



How to Be in Community During Shelter-in-Place

During this time of shelter-in-place, community groups are now more important than ever. When you provide opportunities to stay connected, your group members will feel supported and loved. There are lots of ways to keep the connection going, and it doesn't have to be just once a week through online group meetings. Supplementing your weekly meeting with small, but frequent connections is one of the most powerful ways to care for each other, especially given how isolated some people are feeling right now.

Here are four simple steps to keeping your group active and close through online technology.

Step 1: Stay Connected Daily on a Messaging Platform

Maintain a regular communication stream with the people in your group to check-in, share uplifting and funny thoughts, offer support, and share prayer requests. We recommend either setting up a text message group or a Facebook Group. Both are free and widely used by the majority of people. Facebook Groups are designed for building strong relationships online, and they are a very effective method for fostering community among believers. Setting up a Facebook group is super easy and provides most of the tools you need to stay in touch. Learn more about Facebook Groups in this [short video](#). If you set up a Facebook Group, we suggest you make it private. Other alternatives are WhatsApp, GroupMe, and Google Hangouts.

Step 2: Meet Together via Videoconference at Least Once a Week

Identify a videoconferencing platform that works for your group and pick a regular day and time to meet there. We recommend the following FREE versions of these platforms: Zoom, Webex, Skype, Facebook Messenger, or FaceTime.

Platform	Website	How to Use It	Important Notes
Zoom	www.zoom.us	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXnJVFHfLGc&feature=youtu.be	Limited to 40 minutes in free version App required for leaders & participants
Webex	www.webex.com	https://www.webex.com/in/support/getting-started.html	Unlimited minutes in free version App not required for participants
Skype	www.skype.com	https://www.skype.com/	Unlimited minutes in free version

		en/free-conference-call/	App and registration not required (see link to the left)
Facebook Groups and Messenger Group Calls	www.facebook.com	https://about.fb.com/news/2016/12/introducing-group-video-chat-in-messenger/	Unlimited minutes. You can see up to 6 people at a time; 50 people can be on a call.
FaceTime (iPhone, Mac, iPad only)	Use the FaceTime App	https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT209022	Unlimited minutes, but only works on Apple products

Step 3: Decide on What to Study

Sermon Series Community Group Study

Each week Cornerstone offers a study guide based on the sermon series which includes discussion questions and ideas for practical application. The study guide is appropriate for community groups of all types and is designed to complement Daily Steps, Cornerstone's weekly devotional, and Beyond Sunday weekly video discussion. For more tips on how to use the Cornerstone study guide, visit this resource page:

<http://cornerstoneweb.org/community-sermon-series-resources/>

Right Now Media

As a group leader, you also have access to [Right Now Media](#) – an online library that gives you instant access to thousands of Bible study videos! If your group would like to focus on a specific topic, Right Now Media is an amazing resource. You can ask your group members to watch the weekly videos on their own and then get together in a video conference to go through discussion questions. If you don't already have an account with Right Now Media, [here is a link](#) to sign up for free thanks to the Cornerstone subscription.

Step 4: Tips for Online Success

- Set up your video conferencing location so that light is coming toward your face -- not behind you.
- Select a quiet location, reducing other sources of noise, music, pets, etc., as much as possible.
- Ask your group members to use mute and un-mute as needed. Suggest to everyone that they mute themselves when they are not talking, as every sound will be picked up and shared.
- Ask everyone to prepare ahead of time by downloading and/or trying out the meeting platform ahead of time.