

Prayers God Always Answers— Prayers that We Pray Together



MATTHEW 18:19–20

¹⁹ “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

- One of my favorite places to visit is Canterbury, England, the cradle of English Christianity. In A.D. 597, Gregory the Great sent Augustine to lead the Roman mission to evangelize the pagan Anglo-Saxons.
- Augustine and a company of monks arrived in Kent where they were received by the pagan king Ethelbert because he had married a Christian wife, Queen Bertha from Tours.



- Queen Bertha was allowed to bring her own chaplain with her and she worshipped in an ancient burial chapel built in the 300s by the Roman Christians before they left Britain.
- Augustine and the other monks expanded this ancient chapel and St. Martin's Church in Canterbury became the cradle of the English Christianity.
- Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury.





- ***St. Martin's Church*** is the oldest Anglican parish in England.
- While praying there, I was ***deeply moved*** to kneel in a place where English Christians have been ***worshipping Our Lord for over 1400 years.***



- It was a reminder that we are part of the ***communion of saints*** that stretches back through the centuries to the first church in Jerusalem.
- There is something powerful about Christians praying together.

- The immediate context of Matthew 18 is the subject of **church discipline**.
- It addresses how Christians are to settle their differences and how the church is to deal decisively with divisive members who refuse to be reconciled with one another.
- The Lord says that if a member of the church sins against another member and refuses to repent and be reconciled, then he is to be **put out of the church**.
- That is strong stuff!
- ***Is it really our place to do that?***

Matthew 18:18

¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

- Then verse 19 begins with a Greek adverb that we translate as “**Again.**”
- It is as if Jesus is saying, you’re amazed at that, well, **here’s something else to be amazed at:**

¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”



God answers believer's prayers
when we pray together.

1. God answers us when we pray together about the stuff of life.

- Jesus is talking about the church's praying together, but he's *not just talking about "church stuff."*
- The word anything here translates the Greek phrase: "**pantos pragmatos.**"
- The New Testament word **pas** means **each, every, all.**
- The word carries the idea of totality, with focus on every individual component.
- **Our Heavenly Father is interested in hearing about anything that believers come together to pray about.**

*Our Father is interested in
anything and everything.*

- The second word in that phrase, *pragma*, means an undertaking, a task, a thing being done or that needs to be done, an action, a matter of business.
- One of the verb forms of *pragma*, *pragmateuomai*, means “to do business, to trade.”
- We get our English word *pragmatic* from it.
- Jesus’ words here are intensely practical.
- He’s talking about *the business of life— all the stuff that needs to get done.*

2. God answers when we pray together.

Matthew 18:20

²⁰ “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

- Jesus said that he is *especially attentive* to prayers that believers pray *when they gather together in his name.*

- It *only takes two believers* to claim this promise!
- He could have said if 200 of you agree or 2,000. But he said two—the *lowest, smallest, possible denominator* about which anybody could agree.
- You *have to at least two for agreement*, and that's all the Lord said you needed to claim the promise.
- Of course, more is better, but it only takes two to enlist the divine help, intervention, strength, wisdom, and success of Almighty God.



- The *power of Pentecost* came upon the church because they were *praying together*.

Acts 1:14, 2:1

¹⁴ All these *with one accord* were devoting themselves to prayer

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, *they were all together in one place*.

3. God answers when we pray in harmony.

Matthew 18:19–20

¹⁹ “Again I say to you, if two of you *agree* on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

ΣΥΜΦΩΝΕΩ

- The Lord does more than just direct us to come together to pray about the same thing.
- The word he uses for **agree** is one of the *strongest, most beautiful* words in the New Testament.
- *Symphōneō* is a compound word from **sun** (*together*) and **phone** (*sound or voice*), which is the root of our English *symphony*.
- It means “**to agree or be in harmony with.**”
- It is used for musical harmony, and also for the fitting together of stones in a building.

