



Prayer isn't like going to a vending machine, in fact we often end up with more questions than answers. It often feels like an anti-vending machine! But it is well-worth practicing anyway. Any time we pause with an awareness of being woven deep-down into a bigger reality with God, ourselves and others we are praying. You can't do it wrong. Need some ideas? Here are some "hacks" a few Fabric folks have shared to open up ideas you can try on your own, with a group or family. Want to share your prayer wonderings or join our email Prayer Team? Email [Katy](#).

### **Melissa Lock's Prayer Hacks**

**Just Start Yackin'...**(got that fancy name from Greg Meyer) whether in writing, to myself or out loud I often take a few breaths and just say what's on my mind trusting the power of sharing it beyond myself into a bigger source of strength, acceptance and perspective. "OK, I'm here. I'm not sure what to say...I'm just tired. I have no idea where to start with all this today...I am glad that...I'm feeling bad about how I talked to..."

**Candles...**light a candle as you take a few deep breaths at your table, or in your group. Maybe you light it right after you asked everyone (or yourself) to share something hard you got through and/or something joyful from the day... then simple words while you light the candle - "for all those things, the food, this time...thank you." On busy days it is good when I remember to at least light the candle as people snarf down whatever food we scrape up and whoever is around.

**Back scratch...**While scratching their backs and talking with my kids I think of it as a prayer when I'm paying attention. We talk about the day, things that were hard or good, things we learned or are wondering. Sometimes I say "thank you, amen" to name

**Readings...**We have a few books of short poems, prayers and readings from across traditions and geography that we sometimes have at the table and take turns choosing something from and reading.

### **Katy Kennedy's prayer hacks:**

Melissa wrote this... "Katy, you may not think you have ideas? I feel like when you've invited me on walks it has been a three-stranded experience, I guess we've never called it that but I know you show up with love and a sense of a bigger "us." And I wondered about your walks to and from work...if those are times that ground you. I wondered if you could share anything about typing up/sharing/praying the communication card prayers...or from your family. I hope you will. Others will be glad too."

**Walks/Hikes:** I haven't really thought about my walks by myself or with friends this way before...but I believe that Melissa is right, and I'm going to start thinking about my walks this way (thank you, Melissa!). It *is* a time of grounding for me, and also a time where I notice beauty in the world...physical beauty all around me, and the beauty of my friends. When I walk by myself, I almost always talk out loud...processing all sorts of things (I think I must look crazy to my neighbors). I am also going to start thinking about *talking out loud* as a sort of prayer...or that maybe I'm not the only participant in the conversation.

**Prayer Email:** I send out the prayers to the Prayer Team every week. While I don't necessarily feel like I am praying while typing the prayers...I do feel a lot of care for the people who are praying (maybe this is prayer too?). I feel that it is really important to pray with the staff...this is when I feel most connected to the prayers. It's also a different experience to pray with a group of people, than praying alone.

**Sending Love:** I have come to say "sending love" or "love to you" when someone is suffering. This to me is code for "Prayer" since using the word "Prayer" feels weird to me (unless I'm with people I know aren't weirded out by

the word Prayer), and I don't want to make anyone feel awkward. It also feels bigger to me than "Thinking of You". I typically tie this with saying a prayer in my head.

### **Tip from chaplain, dad and good guy Chris Lillehei:**

Be vulnerable. Ask others to pray with you and for you in the moment. It might be uncomfortable, but I found it one of the best ways to invite all three strands of self, others and God together at once.

### **Group Prayer Hacks**

Practicing different approaches to praying together will draw you closer to God and to each other. Praying in a group is new to most people. The more you do it, the more authentic and significant it will become (unless you get in a rut, of course). Here are some ideas to try...

#### **#1 Just talk**

Tell the group one thing you would like to be prayed about...if you were going to pray. When everyone has had a chance - say "Amen." You all just prayed.

#### **#2 Just talk - continued**

Do the prayer above; have someone write down the prayers and email them to the group the next day for everyone to remember throughout the week.

#### **#3 One word**

Name something you need right now? Calm? Energy? Relief? Share the word and more, if you'd like, to someone sitting next to you. Keep your own or trade words. Go around the circle, each sharing your word or the word you were given.

#### **#4 Notes**

On a small slip of paper, write down something you would like to be remembered this week. Add yours to a pile with the others – everyone who wants to can take one or two and remember it daily.

#### **#5 Pick-up Prayer**

Invite everyone to share a concern they have with the group. Someone in the group agrees to take each one as it is shared – until each prayer shared has been picked up by someone else. Someone starts the prayer, then others share the concern they picked up aloud. Don't worry if people start talking at the same time and if there's a little silence...it will all work out.

