

Best Practices for Online Group Meetings

Mute your microphone when you're not talking

There's nothing more frustrating than hearing that alien echo noise from conflicting microphones. Save everyone from the ear-splitting madness by joining the meeting while on mute!

Unless you live alone, your house is probably pretty noisy these days. Muting your microphone when you're not speaking gives other participants the ability to chime in and share their thoughts without distraction or frustration.

Leave the keyboard alone

Whether you're diligently taking notes or surfing the internet, the sound of your typing is distracting. It's not only distracting everyone else in the meeting, it's also preventing you from devoting your full attention to what other participants are saying.

Dress appropriately

One of the magical things about online group meetings is the freedom to wear anything to your meeting. Still, there's no reason to show participants your PJs and bedhead. The best part of

actually getting ready while meeting with your group online is sticking to a routine, the feeling of actually going somewhere.

Be aware of your surroundings

Be mindful of what people can see in the background. It's hard to focus or take you seriously when there is a pile of dirty clothes in the corner behind you.

Create your meeting space so that you face a window or are exposed to plenty of light. And make sure your background is appropriate!

Stay seated and stay present

It may be tempting to get up for a snack and beverage or carry on a side conversation during the meeting, but don't do it! You might miss out on key information or an opportunity to give input. If you're using your webcam, use attentive body language: sit up straight, don't make big extraneous movements, and don't let your eyes wander too much.

If you're the meeting facilitator

Before the call, send a meeting request with an attached agenda to all attendees describing the purpose of the call, and any pre-read information. This will give participants the opportunity to be ready.

It's also a good idea to set roles before beginning your call. Ask someone to take notes, have another person read the Bible

passage, and assign a timekeeper. As a follow-up you can share notes with everyone.

Start on time! Start promptly out of respect for attendees' time. When latecomers join, don't repeat what you've already covered. Instead, catch them up later after the call. Be conscious of your end time as well.

As the main facilitator you will need to keep focused to deliver your information, ask questions, and give participants a chance to ask and answer questions.

To keep on task and on time you may consider setting up a pray request email. Send all you group members an email prior to your meeting asking for prayer request, this will give everyone time to pray for each other.

Show your appreciation for everyone by saying thank you for participating. End your meeting with a quick recap and pray for everyone.

Your Lake Church staff has group discussion questions available for you to use.

If you're a meeting participant

There's nothing worse than getting invited to a web meeting without any clue what it's about or what questions may be asked of you.

Review in advance any materials sent to you. Be proactive and ask ahead of time about expectations if the organizer of the call

hasn't provided upfront information. You want to be as prepared as possible.

Meeting manners don't go away just because you aren't physically present with the other participants. Put the golden rule to work here: do unto other online meeting attendees, as you would have them do in your meetings.

Ask the meeting facilitator if there is anything you can help with, volunteering to help is always appreciated!

Be ready, be prepared, and participate.