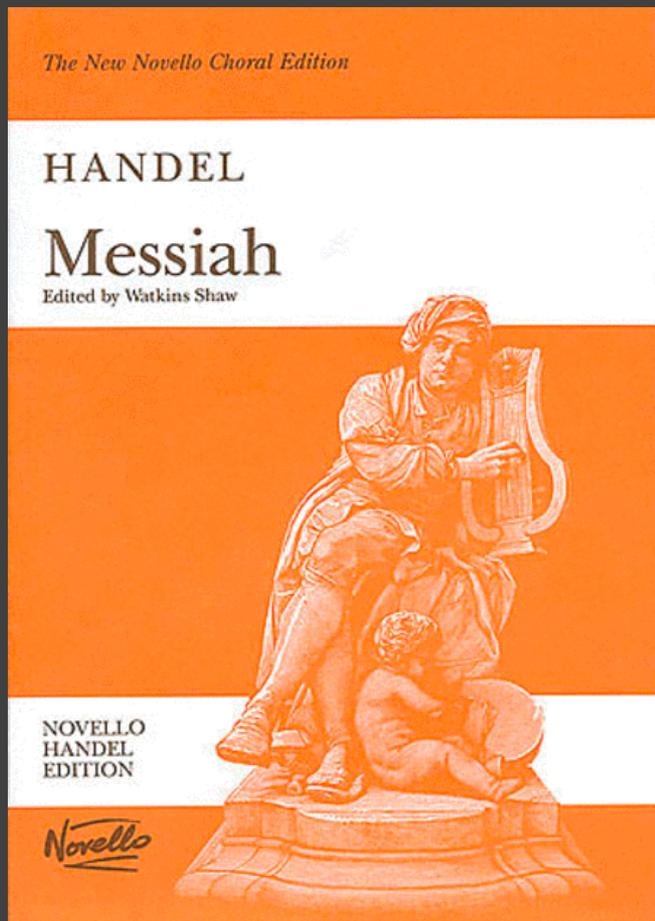
συμφωνέω

- It is used for the fitting together of stones to form a building.



συμφωνέω

- It is also used for musical harmony.



2

for the Selwyn Hills (Chish) High School Combined Chorus

Hallelujah
from *MESSIAH*
for Mixed Chorus (S.A.T.B.) and Organ (opt. Strings^o)

Keyboard Reduction by MIKE CARSON
Choral Parts Edited by JUSTIN BILLS

GEORGE FRIDERIC HÄNDEL

Revelation 11:15, 19:6, 16

Allegro ♩ = 112

f Hal - le-lu-jah,
Hal - le-lu-jah,
Hal - le-lu-jah,
Hal - le-lu-jah,
Hal - le-lu-jah,

I: Full principal chorus → **Mix. f**
II: Full chorus → **Mix. p**

f I (manuals)

Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah,
Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah,
Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah,
Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah,

PERFORMANCE TIME: ca. 3:45 * String parts (3,3,3,2,2) Order No. 20058

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(#00148)

- Symphony orchestra can sometimes have more than 100 musicians playing some of the larger classical works.







The second movement opens with a series of slow chords in the **strings**.



- The **piano** enters, playing a simple *arpeggio*.



Then the **main theme** is introduced by the **flute**, before being developed by an extensive **clarinet solo**.



