

Using Zoom for Small Group Virtual meetings

Whatever part of the world you are in, it's likely that because of Coronavirus (COVID-19) your church is (or soon will be) facing restrictions on the number of people gathering for meetings. We've successfully run several of our small groups remotely using Zoom video conferencing, and encourage you to consider it as an option.

One of the ways in which modern technology enables this is through video meetings using your computer, tablet or smartphone. It's easy for anyone with a Wi-Fi connection to join in, and may prove to add that personal contact which is so much part of the covenant community of God gathering together. Several of our small groups have already had great meetings using it.

This guide (and the web page in the footer below) is designed to provide you with both some advice for conducting meetings this way, and second, with a technical guide too. Some of you are already using WhatsApp as a means of communication; this may supplement and provide room for people to speak, communicate with facial expression, and so on.

Video meetings are not the same as face to face meetings

Just as you plan your Small Group meeting (SMG), so you ought to plan your Small Group Virtual meetings (VM).

In a normal SGM no-one is concentrating 100% of the time – they chill and attention wanders between conversations, or they zone out for a few moments. There's room to pause, think and to laugh at (or with) the words, antics or expressions of other people present. So in planning a VM you need to allow space for breaks in concentration, changes of pace and so on. I suggest:

- 15-20 minutes then change the pace by introducing something different
- Quiet spells to allow people to read a passage or to consider answers to questions
- Short breaks*
- Permission to do weird movements to relax – head – neck – shoulders - core
- It's OK to eat and drink – in fact, you could make it 'mandatory' that people have a cuppa with them as they would at a normal meeting.
- Allowing people to pray out loud together (Zoom will even allow you to split the group into smaller meeting groups within the meeting)

Why use Zoom?

Basic	Pro
Personal Meeting	Great for Small Teams
Free	£11.99 /mo/host
Sign up, It's Free	Buy Now
Host up to 100 participants	All Basic features +
Unlimited 1 to 1 meetings	Includes 100 participants Need more participants?
40 mins limit on group meetings	Meeting duration limit is 24 hrs
Unlimited number of meetings	User management
Online support	Admin feature controls
- Video Conferencing Features	Reporting
HD video	Custom Personal Meeting ID
HD voice	Assign scheduler
Active speaker view	1GB of MP4 or M4A cloud recording
Full screen and gallery view	REST API
Simultaneous Screen Share	Skype for Business (Lync) interoperability
Join by telephone call-in	+ Optional Add-on Plans
Virtual Background	
- Web Conferencing Features	
Desktop and application sharing	
Personal room or meeting ID	
Instant or scheduled meetings	
Chrome & Outlook plug-ins	
Scheduling w/ Chrome Extensions	
MP4 or M4A local recording	
Private and group chat	
Host controls	
Raise hand	
- Group Collaboration Features	
Breakout Rooms	
Mac, Windows, Linux, iOS and Android	
Group messaging and presence	
Screen share any iPad/iPhone app	
Co-annotation on shared screen	
Keyboard/mouse control	
Whiteboarding	
Multi-share	
- Security	
Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption	
AES 256 bits encryption	

It's free and easy to use. Zoom is widely used by workers all over the world. Even the Basic (free) version has many features.

You can create an account and sign up to the Basic package at <https://www.zoom.us/>

There will be a prompt to download the Zoom App to your computer

Once you have done this, feel free to book a 30 minute Zoom meeting with me using this link

<https://calendly.com/ian-pwd/30-minute-zoom-for-churches>. This will create a Zoom meeting and invite us both, so that I can talk you through what you can do, and how to set up a meeting. If I get overwhelmed by the response, I'll shift to group meetings and will advertise them on the web link in the footer below.

If you don't have a laptop or desktop computer, download the Zoom app following **Installing Zoom on Tablet or Phone** below then contact me in the same way.

If you can work out for yourself how to change settings, once you've created your account go to Admin>Account Settings and play with them.

Be sure to **Enable Join Before Host** and also **Enable Waiting Room**. That way people can't jump into a conversation before you are ready.

