

## Suggestions for Using Zoom for Meetings & Worship for Church Leaders

*Anyone who can answer email can connect with others using Zoom. Computers, tablets, smartphones and “dumbphones” can all be used to participate in a Zoom meeting. Here are some suggestions.*

- First, set up your own Zoom Pro account. The cost is \$15 per month, and if you buy a year’s worth, the price drops to \$12 per month. The Pro account provides capacity and flexibility and is worth it. It allows for 100 participants, and it can be expanded for a slight increase in price.
- Zoom works best as a many to many system, that is when everybody is online. Its harder when several people are at one station since they cannot all be seen and heard by all others. If more than one person (two is really max) is at one station, they should sit close enough to the web cam so that facial expressions can be seen. If more than two, have users set up another station (smartphone, laptop, or tablet) in the same room, if they are able.
- Practice! If you are going to hold a meeting or worship with some people who have not used Zoom before, offer several practice session beforehand so people can help them adjust their connection.
- Headsets & Muting – If participants use some kind of a headset, they probably will not need to mute, which allows for freer participation. If they are using speakers, they will need to be muted since ANY background noise is a significant distraction. **Remind people to touch the spacebar** to quickly and easily unmute when they wish to speak. Once they get the hang of this, it works very well.
- Slow Your Normal Pace, Take Time – If you are holding a meeting, open it at least 15 minutes ahead and encourage people to join early. Take time to make sure each person can be seen and hear and feels confident. A sure sign that they do is that they will stop saying “can you hear me?” each time they begin speaking.
- It is best for the leader to host the meeting – This is not true when several people are meeting in one place and others are joining by Zoom, but when everyone is attending by Zoom, the leader needs to be the host. The Host controls muting, can see who joins, can share screen, etc. Hosts need to practice and be familiar with all of the controls head of time.
- Phone Participants – Zoom allows people to phone in. Take time to identify callers and type their names in on their screens. If it is meeting with discussion, always ask if anyone on the phone wants to speak, since they cannot raise a hand.
- Voting – If you meeting requires voting, all members must use the same method. Oral votes, as in an in person meeting, works best. Majorities are as easy to hear as in an in person meeting. If it is not possible to determine a majority, go to a roll call vote. Ballot voting can be done by email, or in writing, but remember proxy voting is never allowed. If votes are going to be mailed in, a meeting code is given to those who were present at the meeting to write on their ballots, since only those at a meeting can vote.
- Worship – Zoom works well for worship if you do not try to exactly duplicate in person worship. Don’t try to “televise” or “webcast” with a camera following several people in a large area—unless you have good video and sound equipment and personnel who know how to channel external video and audio signals through Zoom (its not easy). Instead, each person leading some portion of worship should have their own Zoom station. Everyone can be in a different place, and worship leadership can be shared. The leader can also share items on the screen, like announcements, sermon illustrations, outlines, etc.
- Communion – Participants can assemble their own elements, and hold them up together as the words of institution are spoken. Communion via Zoom is quite meaningful.
- Visual Freeze/Audio Breaks – The host must make sure a very strong WIFI signal is available or connect using a LAN cable. Participants need to be close to their WIFI source. Interruptions are almost always from end user weak WIFI or a poor internet connection.
- Apple Products, especially iPads, seem to work better if the Zoom app is downloaded and used. PC and Android do fine without a special app.