TIPS ON LEADING A ZOOM SMALL GROUP

The main principles for leading a Zoom Small Group are still the same as a Small Group in person:

- Plan and prepare like you usually would
- Create a warm and friendly atmosphere
- Get everyone talking at some point
- Encourage everyone to listen well

In no particular order, here are some specific tips for leading a zoom Small Group though:

- People might feel a bit invisible until you get used to a virtual group and so will be slow to speak up. Encourage them to jump in and speak to the group.
- When you start it can be good to go once around the group quickly, saying hello to each person and getting them to respond. This helps show everyone is part of the group and welcomed.
- You'll need to do far more facilitating than you normally would. 1 way you could do this is to explain that because we're not physically in the same room, our conversation needs to be a bit more turn-based. If someone has something to add, they can come closer to the camera, or raise their hand and the facilitator can bring them into the conversation.
- Help people to participate by directing questions to people more than you would in a physical group. E.g. "Tony, what were your thoughts about that question?" You could warn people that you might be a bit more directive until we get used to things.
- Keep in your head a virtual 'circle' of group members so you can move around the circle to involve everyone at some point.
- Try to look into your camera when you speak rather than your screen, to help promote a connection with the group. Remember that people are looking at you, so keep paying attention, nodding, smiling etc.
- Breakout rooms are super useful. They're a great way to split up into smaller groups within your time together, so it's easier to talk and share in a smaller group. You can split into guys and girls to pray, or break into pairs to answer a question during the bible discussion. You can also easily send a message to the breakout rooms (it's called 'broadcasting') with the question you want people to discuss. [Here's a short video tutorial on how to use breakout rooms](#).
- If your group is reasonably tech-savvy, everyone could mute themselves when they're not speaking, as this helps eliminate annoying background noises.
- Most of us aren't used to ending a virtual meeting, so give guidance here too. Signal to people when formal group time is over and invite them to stay online and chat after like you normally would.
- When people need to leave give them a chance to say bye and for everyone else to say goodbye.
- Invite people to communicate further prayer points, questions and updates on your Facebook Message Group or WhatsApp.

Experiment with ways to be fun and creative! Even though we can't be in the same room, we want to see each other grow to be more like Jesus, love and care for each other, pray together and encourage each other to trust in God. Like Paul:

> "...when we were torn away from you, brothers and sisters, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavoured all the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face" (1 Thess 2:17).

Looking forward to the day we can do that again in person!

saltchurch.