



UNPLUGGING

Exercise for the Week

Jesus knew that if he was going to be his best, offer his best, stay grounded in who he was supposed to be and what he was called to do, he would have to unplug every now and then. He needed to retreat, to get away for silence, solitude, prayer, and reflection. In our world of constant noise, up to the minute news, and never-ending notifications, our desperate need to unplug, to retreat, to disconnect from time to time is as great as it's ever been. But the challenge is also great, because even when alone, we carry the noise with us in our pockets and purses wherever we go. We need to develop the discipline of unplugging more often.

Some Questions to ask

- Am I on my phone too often? Would my spouse, kids, parents, or co-workers say I am on the phone too often? Have they said something before, but I've dismissed their concerns?
- Do I struggle to pay adequate attention to those I'm with because I'm on my phone or frequently distracted by my phone? Am I a poor listener because of my habits?
- Do I feel compelled to pull out my phone even during brief times of waiting? *Line at grocery store. Waiting room. Stop light.* Why do I feel compelled to do that? What might I be missing out on?
- Do my habits with technology reduce my patience, build a wall, create distance, or reduce empathy?
- Do I neglect other duties because of my habits with technology?
- Do I miss opportunities to deepen connection with God and others because of my habits with technology?

Some Action Items to Consider

- Turn off as many notifications as possible. Email, text, and twitter notifications don't have to ding, vibrate, or light up your screen every 3 minutes. It often kills your concentration at work and your compassion and attention while listening.
- Turn off your phone more often. Turn the Do Not Disturb feature on. When you are at home, leave it on a table or desk or somewhere out of your reach and away from your person.
- Turn off all media during your commute. Leave time to think, meditate, or pray.
- Have a no cell phone rule at the table. Eat. Talk. Make eye contact.
- Spend time thinking again about the cell phone use for everyone in the house. There are great resources to think about cell phones and kids, but just remember to set a good example.
- Designate a night of the week as zero tech and media night, or at least aim for an hour to turn it off (whatever "it" is for you). Kick it old school and talk. Go for a walk. Read. Pray. Play games with your family. Sit in solitude and silence a little more often and see what you have been burying in your mind that needs to come up for air.

"It is not that we have anything against God, depth, and spirit. We would like these. It is just that we are habitually too preoccupied to have many of these show up on our radar screens. We are more busy than bad, more distracted than non-spiritual, and more interested in the movie theater, the sports stadium, and the shopping mall and the fantasy life they produce in us than we are in church. Pathological busyness, distraction, and restlessness are major blocks today with our spiritual lives."

-Ronald Roheiser