

Domestic Violence and the Church

RESEARCH REPORT

Sponsored by Autumn Miles

Table of Contents

| | <i>Page</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| Methodology | 4 |
| Quantitative Findings | 5 |

Executive Summary

Domestic violence within Protestant churches is not uncommon. Yet only half of all churches have a plan in place for how to respond if someone shares they are experiencing domestic violence.

- 37% of Protestant pastors are aware of an adult in their church who experienced domestic or sexual violence in the last 3 years.
- Half of Protestant churches (52%) have a specific plan or procedures in place for how to respond if someone shares that they are experiencing domestic violence.

While half of churches have not thought through how they will respond, most have some resources in place that can be put into action if they learn of someone experiencing domestic violence.

- The most common specific resource churches have in place to offer someone experiencing domestic violence is a referral list with professional counselors trained in domestic violence (76%).
- 64% of churches have finances in place to assist someone experiencing domestic violence.
- 61% of churches have a safe place to stay in place to assist someone experiencing domestic violence.
- 53% of churches have a referral list for legal help in place to assist someone experiencing domestic violence.
- 49% of churches have someone in the church who has experienced domestic violence that they can talk to in place to assist someone experiencing domestic violence.
- 89% of pastors agree their church regularly communicates that specific behaviors related to domestic violence are not OK.

Pastors were asked for their response if someone from their congregation files for divorce and cites domestic violence as the reason. Very few pastors say divorce is not an option when domestic violence is present. Most pastors are prepared to believe accusations of domestic violence or to investigate if it is present when this is cited as a reason for divorce.

- If a member of their congregation filed for divorce citing domestic violence as the reason, pastors are more likely to believe that domestic violence is really present (56%) than believe it is not present (1%).
- 60% would investigate whether domestic violence is really present.
- Pastors are much more likely to say divorce may be the best option (59%) than to say they should never divorce (3%)

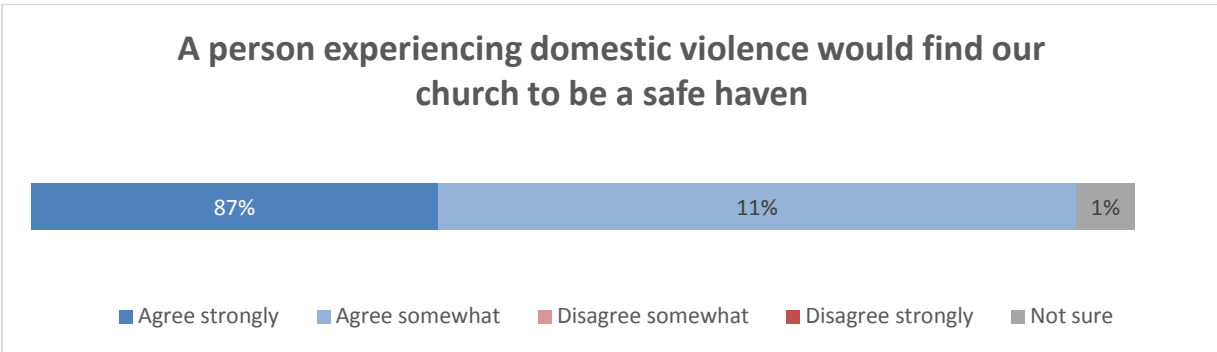
Almost all pastors agree (98%) that a person experiencing domestic violence would find their church to be a safe haven.

Methodology

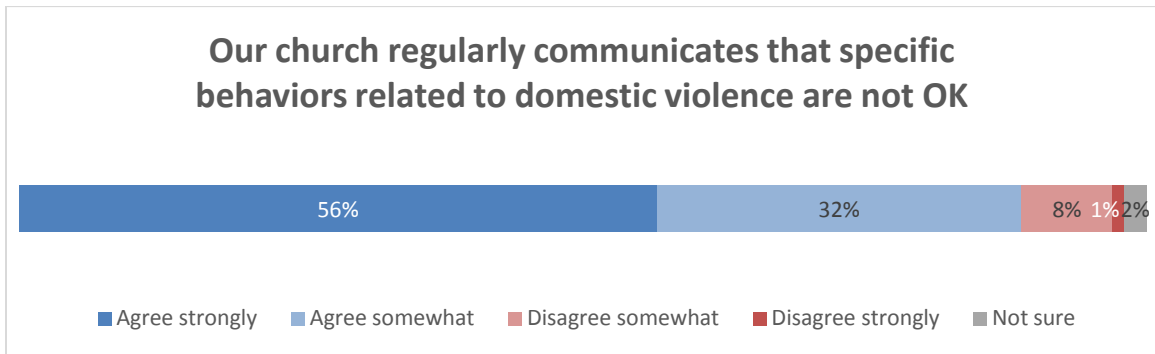
The Domestic Violence and the Church research study was sponsored by Autumn Miles.

