

# HELPING PEOPLE TO RECOVER

## An Outline for a Simple Zoom Experience

### How do we Process our Experience of the Pandemic?

This is a brief guide to running a Zoom event to help people process their experience of the pandemic. We suggest it runs for between 40 minutes (the maximum time for a non paying Zoom account) to 60 minutes so those who are fatigued by being online through the day feel they could just about manage it. If you are not used to running Zoom meetings check our guides on [how to set yourself up for Zoom](#) and [how to run Zoom meetings](#). See our guide on leading through recovery for a more detailed overview of the process and other resources related to this event.

#### Why Recovery

Recovery is important after an illness, a traumatic event or an unexpected challenge in life. It takes time, often longer than expected, and involves a process of engaging with our emotions, integrating our losses, and embracing our new reality. Healthy recovery includes:

##### REMEMBERING

This includes both thanksgiving and lament. We remember with thanks those who have served and cared for us (frontline staff), the daily blessings we have experienced, the signs of God's grace and presence. We also remember our losses, both of people and things, and lament over the way the world is not as God would want it to be.

##### REFLECTING

This includes reflecting on what we have experienced (the positive and negative), what we have learned through such experiences, and what will we do differently post pandemic.

##### RECUPERATING

This includes what are we looking forward to (for example reconnecting with family and friends), and what will restore us (for example, travelling to some of our favourite places, serving others, playing sport, returning to workplaces, visiting the hairdressers, enjoying coffee shops and restaurants, attending concerts, motor sport, the theatre).

This event is structured around these three aspects of recovery. Obviously recovery is a process and this event is just a part of an ongoing journey. We have tried to give options that could be used for a community event where people who don't attend church are invited, as well as ideas for a church gathering. Use this outline as a starting point and adjust for your context and tradition. Please send your ideas in to us so we can update this guide.

#### Event Outline

##### WELCOME

Welcome people, ideally as they arrive. It helps to open the meeting 10 minutes before the advertised time to do this, and to click the 'mics unmuted as people enter' in the set up. Alternatively you could have some appropriate music playing as people arrive.

Start at the advertised time with a welcome, an introduction of those leading the session, a brief explanation of what is going to happen, and any practicalities that people might need to know.

##### OPENING PRAYER/QUIET

Invite people to be still, quiet, aware of how they are feeling. If appropriate, say an appropriate prayer and read an appropriate verse (for example Psalm 42:1-2).

##### NORMALISE THE EXPERIENCE

Take a few minutes to help people understand the normal range of emotions people experience as part of a crisis like this, perhaps basing your thoughts around a Psalm like [Psalm 42](#).



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**LEAD  
ON**

- Lament, for people lost, jobs lost, loss of hopes and dreams.
- Hope for possible changes to the way we live.
- Anxiety, fear and concern over uncertainties.
- Fatigue due to multiple deprivations, lack of proper holidays.
- Thankfulness for what we have learnt.
- Irritability with others when our circumstances are confined, and when people don't see things as we do.
- Listlessness, struggles with motivation, loss of get up and go.
- And explain recovery is helped by engaging with our emotions, integrating our losses, and embracing our new reality. Three things can help that process:
- Remembering.
- Reflecting.
- Recuperating.

### SPACE FOR REFLECTION

There are two possible ways of doing this below. Take time over this section. If you choose the triplets approach it will need around 20 minutes, five minutes for each person and then time for prayer. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. The first approach is likely to be better if you are running an event open to those outside the church. The second approach is more intimate, but could provide a great space for people to express emotion and feel supported.

**Either** give some space for people to pause and reflect on what their experience has been. Provide them with the following questions to use in this time. Perhaps put on some quiet instrumental music, and introduce each section, giving time for people to process their thoughts and feelings before introducing the next section.



Encourage people to write, draw, doodle, move if that helps.

- **Remember:** who or what have you lost during the pandemic? What do you want to give thanks for from this season?
- **Reflect** on what have you experienced (the positive and negative)? What have you learned through such experiences? What will you do differently post pandemic?
- **Recuperating** What are you looking forward to (for example reconnecting with family and friends)? What will help with your restoration (for example, travelling to some of your favourite places, serving those in need, playing sport, returning to a workplace, visiting the hairdressers, enjoying coffee shops and restaurants, attending concerts, motor sport, the theatre)?

**Or** invite them to go into triplets with two other people using the breakout room feature in Zoom. Post the questions below into the chat feature of Zoom before you go into the breakout rooms and then they can open chat when they get into the breakout room to be reminded of the three questions. Ask the questions below of the first person. Listen carefully to their answers. Then the same questions are asked of the second person, then the third. Someone will need to keep time in each triplet. At the end take a few minutes to pray for one another, either out loud or silently.

- What has been your experience of the pandemic?
- Where has God been in all of that?
- What can we pray for you?

### OFFERING

Gather up everything people have thought, talked about, experienced in an appropriate way.

- Invite people to stand and hold out their hands and to imagine all that they have thought and felt in their hands. Invite them to lift their hands to God and ask for God's help with all they have experienced. Read a suitable verse of Scripture to remind them of God's love, grace and hope.
- Or invite people to take a piece of paper and write a few words or draw a few images that capture something of their thoughts and emotions. Then fold the paper and invite people to write a short prayer on the paper offering all these to God. They can use the prayer over the coming days as part of their regular prayer times.
- Or for a gathering involving people outside church, explain that Christians believe in a God who is present and responds to those who call out to him for help. Then use one of the suggestions below.

Perhaps conclude this by saying the Lord's Prayer together. Or play a song/video, for example [Hold On](#).

## CLOSE

End the meeting. Thank people for coming and make connections for people around next steps they might take, mentioning that of course recovery is a process over time, and this simple experience is just a part on an ongoing journey. For example:

- Place a link in the chat to where they can download one of the 'My Pandemic Experience' guides to continue the process of reflecting at home.
- Let them know who they can contact in the church if they want to talk with someone.
- Suggest the healthcare providers who are available for those who are really struggling.
- Invite people to attend your next service.
- Invite them to attend your enquirers course.

Offer a final prayer. If your account allows you, stick around for further chat with anyone who would like to do that.

## Materials

The following resources are available to give to those who attend the event, to help them think further about their experience of the pandemic, or to encourage them to share with others.

- **[My Pandemic Experience – Church](#)** For congregation members to use in their homes to reflect on their experience of the pandemic.

- **[My Pandemic Experience – Community](#)** For people outside the life of the church to use in their homes to reflect on their experience of the pandemic.
- **[Our Family Pandemic Experience](#)** For [families](#) to use as a family together in their homes to reflect on their experience of the pandemic.

## FOLLOW UP

Here are additional ways you could help people process their experience of the pandemic.

- **The Well Being Course** A new course released January 2021 exploring well-being, a timely theme for the year ahead. There is an [introductory video](#) and a [website](#) with more information. There is also a [youth version](#).
- **Kintsugi Well-Being Groups** A [course and groups](#) to help people with their well-being.
- **Enquirers Courses** Most courses now have online versions which are proving very popular and effective. [Alpha](#), [Christianity Explored](#), [Start](#).
- **Grief** If people have experienced the death of a loved one you may want to recommend this informative online booklet from the Church Army on [Death, Grief and Hope](#), or these resources from [MIND](#) on bereavement.

