

Online Small Group and Zoom Tips

1. Tips For The Hosting and Etiquette Side of Things:

Over Communicate to Your Roster

- When people first sign up, send them a welcome email
- The week or weekend before your first meeting, resend a welcome and reminder of your details
- On the day of your first meeting, resend another email reminder that you are starting tonight.
 - o For all three emails, include your contact info, meeting days/times, and the zoom link

Prepare in advance

- Have your hosting notes ready, and go over them, well in advance of the meeting
- If possible, watch the group videos in advance of the meeting so you can understand the content
- Understand the itinerary and flow of the meeting ahead of time
- If you think you will have more than 16 zoom squares joining you, you will want to use breakout rooms
 - o Note: A couple in one zoom square counts as one person, since one usually does the talking for both.
 - o Expect 8-15 zoom squares per breakout room
 - o You, and your co-host will be the first two discussion leaders
 - o If you need more, try to appoint skilled veteran Eastsiders, from your roster, ahead of time
- If you appoint discussion leaders, make sure to share discussion questions and content with them ahead of time.

Value the relationships as much as the content

- Start your meeting with warm introductions and a little fun
- Be flexible with people as needs or difficult questions come up
- End with prayer, naming individuals if they shared something needing prayer

At Your First Meeting

- Communicate your roles to everyone: Host, Tech, Discussion Leads (If you need or have them)
- Set the tone for everyone: this is a time to have fun, connect, and grow in our faith
- Inform everyone of the topic and flow of the evening before diving in: Discussions, Videos, Breakouts

2. Tips for The Admin Side of Things:

A few days before your zoom meeting

- Make sure your internet connection is working and strong
- Make sure you have a zoom account that can handle more people than you expect, for more than an hour
- Go through the settings on your zoom account to verify they are appropriate for this group meeting

On the Day of your first meeting: Before your zoom meeting

- Make sure that you have a clean, appropriate background, or use an appropriate virtual background
- Adjust your camera so that it looks slightly down towards you. Otherwise people will be looking up your nostrils.
- Make sure you have good lighting, and that your face isn't shadowed.
 - o Try not to have a window or light source behind you or to one side of you
- Test your audio (Mic and Speakers) and video settings ahead of time to make sure they look and sound great
- Test share your video to other devices to make sure it works the way you expect it to
- Consider wearing headphones or earbuds so that speaker volume doesn't feedback into your microphone
- Try to remove/minimize potential distractions: Fan noise, Loud TV's, Animals, etc.
- Setup your physical and digital meeting space so that its clean, clear and comfortable for you
- Grab your drinks and snacks and have them at the ready
- Meet with your tech/co-hosts fifteen (15) minutes before the meeting to re-test video sharing and pray.
- Make sure you give your co-host, the zoom co-host privileges they need: [Here's how to do that](#)

During your zoom meeting

- Look into the camera when talking instead of looking at yourself or down at notes
- If you rely on notes, situate the notes just under your camera as you read, so you're still making eye contact.
- If you use a waiting room for this zoom meeting, make sure you keep checking it throughout your meeting
- Address disruptions in a kind way, if they come up
- Host and Co-Host work together. Host lead the meeting, while the co-host manage the zoom....
 - o Muting people who aren't talking
 - o Monitoring the waiting room to allow late arrivals in
 - o Removing people if they are intentionally distracting and disrespecting the space
 - o Monitoring the chat and replying to chat
 - o Sharing videos when it's time to share
 - o Launching breakout rooms if/when needed etc.

After your zoom meeting

- Dismiss everyone, then stick around for questions or dialogue as people lead

3. Tips for the most crucial aspects of your Zoom Meeting – Mainly handled by the Co-Host or Zoom tech

While the zoom meeting is up, if you're zooming from a computer, you should see menu buttons on the bottom of the zoom screen. Here are the buttons we want to utilize during our zoom group meetings: **Security / Participants / Chat / Share Screen / Breakout Rooms**

Regarding the "Security" Button

- Make sure the following are SELECTED
 - o Enable Waiting Room
 - o Chat
 - o Rename Themselves
 - o Unmute Themselves
- Make sure the following are NOT SELECTED
 - o Lock Meeting
 - o Hide Profile Pictures
 - o Share Screen
 - o Start Video
 - o Share Whiteboards
 - o Suspend Participant Activities

Regarding the "Participants" Button

- Click the button to see the participants window
- The Co-Host overseeing the zoom tech, should always have this Participants window open to avoid a scenario where someone is lingering in the waiting room for minutes on end.
- The bottom of this window has a "three dots" menu button. Open that menu, and make sure to select "Play Sound When Someone Joins or Leaves". That way, you get a sound notification in case you don't see them. You may need to select this every time your group meets
- The participants window will also allow you to easily see who is muted and un-muted. And allows you to mute people easily.
- It's a good habit to always mute folks when they aren't currently talking.

Regarding the "Chat" Button

- Click the button to see the chat window
- The Host and the Co-Host, should always have this window open. You need to be able to see chat responses, questions and comments to the things you are currently sharing or talking about.
- Hosts can make their own judgement call, on whether or not to verbally acknowledge any chats that appear while they are presenting.

