teaching conferences, and uses state-of-the-art media technology. The people even seem to be dressed similarly.

However, looking at the ships’ port and starboard sides reveals that they are not identical after all. One ship has a prayer room that is relegated to a small corner in the stern. Although this ship seems to have more glitter than the other, there are

many things weighing it down—things that look rusted, old, and decayed—and causing it to veer off course. Barnacles are clinging to the sides, slowly and imperceptibly damaging the hull. All of the passengers on board are going about their business as usual with a casual attitude, maybe a little arrogantly or just wrapped up in what they are doing, making decisions on the fly.

The second ship has all the same departments as the first ship, but along the entire length of its decks, people are praying to God, calling out to Him, worshipping Him, and asking Him to shower His presence upon them. Some of the people are prostrate, while others are on their knees, sitting down, or standing. All of them are in prayer and are actively waiting upon the Lord. They are hungering for Him with intensity, and their attitude permeates the entire ship.

This ship is cutting through the waters faster and with greater ease than the first ship, even though the waves are hitting it more intensely. No glitter, no barnacles, no rust—yet moving swiftly through the rougher waves.

The question the Lord is laying on my heart to ask pastors and their congregations is this: Which ship would you like to be on?

THE CHALLENGE OF PRAYER

Why is prayer so hard? Why don't we as the church of Jesus Christ take prayer as seriously as Jesus did? Why do many of us say we pray and say we believe that God answers prayer but, for the most part, do not participate in corporate prayer meetings?

Why don't we want to gather together as a body of believers and honestly ask and believe God to answer our prayers? After all, the church was born in a prayer meeting in the upper room.

I know that pastors often will not ask their congregations to meet regularly to seek God together in prayer because they know people will not find the time to come. It brings me to a very puzzling question: Why has the privilege of corporate prayer become so unattractive to Christians?

I honestly believe that, most of the time, our level of expectation for God to truly intervene is low—so low that we expect God to answer only the prayers that we can almost fulfill ourselves! That doesn't take much faith! One of the reasons it's almost impossible for churches in America to have a good response to their prayer meetings is because most Christians do not believe that God answers prayers that move mountains. (See Matthew 17:20.)

Can you imagine what a church body that met regularly and sought the face of God with a humble and contrite heart would look like? Doesn't God say that He will not ignore a broken spirit and humble and contrite heart? (See Psalm 51:17.) Ignorance of the outcomes of prayer is probably the number one reason churches do not enter into the magnificent gift and privilege of praying together. Throughout the Bible, God encourages us to embrace the power of prayer to change everything in our lives:

*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and **will forgive their sin and heal their land.*** (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

(1 John 5:14–15)

When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

(Matthew 6:6)

If we believe that these Scriptures are true, then why is prayer, personally and corporately, not of vital importance in our lives? Do you understand a little better why God's most powerful servants have said that they wish they would have prayed more and led others with them in prayer?

Perhaps prayer is the missing link that God has provided for us. With prayer, we will enter a new dimension in our walk with Him. With prayer, if we enter His gates with thanksgiving, the church of Jesus Christ will experience a powerful spiritual wave of His presence. I believe the destiny God has for each of us will start to unfold rapidly when we submit our heart and soul to Him for His eternal purposes in our lives. I pray that you would accept the awesome privilege of talking with God and receiving from Him the majesty of His presence in prayer.

The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men.... The Holy Ghost does not flow through

methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men...men of prayer.¹

PRAYER GETS PUSHED AWAY

For over forty years, I have observed that prayer gets pushed off the agenda. We get too busy or we just do not learn how much power prayer has to change our circumstances. Busyness and success occupy the church's life; before long, prayer is no longer a priority. Most pastors try hard to change this, but it is difficult to get the church to respond.

I have spoken to many pastors with a seminary education who confirm that the "practice" of prayer was never modeled to them by any professor. Prayer was just another theological subject, and the powerful importance of prayer was never conveyed as a top priority. As a result, when the local church experiences some success, the pastor and staff will often forget the emphasis on prayer in Jesus's life to fulfill the Father's will. When pastors lack fellowship with God in prayer, discouragement, anxiety, and ministry burnout set in. The work is on man's shoulders instead of God's. People with good intentions replace kingdom power with earthly principles.

Through this time of seeking God in intercessory prayer, we will pray for our pastors and their own personal prayer lives, encouraging them to lay the burdens of the church on God in prayer. We will also pray for the Holy Spirit to breathe life into

1. Edward M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (Racine, WI: Treasures Media, Inc., 2007), 2.

the prayer lives of our congregations. God has promised. He can and will bring change to our lives as we seek His face in earnest together!

WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN

We have been chosen by God, pastors and lay believers alike, as the means for the world to see His love in action. We are all the church, and we can all be used by God to reach out to the people in need of God's saving grace. We are the ones who will determine which ship we will board. Will you be on the ship whose passengers dedicate their lives to prayer and believe God for great things to happen through His kingdom? We have the awesome privilege to be used every day for God's glory!