#### **#6 Squeeze**

Make a circle, hold hands. Maybe there is a theme of "one word or thing you are thankful for..." Someone starts. When they are done they squeeze the next person's hand. Each person can pray either aloud or silently, then squeeze the next person until it gets back to the beginning. Amen.

**Continue scrolling for Heidi's Prayer Hacks...**

## Heidi's Prayer Hacks:

Some of my most memorable and surprising moments of conversation with God have been through creative and out of the box experiences – and most have them have been shared with Fabric kids and youth! There is something about “hacking” into the right brain that seems to get me to open up and let go of my want to control and that leaves space for God. And...I think Jesus definitely was on to something when he said, “Let the children come to me!” Here are some prayers to try...



**Prayer Tent** – Being still opens us up to the feelings and thoughts that are at our center, and stillness also creates space to listen. Find a way to minimize the external stimulations and distractions. (tents are only one idea) quite your body and breathe. Take turns repeating this Psalm leaving off one word each time you repeat it:

***Be still and know that I am God.*** Psalm 46:10

**Big Questions** – Create a clothes line that you can clip pieces of paper to. Create space each day to devote to the questions you have about yourself, God, or the world around you. These question prayers encourage us to share our open and honest thoughts with God. Getting closer to God involves being real with our thoughts and feelings. We can get stuck holding in our questions, waiting to figure out answers on our own. Psalm 121 reminds us to look up (not to some magical place where God is sitting on a cloud, but to shift the focus off of us and out and open to the bigness of God)

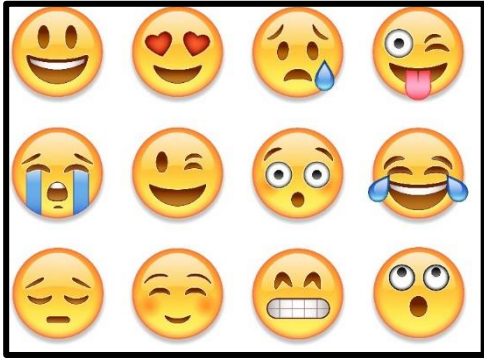


**Parachute Prayers** – Think about things or people you are worried about. Write the people or things you are worried about on a large square of tissue paper. Tie string on the ends and attach to a button or washer at the bottom. Climb on a chair or stand at the top of some stairs. What if your prayer went something like this: ***God, tightly weave us, these people, and you together. Show me what loving, and caring can look like here.*** Release the parachute as a sign of letting go of those worries and trusting God is with us in the midst.

What did you notice about how a parachute works? (Air, something that we can't see is there supporting and surrounding those worries.) God is like that – we can't see God, but like the force of the air pushing against the parachute, God's love surrounds all the things that we worry and care about.

**Prayer Pauses** – Sometimes our biggest obstacle to exploring prayer is the busyness of our day. We get so involved in the *day-to-day* that we simply forget to include conversations with God. What things could act as ‘triggers’ to remind you to pause and include God in your day? How about something as simple as a conversation icon displayed in the places and paths you frequently cross?





**Emoji Prayers:** In H2O Kids we created some fun emoji dice, but emoji's drawn on index cards works too! Roll or draw an emoji, look around, who has a matching emoji? Find someone who rolled the same one and then share with each other a time that they felt that way. When the person is done sharing, the other can respond "May love be with you!" Continue rolling, sharing, and praying for each other. When we open up and share ourselves, with our family or friends that is prayer! God works through all 'strands' of our ROPE!



**Prayer Net:** Remember the story of Jesus calling his first followers? They were a bunch of fishermen that Jesus asked to put down their nets and follow. Jesus challenged them to transform from catching fish to helping people to "catch" God's big vision of love for the world.

Find something to use for a net and cut some pieces of yarn or string into about 8" lengths.

Think of people, places, or situations that could use that big love. When you think of one, take a piece of yarn and tie it onto the net.

**Breath Prayers:** Breath prayers are short prayers said in one breath. Simple, repetitive and surprisingly ancient. The breath prayer generally involves quietly repeating a chosen word phrase for several minutes, allowing the prayer to take on the shape of one's breathing so that the words accompany every breath.

Breath prayers are brief, simple expressions of the longings of the heart. The idea is to pick a meaningful word or phrase and repeat it until it becomes a part of your being.

Breath prayers can be helpful when you just don't know what to pray, and simply asks for a closeness with God. One example of phrases you could use with a breath prayer are:

***Live peace, love peace, share peace, be peace.***

Think about the word peace. What does it feel like? When have they felt it? How do we help others feel peace? When is peace hard?

