

preparing your family for a digital fast



Set aside some time on Sunday evening, Apr. 21, to prepare your family for the week ahead.

1. Why are we doing this?

To improve mental health, make space for relationships, and prioritize quality time with God.

Recent Barna data from *Gen Z: Volume 2* show that U.S. teens (13-17-year-olds) with a smartphone estimate that they use these device 5.15 hours per day. Barna data also shows that young adults (18-21-year-olds) with a smartphone estimate they use their phone an average of 6.7 hours each day.

Another stat from this same study highlights that young adults are more likely than teens to report negative feelings associated with social media, with Gen Z women being more negatively impacted than Gen Z men. For example, 18-21-year-old women are more likely than their male peers and teenage girls—and nearly twice as likely as teenage boys—to experience feelings like isolation, self-criticism and insecurity due to social media.

2. What will the fast involve?

Smart phones:

- Go through the apps on your phone, differentiate the “distraction” apps from the “utility” apps, and remove the distraction apps.
 - * Distraction examples: social media, games, Amazon, news, email
 - * Utility examples: phone, text, calendar, camera, weather, maps
- Remove phones from your bedside at night
- Turn off notifications
- Set phone display to grayscale (black and white)

Other screens:

- During the week ahead, we will eliminate using other screens for personal/entertainment use.
 - * Examples: TV, gaming devices, tablets, etc.

3. Spend some time as a family making plans and goals for things you would like to do this week.

- Write down some things you would like to do personally.
- Discuss some things you would like to do as a family.

Ideas

Read a book, make a plan for Scripture reading and prayer, play board games, host a get-together, go for walks, journal, plan some special homemade meals, call friends & family, explore our area.

Make some specific plans for specific times this week, both personally and as a family!

4. Consider listening to one of these podcast episodes as a family.

- "The Case for Digital Asceticism: Unhurrying with a Rule of Life (E3)"
John Mark Comer Teachings Podcast
- "The Digital Fast: Dr. Darren Whitehead" *Theology in the Raw Podcast*
- "Living a Tech-Wise Life with Andy and Amy Crouch" *The Trinity Forum Podcast*

5. Finish this time reading one of Scriptures and praying over the upcoming week.

Psalm 139

Matthew 6:16-18

Philippians 4:4-9

FAQs

What if I need certain apps and notifications on my phone for work?

We don't want you to get fired. Use what you *need* and cut out the distractions.

Talk to your boss and co-workers about your fast ahead of time to let them know you're doing this and why. Set up a special auto-reply for the week of the fast.

What if I use my phone as my alarm clock?

Dust off that old alarm clock or buy one (before you remove the Amazon app).

I'm having a hard time differentiating "distraction" apps from "utility" apps. Any tips?

What do you find yourself wasting time on? What pulls you away from where you are? What apps leave you feeling anxious, drained, or numb? Cut those out.

Can I use my computer?

Yes, for what is necessary—work, homework, communication, travel, etc.