E-Conferencing How-To & Basic Etiquette Guide

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E-Conferencing

E-conferencing is really easy! All you need is an internet connection, an electronic device (computer, cellphone or tablet) and the right software app. It provides a way to meet together without being face-to-face. Skype, Zoom, Google Meet and GoToMeeting are a few of the popular e-conferencing apps available. E-conferencing or electronic meeting can also be called video or virtual conferencing and usually includes both voice and visual display.

You will generally only need three things:
1. **An electronic device** (computer, cellphone or tablet) that has a **microphone** and a **camera**. Check your settings to make sure your mic and camera settings are turned on.
2. **A downloaded app**. Best to find out which app your host is using BEFORE the meeting and download it to your device; sometimes you can e-conference directly through your web browser.
3. **An electronic address** (url) for the conference conversation. Your host will email or text this to you before the meeting.

Troubleshooting Tips

- If there is video but no sound, find the mic icon on your screen. Click on it to make sure it is turned on. Or check your computer settings to make sure the sound is turned on or up.
- If there is sound but no video, check your computer settings to ensure your camera is turned on. If it is, you may need to find a location with a stronger Wi-Fi signal, or check with your internet service provider to upgrade your package.

Etiquette

When you e-conferencing, assume all the norms and expectations of a face-to-face meeting apply.

1. **Be prompt**: Join the conversation a few minutes early to ensure everything is working.

2. **Turn off notifications:** adjust your settings so that you can give your full attention to the meeting. It's easy to get distracted by all the beeps and whistles from your device.

3. **Do not multitask:** It is so tempting to check email or to text during an e-conference. Do not succumb to this temptation! Respect the fact that everyone else also has a demanding schedule and yet has given their time to this meeting. Be present, engaged and focused.

4. **Don't interrupt:** This is really important with e-conferencing because there usually is a slight delay as the software shifts from one speaker to another. Interruptions are not easily detected by the one who is speaking and so there is often a noisy over-speak as a result. If you have something to say perhaps give a little wave or type "C" for comment in the text box and then click enter.

5. **Dress appropriately:** Remember this is still a professional meeting so be careful what you wear.

6. **Find a quiet, professional setting**: e-conferencing can take place in a variety of setting, but it is important to establish a quiet space where you won't be interrupted. If there are unavoidable ambient sounds, apologize and then mute your mic so that you do not draw the focus away from the speaker.

7. **Prayer:** At first it might seem awkward to pray while e-conferencing. Covenant with each other to close or avert your eyes away from the screen until the prayer is over with the saying of "Amen". In this way participants can relax and enter into the prayer without feeling like they are being watched.

8. **Be Kind & Caring:** although there is no physical touch with e-conferencing there can still be times of emotional outpouring. As with a face-to-face meeting, it is important to acknowledge feelings and to respond with appropriate pastoral care and support.

Anglican Diocese of Niagara