LifeWay Research conducted the phone survey of American Protestant pastors August 22 – September 16, 2016. The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were in place for church size. Responses were weighted by region to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample size is 1,000 surveys. The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

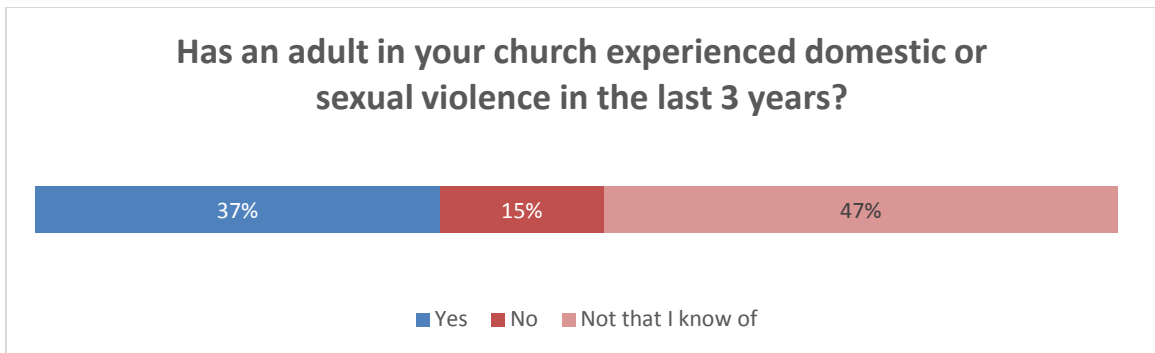
Quantitative Findings



Pastors age 55-64 (90%) are more likely to Strongly Agree than those 18-44 (85%) and 45-54 (83%).



Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (93%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 50-99 (86%).



Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (65%) are most likely to select “Yes,” followed by those with attendance 100-249 (43%), then 50-99 (31%), then 0-49 (20%). Pastors age 55-64 (42%) are more likely to select “Yes” than those 65+ (31%).

If someone in your congregation files for divorce and cites domestic violence as the reason, what would your response likely be? (Select all that apply)

| | |
|--|-----|
| To investigate whether domestic violence is really present | 60% |
| To believe divorce may be the best decision | 59% |
| To believe domestic violence is really present | 56% |
| To believe they should never divorce | 3% |
| To believe that domestic violence is not really present | 1% |
| Not sure | 5% |

Among those who would investigate whether domestic violence is really present, 55% also indicate they believe domestic violence is really present.

To believe domestic violence is really present

Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (65%). Pastors age 55-64 (57%) are more likely to select than Pastors age 65+ (46%). White pastors (58%) are more likely to select than African-American pastors (41%).

To investigate whether domestic violence is really present

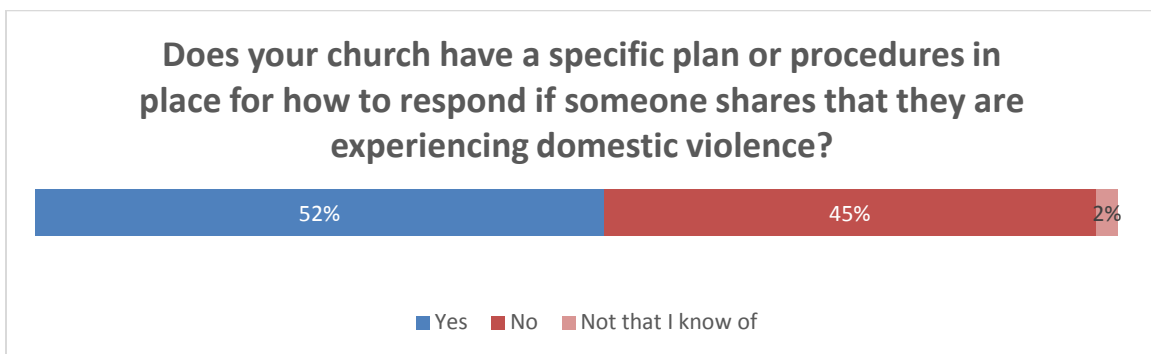
Evangelical pastors (68%) are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (46%).

To believe they should never divorce

Pastors age 18-44 (6%) are more likely to select than those 45-54 (2%) and 55-64 (2%). Pastors of Other Ethnicities (9%) are more likely to select than White pastors (3%).

To believe divorce may be the best decision

Pastors age 55-64 (63%) are more likely to select than those 18-44 (53%). Mainline pastors (72%) are more likely to select than Evangelical pastors (55%).



Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select “Yes” (73%). Pastors of Other Ethnicities (67%) are more likely to select “Yes” than White pastors (51%).

Which, if any, of the following specific resources does your church have in place to offer someone who is experiencing domestic violence? (Select all that apply)

| | |
|---|-----|
| Referral list with professional counselor trained in domestic violence | 76% |
| Finances to assist them | 64% |
| A safe place to stay | 61% |
| Referral list for legal help | 53% |
| Someone in the church who has experienced domestic violence that they can talk to | 49% |
| Other | 8% |
| None of these | 4% |
| Not sure | 1% |

A safe place to stay

Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (68%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (55%).

Referral list with professional counselor trained in domestic violence

Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (92%), followed by those with attendance 100-249 (81%). Pastors age 55-64 (79%) are more likely to select than those 18-44 (72%).

Referral list for legal help

Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (63%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 50-99 (49%) and 100-249 (52%). Mainline pastors (59%) are more likely to select than Evangelical pastors (50%).

Finances to assist them

Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (51%), followed by those with attendance 50-99 (61%). Pastors age 55-64 (67%) are more likely to select than those age 65+ (58%). White pastors are the most likely to select (66%).

Someone in the church who has experienced domestic violence that they can talk to

Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (65%).