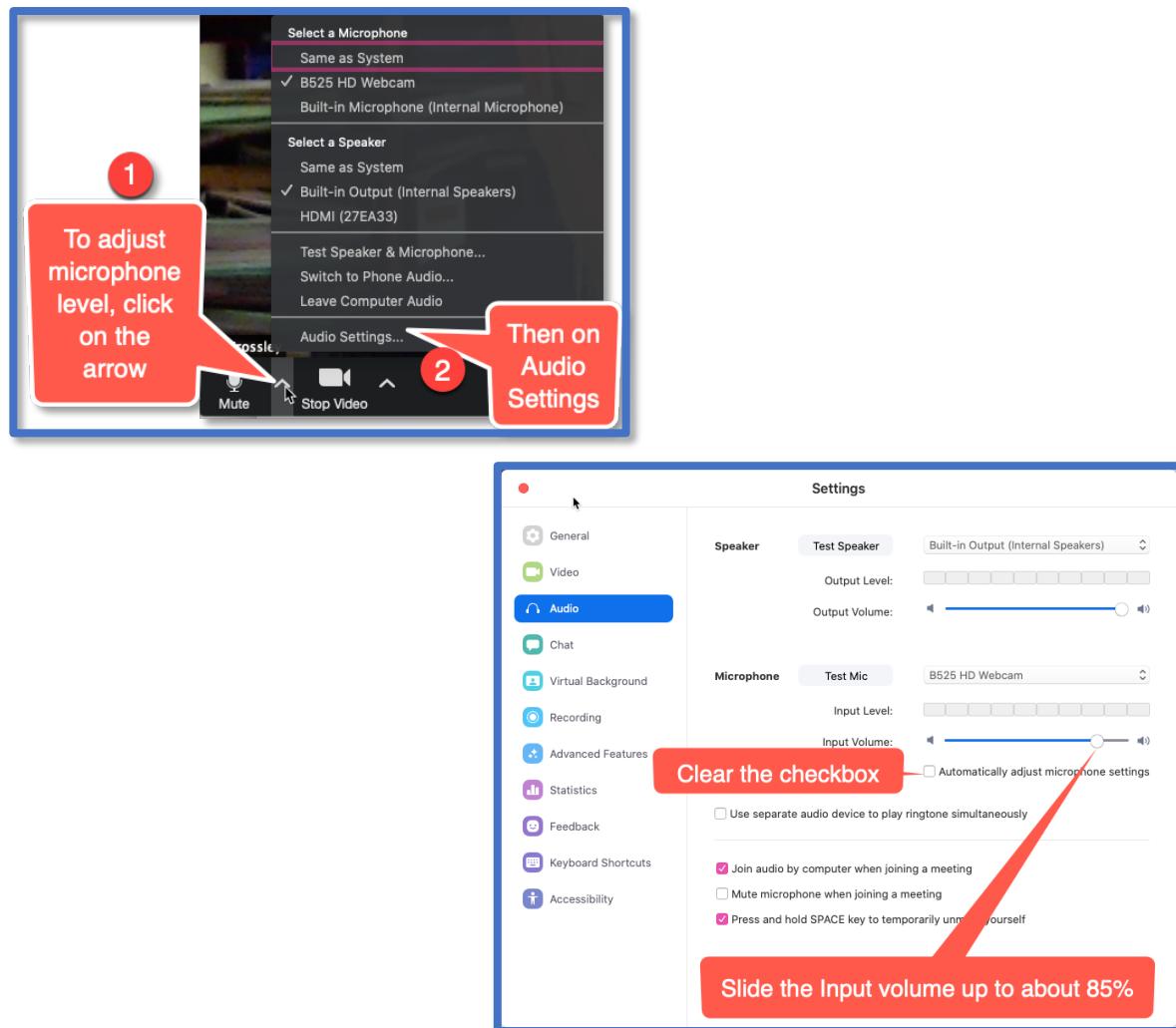
Some Tips for leaders (I can demonstrate these if you wish)

1. The Basic (free) version of Zoom allows meetings to be no more than 40 minutes long. ***For the moment, in response to COVID-19, Zoom at first appeared to have waived this***, despite the web portal saying otherwise. But because of demand, they may have re-introduced the 40 minute time limit. If the 40 minute limit does apply, when setting up your Small Group, my first instinct would be to, say, create two (or even 3) back to back meetings with a 5 min gap between them. Then as one ends, give people an opportunity for a leg stretch, a loo break, to make a cuppa, or to read a passage quietly and come back with some answers.
2. You can make the meeting(s) recurring, e.g. 'Every Wednesday evening for 12 weeks' so that you don't have to keep creating meetings each week.
3. If you use your personal ID number as the link, the Meeting ID is the same for everyone, every week.
4. When you have set up and saved a meeting, you should see a link '**Copy the invitation**'. Select this, and then paste the invitation into an email to all of your group members.

5. Consider using Breakout Rooms This will allow you or the host to assign people to chat together in smaller groups – e.g. let's say groups of three people can pray together by creating several breakout rooms.
 - a. Watch the video <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Getting-Started-with-Video-Breakout-Rooms>
6. Once you've commenced a meeting, you can enable another person as co-host. Do an internet search for **Zoom Co Host** to find out more.
7. If there is too much background noise from one person (e.g. dog barking) you can select Participants, and then mute either an individual, or mute all. You may have to show them how to unmute themselves.
8. Finally, there is lots of Zoom help available, including videos to show you how to use it well. You'll get better by practising with it.

Adjusting microphone levels

In my experience, the default settings for Zoom microphone levels are too low. Once in a meeting (even the test meeting)



Please ensure you can work the audio on your computer / phone and that you will be somewhere where you can talk and listen freely. **If you have a noisy background then please mute your microphone unless you are talking.**

Tip: If you aren't plugged into the mains electricity supply have fully charged phone/tablets/laptops OR a battery pack.

Updates to the generic version of this document will appear on the website in the footer below.