The evolution of technology in the last 20 years is mind boggling. The benefit of having limitless amounts of information at our fingertips is very powerful...and costly. That cost includes the price of our gadgets as well as the additional spending that occurs as a result of all the marketing we receive through them. But the greatest cost is in relationships that are potentially lost or damaged when electronics cause a breakdown of communication or an increase in miscommunication.

This is especially troubling for folks who are navigating the previously uncharted waters of parenting teens in a high tech world. Having grown up in the relatively low tech 20th century, today’s parents of teens have little to pull from in their experiential toolbox.

**Low Tech Responses to a High Tech World**

So how do parents keep their children safe and balanced without unnecessarily sheltering them from the advantages technology has to offer? Below are a few ideas that may help:

1. **Declare a “tech-fast”**. Pick a time in which no technology is allowed. Turn off the phones, the computers, unplug the TV…get off the grid. Use the time to grow closer as a family; lead family devotions, go for a family walk, play a board game. You may find it becomes the highlight of your week.

2. **Create a public “central docking station” and curfew.** Have a place where gadgets are placed each evening for charging, and an expectation of when they need to be there. This will help your family’s sleep pattern by unplugging before bedtime, and eliminate the temptation of “under the covers” screen time for your kids.

3. **Know their passwords!** If they live under your roof and eat your food, you have every right to know their passwords and peruse their social media sites from time to time. You also have a responsibility to teach your kids how to manage their technological privilege responsibly, and that requires you to be in their cyber-world.

4. **Use parental software tools.** Many sites come with parental control settings, and there are a plethora of aftermarket programs that can help you manage what’s coming into your home. Do your research and use the tools that are available to you.

**Attention Dads of Middle or High School Girls:**

*Father/Daughter Game Show Night! Sunday November 20th.* A fun night of food & prizes for dads and their middle- and high-school aged daughters. **Register today!**

*Need marriage help? Call 301-620-2255 or email BillR@FCFchurch.com.*