

Testimony: Our Church's Zoom Calls Eased the Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown

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During the last few weeks I really felt the impact of lockdown on my social life, as I very much enjoy getting out and about and meeting people face to face. To this end, in the last few years, I have built up quite a few relationships with people in the local community both through offering my time as a volunteer and also through joining different local not-for-profit groups. Some days I would get a steady stream of visitors coming through the front door, which is always unlocked and openable from the outside. I like to keep an "open house" and feel like my home is a public place because I know that God gave it to me.

Then suddenly – from one day to the next – all that stopped!

Then the Zoom calls started, and I became busy with them, so somehow a certain void was filled with a limited amount of interaction online, but this was not satisfying enough for my soul, as I felt there was still a void in my life.

It occurred to me one morning that I had to be the one to do something about it.

I also needed to organise my time better and make a new kind of schedule to stay sane and happy. What I had been feeling acutely was the lack of a discussion partner to do Hoon Dok Hwe with. This was a very basic need for my sanity and I felt this was much more important than eating breakfast/lunch or dinner, or even phoning a friend for a chat. I was really missing this kind of give and take based on Heavenly Tradition and True Parents' Words.

At the same time I was freaked out by the idea of setting up a Zoom call to do this, yet I knew that this was an unreasonable techno-phobia, without any grounds at all, and that I was perfectly capable of

solving this problem if I just put my mind to it. So I hesitated for around 2-3 weeks mulling it over and finally it became clear to me: to start off with just a few people I knew well to get it up and running. It all began then 3 weeks ago today and there are now about 6 people in the group on a regular basis. Currently all are sisters and all are living alone or if with children, the children do not share the same passion for doing HDH as their parents. We use the Cheong Seong Gyeong 2014 edition and are currently working our way through Book 7 on Earthly Life and Spirit World.



I had a steep learning curve but finally with the help of others found this online edition and also learnt how to screen share during the Zoom call. I learnt to circumnavigate the 40 minute barrier of the free Zoom account by setting up a 2nd free consecutive call straight away after the first one, in case we want to continue for longer. Sometimes 40 mins is enough and sometimes not!

I welcome any newcomers – please email me if you would like to join on: joanna.c.m.hartl@gmail.com. I feel so relieved that I was able to do this and so grateful to God and True Parents for giving me this tremendous opportunity!

Thank you and Aju!!!!