Breathe in as you say, "Live peace" breathe out while you say, "love peace" and so on. Repeat a few times. Other words that could be breath prayers (love, joy, prayer)

One fun way to see your breath prayer is to use a pinwheel!







## Prayer Flags

Prayer flags can be seen flying all over the world as a visual display of a community's prayers. Different cultures and religions might use different colors or symbols to convey meaning, and as they flap in the wind, prayers are being spread out into the world. A community's prayers are held together as one through the rope they are attached to.

Draw your prayer for peace and healing on a piece of material or paper. Tape or clip your prayers to a piece of rope or string.

## Play Dough Prayers

Think about what it feels like to be sad or like you are alone. What has made you feel better? Was there someone who listened or did something kind, or invited you? I wonder if that is like light? I wonder how God creates light?

Take some play dough and shape it into candles and flames as you think of people you know who need prayers of light.



## Button Prayers

Give everyone a button and lead them through the following:

Feel the hardness of the button and think about people who are going through hard times. Ask God to help them.

Buttons are used to fasten clothes together. Ask God to bring together people who have fallen out and moved apart from each other. Pray that He will bring peace.

Look at your button and see how many holes it has. Think of that number of things you would like to say thank you to God for and say Thank you for families and our communities.

Look at the color of the button and say thank you to God for something that is that color

Find someone who has the same color button as you. You might want to make a small group of people with the same color. Say thank you to God for families. Ask God to bless them and help them to live together and to love each other.

Find someone who has a different button to you- it could be different in shape, size or color. Thank God for making everyone different and giving us all different gifts. Pray for the person you have found. Ask Them what they would like God to help them with.





## Zipper Prayers

Think of places in our lives and world where there is disagreement. We have all experienced arguing!

As you think of those different “sides”, zip up the zipper and pray that God will help us to see possibility and peace in these spaces.

## Bubble Wrap Prayers



Holding in our worries can feel pretty bad – we feel it in our tummies, heads, and shoulders. Our bodies feel our worry when we try to sleep, eat, and in how we get along with others. God has promised to be with us always, and that means when we feel worried or feel afraid.

Take a square of bubble wrap and name the things you feel worry about. Pop a bubble as a sign that you have released that worry and are weaving God and others in with you in those worries.

## Hope Blossoms



Take the flower cut out. On the inside of the blossom, write or draw something that feels stuck or needs a change. Fold the pedals in to the center, overlapping as you go.

Jesus described aligning with God's big vision of love as being like water that is living and bubbling over. As you set your prayers in the water (gently, as not to get water on the top) watch as the blossom slowly opens. May we be open to new ways for the places we feel stuck.

## Sticks of Thanks



One of the things that we can include in our prayers is the things that we feel grateful for. Each of the sticks is a different color and on one side has an idea of a place to look for gratefulness.

Choose one of the sticks and either think of something you are thankful for that matches the color of the stick or use the word prompt to help you notice where you feel grateful. How many different ways can you express thanks?

## Skittle Prayers



Who are the people or places that need love or help? Let each person in your family take a Skittles candy and name one place as they set the candy in a saucer or dish. Gently pour hot water onto the plate. Now wait and watch as the colors and your prayers mix and grow.

Prayers are a way of joining with God and asking to have an effect on the world and situations around us. Prayer has a way of helping us to be open to seeing ourselves, God, or the world in new ways.

## Rocket Prayers



First, write and draw their prayers on a small slip of paper (about the size of an average till receipt). Next, roll the paper tightly round a straw (the long straight part rather than the bendy part!) and secure it with sellotape. Fold the top of the paper over and secure it with some more sellotape. The paper will now have made a sealed pocket around the top of the straw

Do a count down and blow hard into the straw sending your prayers flying! Air has amazing power even though we can't see it! I wonder if prayer can be like that?

## Pipe Cleaner Prayers



1. **Shape the pipe cleaner** into an initial or a shape that stands for one of your friends. Hold the shape and tell God how your friend might need His help. Ask God to bless them.
2. **Screw the pipe cleaner up.** Think about people in the world who live in confusion and don't understand what is happening to them- people who live in war-torn areas, who have to leave their homes, who don't know where they will get their next meal. Hold the shape and ask God to help them.
3. **Link your pipe cleaner** with someone else's. Think about people who are lonely- those who have no friends, family or support around them. Ask God to send them people who will be their friends.
4. **Loop the pipe cleaner** around your wrist. Think about when God has been with you this week. Where have you seen God's big vision of love at work? If you have any prayers, ask God now. Thank God for always being with us and caring for us. Wear the pipe cleaner around your wrist as a reminder of God being with you