

Tips for Holding Virtual Meetings

Although your small group can't meet in person at this point, it's important to stay connected. *Social distancing* is the current phrase, but it's better to think of it as social connection during a season of physical distancing.

This is a good time to consider a virtual meeting. Many people are using Zoom, a free web-based videoconferencing platform that you'll find at <https://www.zoom.us/>. It can be used across devices—laptops, mobile devices, and desktop computers. Zoom is offering extra training resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can learn more [here](#).

Here are a few more key links to the Zoom site:

- How do I host a video meeting? <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362613-How-Do-I-Host-A-Video-Meeting->
- How do I invite others to join a video meeting? <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362183-How-do-I-invite-others-to-join-a-meeting->
- Best practices and resources: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/209743263-Meeting-and-Webinar-Best-Practices-and-Resources>

Other virtual meeting options include Google Hangouts, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams.

Once you pick a platform, you may want to try it with just a few people to get comfortable with how it works before you hold your first group meeting. If you're using a video curriculum, ask group members to watch the video prior to the meeting.

Tips for Meeting Participants

- Think about your background. Whenever possible, try sitting with your back to a wall rather than a window that gives harsh lighting to your video.
- Sign in early to make sure your connection, video, and audio are working properly before the meeting begins.
- As soon as you enter the meeting, *be sure to mute your audio and leave it muted until you are ready to speak*. That improves the overall sound quality and helps eliminate distractions (someone talking in the background, doorbell, etc.).
- Remember that other people in the group can see you, along with whatever is happening in the background. If you need to step away from your device, mute your video.
- Keep your eyes on the camera and give the person speaking your full attention. (The exception would be when someone is praying. It's OK to close your eyes then.)
- Just as you would in an in-person meeting, avoid the urge to check your email or phone while listening. And pray, together just as you normally would—it's as important as ever!