

Best Practices for Virtual Groups

***24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
Hebrews 10:24-25***

While Scripture calls us to value meeting together in community, it never tells exactly *how* to meet together. The good news is technology can help us stay connected even when we can't be together physically. It can take some practice to not feel awkward when we meet on-line so below are the 10 top best practices¹ of hosting or participating in a virtual group.

- 1. Download Zoom ahead of time:**
 - At least 30 minutes early to troubleshoot tech issues.
- 2. Lighting Matters:**
 - Lighting works best in front of your face not behind.
- 3. Center your Video Camera on your face:**
 - That way your friends aren't staring at your forehead or neck 🙄
- 4. Select a quiet room or location:**
 - Make sure your kids are occupied, put your pets away, turn off background noise.
- 5. Use only one device per household:**
 - If you don't, it produces feedback that affects the group.
- 6. Mute your computer unless you're talking:**
 - This reduces feedback and improves sound quality for everyone.
- 7. Follow your host's lead:**
 - Host should jump on the call a few minutes early to welcome everyone.
 - Host needs to be welcoming and in charge. Redirect conversation, mute as necessary, help everyone participate.
 - In general, host should talk 30% of time, listen 70% of time.
- 8. Create a plan for participants to indicate they'd like to talk.**
 - Help them know when to mute, unmute.
 - Try different things to make the conversation feel as natural as possible—try raising a hand or another signal, answering in a specific order
 - Utilize chat feature to post questions for discussion
- 9. Actively Listen and Don't Multi-Task:**
 - Digital eye-contact and heads nods go a long way.
- 10. Stay in touch afterwards:**
 - Find ways to encourage each other outside the group (text, Group Me, Slack, etc)

¹ List adapted from an [article](#) by Chris Surratt in Lifeway Christian resources. You can also find a funny video of what to do and what not to do [here](#).