

ZOOM AND SKYPE

Two good options for Bible study groups meeting remotely

Zoom and **Skype** are two popular tools for online meetings. The chart below outlines the features available in the free versions of each application.

	Zoom	Skype
Cost	Free	Free
Plan Name	Basic	Basic
Participants	Up to 100	Up to 50
Meeting Limits	No limit on number of meetings allowed	No limit on number of meetings allowed
Time limit	Meetings limited to 40 minutes each (may be waived at this time)	Meetings cannot exceed 4 hours
Option to participate with audio and video?	Yes	Yes
Option to participate by phone?	Yes	Yes
Screen Sharing	Yes	Yes
Chat	Yes	Yes
Support	Yes	Yes
Download Required	Yes	No download required if using Chrome or Microsoft Edge; Yes , if using other web browsers.
Active Speaker View	Yes	Yes
Website for more info	https://www.zoom.us/home	www.skype.com

Zoom is a popular video meeting application that is used the world-over for meetings and video chat. It is relatively easy to use following the initial download of the application to your computer, which generally takes just a few minutes. Zoom allows all the members of your group to see one another during the meeting (although you do have the option to turn off your video camera if you wish), and it has an automatic Active Speaker View in which the person who is talking will appear foregrounded in a larger picture on everyone's screen. For members of your group who may not have a computer at home, Zoom still allows them to participate through a call-in feature on their phone. The screen-sharing feature allows participants to share material on their own computer screen, which may be useful if you'd like to share a DVD lecture with your group. Zoom also provides excellent support, including video tutorials, help articles, and technical assistance by phone. **The main drawback** of Zoom is the 40-minute time limit on meetings. However, since there is no limit to the number of meetings that can be held, this constraint can be overcome by scheduling a follow-up meeting to continue your discussion if needed.

Follow-up note: Zoom may be waiving the 40-minute time limit during this time.

Skype, like Zoom, is a widely used video conferencing tool which is popular with both businesses and individuals. Skype has many of the same capabilities as Zoom, and the duration of individual meetings is much more generous. **On the downside**, users do report instances of poor picture quality and "freezing" of the video feed. These problems may be associated with poor internet connectivity rather than the product itself, but due to the wide range of internet connections your group members will have, this is worth considering. Some users also indicate that the level of support that Skype offers is not as good as that offered by Zoom.