

HOW TO HOST A DIGITAL GROUP

Chase Oaks Church

Welcome

New to hosting a group online? **Don't worry, we've got you covered.**

This **quick guide** will present an overview of meeting online as a group: how to get started, a sample meeting, and some best practices. There are great **tools** and **resources** available to help people connect relationally even when they're not physically meeting in the same location.

But first, we want to say **thanks**. We know many of you are new to this, and it may feel awkward at first. However, we believe God will use you in a big way to help people connect during a challenging and isolating time.

What We're Here To Do

The Big Goal:

Create a digital gathering of friends who help each other take next steps in their relationship with Jesus.

Online Group Wins:

- ▶ The group cares for each other. Every person can share an update on how they are doing and what they might need (financial assistance and supplies...and yes, that includes toilet paper!). We don't want anyone falling through the cracks.
- ▶ The group has a helpful and hopeful spiritual conversation that inspires next steps.
- ▶ The group prays together.

Getting Started

1. **Pick Your Platform:** Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, FaceTime, Facebook Video Chat by Messenger.
2. **Contact the Group:** Share day/time of the meeting and login instructions. Send a link to the sermon to let everyone know you'll briefly discuss it when you meet.
3. **Send a Reminder:** Send a reminder one day ahead of the meeting and another one a half hour before you start. Ask everyone to login a few minutes early.
4. **Lead the Way:** Welcome people as they join. Share how you're excited to try this method of meeting together as you learn what works and what needs adjusting.

A Sample Meeting

- ▶ **CONNECT (15-20 Minutes):**
 - ▶ Ask everyone to share an update on how they are doing. Does anyone need any supplies? Is anyone sick, or does anyone have relatives or neighbors who are in need?
 - ▶ Ask an “easy-to-answer” question to get everyone talking. What is one word people would use to describe their mood? What is one new activity people have tried to pass the time during social distancing?
- ▶ **DISCUSS (30-40 Minutes):** Go over the message together. We will be providing weekly sermon discussion guides. Don't feel like you have to ask every question. The goal is to help people process what is happening and how God is working.
- ▶ **PRAY (5 Minutes):** Briefly ask for prayer requests. Have one person pray over all the requests shared.
- ▶ **CLOSE (5 Minutes):** Thank everyone for joining. Invite people to text between meetings (GroupMe is a wonderful tool). Share the plan for the next online group gathering.

Tips, Tricks, and Best Practices

- ▶ **Try it ahead of time:** Recommend group members download the meeting software before the meeting to make sure it works.
- ▶ **Lighting:** It's best to have lighting in front of your face, not behind. People want to be able to see you!
- ▶ **Camera angles matter:** Position yourself close to the camera. Have the camera at eye level or slightly above. People don't want to look up your nose!
- ▶ **Be aware of surrounding noises:** Turn off anything that makes noise in the background (e.g., TV and appliances). Put pets in a different room.
- ▶ **Hit "mute" when you're not speaking:** This will help cut out unnecessary and distracting noises. If everyone's microphone is on at the same time, it can be hard to hear the person speaking. Let everyone know they should be hitting the "mute" and "unmute" button a lot.
- ▶ **Be an assertive moderator:** The moderator should talk 20% and listen 80% of the time. But when talking, it's important to be welcoming and directive. People don't always know when to speak in a video chat. A great moderator knows how to involve everyone throughout the chat.