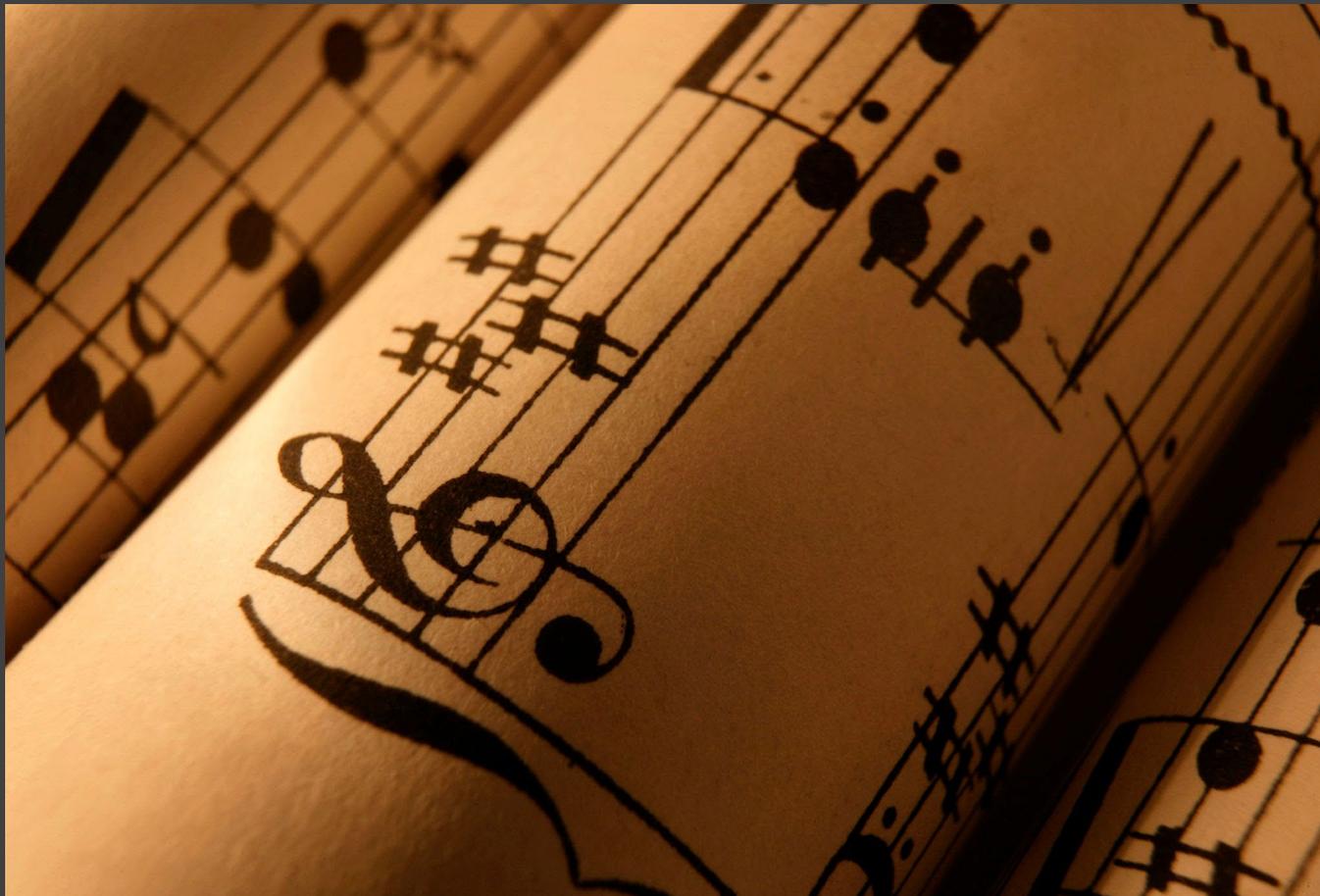


This beautiful motif is passed between **the piano and other soloists** before the music accelerates to a **short climax** centered on the **piano**.



- But my favorite part is the end of the movement when the **original theme** is repeated by the **strings** over these **luscious chords** from the **piano**.
- Sometimes when I hear it, I weep for the sheer beauty of the music.

- It is the most exquisite *harmony*.
- It is συμφωνέω—agreeing.





- Oh, that the church would exhibit such *harmony* that people would weep for the sheer beauty of it.
- That our hearts and minds would be *so united* that people would be stunned when they saw the love that passes between us.

- There is *no place* in the church for *discord* to start with.
- It is the very *opposite* of the *mutual love and harmony* that should mark our *general fellowship* as well as our *prayers*.
- The immediate context of Matthew 18 addresses *how Christians are to settle their differences* and how the church is to deal decisively with divisive members who refuse to be reconciled with one another.

Matthew 18:15–20

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

- We are called to *Christian unity*, called to *mutual love and respect*, called to take a genuine *interest* in the *concerns* of fellow members of our church family.

Philippians 1:27

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in *one spirit*, with *one mind* striving *side by side* for the faith of the gospel.

Philippians 2:1–4

¹ So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the **same mind**, having the **same love**, being in **full accord** and of **one mind**. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, ***so that your prayers may not be hindered.***

Conclusion

- When the church is of *one heart* and *one mind* in Christ, it has *power*.
- And when a church that is of one heart and mind prays together, God hears and answers.

Acts 4:31–33

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. ³² Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³ And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.