



CCIW GROUPS & DISCIPLESHIP

How to Host Your Group Online

We're so grateful to the Lord for each of you and for the church during these unusual and uncertain days. None of us could have predicted the situation in which we find ourselves, but we know that God is in control. We also know that the church is more than buildings and programs. The church is God's people—all of us, redeemed and adopted into his family. While it's best and right for us to meet in person, during events like these, I'm grateful that we live in a time and place where technology allows us to not forsake meeting together. (Hebrews 10:25)

As we follow the recommendations given to us by the CDC and other government officials (1 Peter 2:13) and pause all our in-person group meetings, that doesn't mean we can't connect. Now is the time your group can gather in a unique way to keep the gift of community moving forward.

Groups meeting online is nothing new. Many of you have been doing this for work, school, family and social activities for years. Now is the time for everyone else to catch up. The good news is that IT'S EASY! You just need [a few simple tools](#), a little bit of patience and a willingness to give it a try. You'll be up and running in no time. Who knew social distancing and technology could be part of your sanctification?

Below, you'll find a list of recommended online group platforms. Followed by instructions on how to use them, as well as a few details that will allow you to make the best choice for your group. We've also included a few tips for moderating your discussion so that everyone will have the best experience possible.

Many of our groups are already using these tools and enjoying times of fellowship, Bible study and prayer. Feel free to continue using whatever study options your group is using. If you need something new, we have options. If you're not currently in a group and are interested in joining or starting one, please let us know. We want to help you, not just to avoid isolation, but to enjoy growth in your relationship with Jesus and your church family during these days.

Questions? Please contact your ministry leader. We're here to assist you!

**Thank you to Wheaton Bible Church for producing much of the content being used in this document!*

TECHNOLOGY

(jump to [Best Practices](#) if you have already chosen an online meeting tool)

zoom ZOOM

- **Pros:** Free. Only hosts are required to have a Zoom account. There is a phone-in option.
- **Cons:** 40-minute limit per meeting without a paid account (~\$15/mo). Host can “restart” meeting by sending out new invite link or scheduling consecutive meetings. **Have to download Zoom application to phone or computer to join.**
- **Capacity: 100 participants**
- **How to Use:**
 - o Open Zoom in a [web browser](#) or [mobile app](#) ([apple device](#), [android device](#), [chrome web browser extension](#))
 - o Log in
 - o Click “Host a meeting with video on”
 - o Click “Invite participations”
 - » Select how you’d like to send an invite:
 - Default Email, Gmail, Yahoo to send email invite
 - or “copy URL”, “Copy Invitation” to copy a link and send it via a text message, email, Facebook message, etc.
 - » You can also schedule a meeting on the Zoom website and send an invite to join you at a specific time, including a link to your online meeting. ([See Instructions](#))
 - o [Watch tutorial videos in Zoom video library.](#)



JITSI MEET

- **Pros:** Free. Easy meeting setup and join. No Account required.
- **Cons:** Must use [Google Chrome browser](#) or download [jitsi mobile app](#). (Safari and Firefox web browsers aren’t supported)
- **Capacity: No restrictions. No time limits.**
- **How To Use:**
 - o [Open the start meeting web page](#) in Chrome or the [mobile app](#)
 - o Enter in a room name i.e. “CCIWTest” and click Go/Create/Join
 - o Give permission for Jitsi to use your mic and webcam/camera
 - o Send individuals an invite link via text/email to join the meeting i.e. <https://meet.jit.si/CCIWTest>
 - o Jitsi rooms are always open and can be joined by anyone unless you create a password
 - o [Watch 5-minute tutorial.](#)

TECHNOLOGY



GOOGLE HANGOUTS

- **Pros:** Free. Unlimited time. Closed Captioning. Accessible via web browser on computer.
- **Cons: Requires a Google account for all participants.** (sign up for one [HERE](#)). **Phone-in option not available unless you have a [G Suite business account](#)**, G Suite accounts are free until July 1.)
- **Capacity:** 25 Participants
- **How to use:**
 - Open Google Hangouts in [web browser](#) or mobile app ([Apple device](#), [Android device](#), [Chrome web browser extension](#))
 - Log in
 - Click "Video Call" button
 - Click "Invite People" and type in their email address (If they don't have a Google account it will send them an invite to set-up an account)
 - [Watch 6 minute YouTube tutorial.](#)



BEST PRACTICES

1. Recommend everyone in your group download the application before you meet.

- Remember to enable the camera and microphone.
It may make you self-conscious at first to see yourself, but your group wants to see your smiling face and be able to read your non-verbal communication.
- Try out the application before your meeting time to get familiar with it.
- Consider using headphones with a microphone to keep everything as clear as possible.

2. Have the right light.

- Lighting works best in front of your face, not behind.
- Use a window behind the camera or a lamp.

3. Make sure your face is centered in the camera.

- People don't want to see your forehead, neck or feet.
- Position the camera eye level or slightly above.
- If you are using a mobile device, set it up on a desk instead of holding it for the entire meeting time.

4. Select the quietest room/location you can find.

- Turn off anything making noise in the background (TV, radio, appliances).
- Put pets in a different room or have them in a place where they will be most quiet.
- Put a movie on for the kids in another room but know they might interrupt and that's ok.
- Minimize interruptions just like you would for an in-person meeting, but normalize them when they do happen.

5. Only use one device per household per meeting.

- When two devices are used in one location it produces feedback.

6. Mute your computer unless you're talking.

- If everyone's microphone is turned on at the same time, the sound quality can be an issue and it can be hard to hear the person who is talking. Mute yourself when you are not talking. (Zoom will allow the host to mute and unmute participants) (with permission)
- If you are muted, make sure to nod your head and listen well so people can recognize you are following them.
- You will be muting and unmuting A LOT.
- You'll get called out if you don't unmute, so don't be offended. Laugh it off.



BEST PRACTICES

7. Be an assertive leader.

- The leader/host of the group will need to be welcoming and in charge. Make sure as the online host you jump on a few minutes early to welcome everyone.
- Redirect the conversation or mute participants as necessary. This may feel rude, but is necessary to manage a good online experience.
- Remember, as always, good leaders talk 20% of the time and listen 80% of the time.

8. Create a plan for participants to indicate they'd like to talk.

- You may try something like raising a hand, answering in a specific order or another signal.
- Since participants will often be muted, having a plan will help you know when to mute and unmute.
- Be gracious with yourself and others when you accidentally speak over one another. This will happen occasionally. Just laugh and move on.

9. Give your full attention, don't multitask.

- When participants are not paying full attention, it can be a big distraction online, just like an in-person group.
- When talking, spend some time looking at the camera, not just the screen.
- Think about your actions on camera. Always remember that everyone can see you. Someone is watching as you yawn, stretch, or wander around the room. These exaggerated movements are distracting.
- Don't allow technology to lead you to other places while you're on with your group. Consider turning on the Do Not Disturb function on your device to diminish distractions.

10. Stay in touch afterwards.

- Consider assigning prayer partners to call/text each other after your gathering is over and pray together.
- Leverage [GroupMe](#), [Facebook Groups](#), [WhatsApp](#), etc. as a place to stay connected and keep the conversation going throughout the week.