Domestic Violence and the Church

Survey of Protestant Pastors

Sponsored by Autumn Miles
Methodology

- The study was sponsored by Autumn Miles.
- The phone survey of Protestant pastors was conducted August 22 – September 16, 2016
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest of the church called
- Responses were weighted by region to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,000 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed ±3.2%
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
Survey Responses
98% say a person experiencing domestic violence would find their church to be a safe haven

Q: “A person experiencing domestic violence would find our church to be a safe haven.”

Among Protestant Pastors

- 87% Strongly agree
- 11% Somewhat agree
- <1% Somewhat disagree
- <1% Strongly disagree
- 1% Not sure
89% regularly communicate that specific behaviors related to domestic violence are not OK

Q: “Our church regularly communicates that specific behaviors related to domestic violence are not OK.”
37% know of an adult in their church who has experienced domestic or sexual violence in the last 3 years

Q: "Has an adult in your church experienced domestic or sexual violence in the last 3 years?"

Among Protestant Pastors

- Yes: 37%
- No: 15%
- Not that I know of: 47%
“If someone in your congregation files for divorce and cites domestic violence as the reason, what would your response likely be?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To investigate whether domestic violence is really present</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To believe divorce may be the best decision</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To believe domestic violence is really present</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To believe they should never divorce</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To believe that domestic violence is not really present</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: "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)"
Just over half of churches have a plan in place for responding to someone sharing that they are experiencing domestic violence among Protestant Pastors.

Q: “Does your church have a specific plan or procedures in place for how to respond if someone shares that they are experiencing domestic violence?”
Three-quarters of churches have a referral list with a professional counselor trained in domestic violence

Among Protestant Pastors

- 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%
- None of these: 4%

Other 8% (see following page)
Not sure 1%

Q: "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)"
Other mentions of specific church resources in place:

- Counseling (In addition to indicating a “referral list with professional counselor” it was also mentioned here and some specified counselors at the church)
- Referrals for shelter or other local churches
- Local shelters
- Referrals to county or state agencies
- Training/education
- Pastoral care and support
- Support groups
Significant Differences

Pastor
Ethnicity
Age
Education Level
Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church
Region
Denomination
Average Attendance
Significant Statistical Differences

- Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church’s attendance and region, the pastor’s age and ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pastor’s Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>18-44</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-249</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>Other Ethnicities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250+</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Region is defined by US Census regions.
Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were also made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the self-identified Evangelical or Mainline, denomination, and education level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Identify</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>No College Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>Christian/Church of Christ</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presbyterian/Reformed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“A person experiencing domestic violence would find our church to be a safe haven”

- There were no significant differences in combined Agree percentage.
- Pastors in the West (90%) and South (89%) are more likely to Strongly Agree than Pastors in the Midwest (83%).
- Pastors age 55-64 (90%) are more likely to Strongly Agree than those 18-44 (85%) and 45-54 (83%).
- Pentecostals (99%) are more likely to Strongly Agree than Baptists (88%), Lutherans (86%), Methodists (82%), Presbyterian/Reformed (87%), and Holiness (81%).
- Those with no college degree (92%) or a Doctoral degree (93%) are more likely to Strongly Agree than those with a Master’s (84%).
“Our church regularly communicates that specific behaviors related to domestic violence are not OK”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (93%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 50-99 (86%)
- Pentecostals (95%) and Baptists (91%) are more likely to Agree than Presbyterian/Reformed (82%)
- Those with a Doctoral degree (94%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Bachelor’s (87%) or Master’s degree (87%)
“Has an adult in your church experienced domestic or sexual violence in the last 3 years?”

- 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 in the Midwest (42%) and West (45%) are more likely to select “Yes” than Pastors in the South (33%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (42%) are more likely to select “Yes” than those 65+ (31%)
- African-American pastors (31%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (32%) are more likely to select “No” than White pastors (13%)
- Those with a Doctoral degree (47%) are more likely to select “Yes” than those with a Bachelor’s (31%) or Master’s degree (37%)
“If someone in your congregation files for divorce and cites domestic violence as the reason, what would your response likely be?”

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%)
- Lutherans (70%), Methodists (63%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (62%) are more likely to select than Baptists (49%) and Pentecostals (40%)
- Those with a Master’s degree (62%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (40%) or a Bachelor’s (50%)
“If someone in your congregation files for divorce and cites domestic violence as the reason, what would your response likely be?”

To investigate whether domestic violence is really present

- Evangelical pastors (68%) are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (46%)
- Baptists (70%), Pentecostals (70%), and Holiness (76%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (52%), Methodists (39%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (47%)
- Those with no college degree (69%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s (58%)

To believe that domestic violence is not really present

- No significant differences
“If someone in your congregation files for divorce and cites domestic violence as the reason, what would your response likely be?”

To believe they should never divorce

- Pastors in the Northeast (7%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the South (2%)
- 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%)
- Church of Christ (8%) and Baptists (5%) are more likely to select than Presbyterian/Reformed (<1%)
- Those with no college degree (9%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s (2%) or a Doctoral degree (2%)
“If someone in your congregation files for divorce and cites domestic violence as the reason, what would your response likely be?”

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%)
- Lutherans (67%), Methodists (72%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (71%) are more likely to select than Baptists (50%) and Pentecostals (49%)
- Those with a Master’s degree are the most likely to select (66%)
“Does your church have a specific plan or procedures in place for how to respond if someone shares that they are experiencing domestic violence?”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select “Yes” (73%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (64%) are more likely to select “Yes” than Pastors in the South (51%) and Midwest (45%)
- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (67%) are more likely to select “Yes” than White pastors (51%)
- Methodists (63%) and Pentecostals (66%) are more likely to select “Yes” than Baptists (52%), Lutherans (44%), Presbyterian/Reformed (45%), Church of Christ (41%), and Holiness (45%)
- Those with a Doctoral degree (62%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (50%)
“Which, if any, of the following specific resources does your church have in place to offer someone who is experiencing domestic violence?”

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%)
- Baptists (66%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (55%) and Methodists (54%)

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%)
- Methodists (85%) are more likely to select than Baptists (75%), Church of Christ (72%), and Holiness (63%)
- Those with a Master’s (78%) or a Doctoral degree (84%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (68%) or a Bachelor’s (67%)
“Which, if any, of the following specific resources does your church have in place to offer someone who is experiencing domestic violence?”

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%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (61%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the Midwest (49%)
- Mainline pastors (59%) are more likely to select than Evangelical pastors (50%)
“Which, if any, of the following specific resources does your church have in place to offer someone who is experiencing domestic violence?”

**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 in the South (67%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the West (58%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (67%) are more likely to select than those age 65+ (58%)
- White pastors are the most likely to select (66%)
- Baptists (71%), Presbyterian/Reformed (67%), and Church of Christ (67%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (49%) and Methodists (53%)
“Which, if any, of the following specific resources does your church have in place to offer someone who is experiencing domestic violence?”

**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%)
- Pastors in the West (62%) are more likely to select than Pastors in the South (46%) and Midwest (43%)
- Pentecostals (61%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (35%), Methodists (42%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (43%)
- Those with no college degree are the most likely to select (66%)
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