- But the Co-Host should always assume responsibility for replying and acknowledging (in chat) to comments and questions that come up.
- While in chat, the co-host can choose to send messages to “Everyone” or private message people individually if needed, using the blue pull down button in the chat window.

Regarding the “Breakout Rooms” Button

- If you have 16 or more zoom squares, you will want to alternate between large group and small group discussion times. Groups with 8-15 zoom squares is the ideal size for discussions that leave you wanting more.
- Anything less, and you could run into awkward silence with a group of people wanting less time together!
- **Note:** A couple on one zoom square counts as one person since one usually talks for both.
- Use the breakout rooms button to setup the groups. The Cohost is responsible for setting these up.
- When you click the breakout rooms button, a “group creation” window appears.
 - o Select the number of breakout rooms you will need.
 - 0-15 Zoom Squares = Zero Groups needed (You won’t leave the main room)
 - 16-30 Zoom Squares = 2 Groups Needed
 - 31-45 = 3 Groups Needed
 - 46-60 = 4 Groups Needed
 - 61-75 = 5 Groups Needed
 - 76-90 = 6 Groups Needed
 - 91-105 = 7 Groups Needed
 - o SELECT: “assign automatically”
 - o Then hit the “Create” button.
 - o NOTE: Creating the groups is not sending people to groups. You will send people to groups later.
- After groups have been created and people assigned...
 - o You can manually move/assign your discussion leaders to the correct room’s
 - o Then add or adjust participants as needed
- Once groups have been created you now need to adjust the “Options”
 - o Click the blue “Options” button at the bottom of the groups window
 - o Make sure to SELECT the following
 - Select: Automatically move all assigned participants into breakout rooms
 - Select: Breakout rooms close automatically after ____ minutes.
 - Add the amount of minutes....
 - Good Rule of thumb: 1-2 min per zoom square in the group, or less based on itinerary
 - If your groups has 10 zoom squares, then select 10-20min.
 - o Make sure to UNSELECT the following
 - Unselect: Allow participants to choose room

- Unselect: Allow participants to return to the main session at any time
- Unselect: Notify me when the time is up (Only needed if you aren't in a group)
- Unselect: Countdown after closing breakout room. (Groups have a timer already)
- When it's time to breakout into groups, you hit the blue "Open All Rooms" button
 - People will automatically be sent to the rooms you created
 - Everyone will see a countdown timer in the upper right hand portion of their screen based on the minutes you entered.
 - When the timer runs out, everyone automatically comes back to the main room

Regarding the "Share Screen" Button

- This is the most important category on this list.
- When it comes time to share a video with the group, the co-host or zoom tech is responsible for doing that.
- There's a zillion ways to show and share a video via zoom, some work great and some don't work well at all.
- Here's my best practice for sharing a screen while trying to be present and lead a seamless group experience
- **Important Note:** The best way to share video is from a file located on your computer. If possible, download these files ahead of time and avoid using videos from the web.

Step 1: Click the share screen button

Step 2: Select the "Advanced" tab at the top the share window.

Step 3: Select the two bubbles at the bottom of the share window that say: **Share Sound / Optimize For Video Clip**

- **Note:** Sharing Sound does not refer to your microphone. It refers to the audio of the video clip.

Step 4: Click the "Portion of Screen" option, then click the blue "Share" button on the bottom right.

- You should now see a green window border on your screen. You can move and resize this window.
- Open your video, size the video window to at least half of your desktop, and then size the green window over it.
 - People will only see what's inside that green window when you share this way.
 - Why share this way? You need to see other things on your screen while sharing. This allows that.
- **Important Note: The size of this green window matters!!!!** If its small, your group members will see a large fuzzy unfocused video, because you're sharing a small window to their full screen. Make sure this green window takes up at least half of our desktop space. And if you have a dual-monitor, then use most of that second monitor for this.
- **Important Note: Your desktop setup is crucial here!** You will want to play around with finding a desktop arrangement that works for you BEFORE your first group meeting. You want half of your desktop dedicated to the green video window. You also want to open the chat window, and the participants window. And maybe have space for your notes too if needed.

- **Important Note:** You can open zoom and share your screen before the meeting to arrange the placement of all these windows. Then stop sharing, and keep the zoom meeting open. When it comes time to actually share the screen again, the windows will all open up in the same place you arranged them ahead of time.
- **Important Note:** Don't let your mouse or other windows cross over into the green window while sharing, it will obstruct the video for those watching.
- **When you share your screen this way.** All of your zoom menu buttons jump to the top of your screen. They may even fade out of view. Scroll your mouse up to see the menu. Then click the Chat and Participants buttons to open those windows again while your sharing your screen.
- **Don't assume your video is off while screen sharing!** You still need to mute your own audio and video after you share your screen. Muting your microphone and camera will not mute the video for those watching.

Step 5: When the video is over, click the red "Stop Share" button to go back to the main room with everyone