Pastor Views on Church Discipline

Survey of Protestant Pastors
Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors was conducted August 30 – September 18, 2017
- 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
The majority of churches have not formally disciplined a member as far as the current pastor knows.

Among Protestant Pastors

- In the last month: 3%
- In the last 6 months: 5%
- In the last year: 8%
- In the last 2 years: 5%
- 3 or more years ago: 21%
- A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know: 55%
- Not sure: 2%

Q22 “When was the last time your church formally disciplined a member?”
For the majority of churches discipline is a responsibility shared by more than one group of leaders

Among Protestant Pastors

- Pastor alone: 8%
- Deacons alone: 1%
- Elders alone: 14%
- Trustees or board members alone: 4%
- Two or more of these groups must agree: 51%
- We have no official policies in place for disciplining members: 18%
- Other: 5%

Q23 “Who at your church is officially responsible for administering formal discipline of a church member? (Select One)”
Significant Differences

- Pastor
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Gender
- 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 gender, age and ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Pastor’s Gender</th>
<th>Pastor’s Age</th>
<th>Pastor’s Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18-44</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-249</td>
<td>South</td>
<td></td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>Other Ethnicities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250+</td>
<td>West</td>
<td></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 education level, the self-identified Evangelical or Mainline, and denomination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Self-Identified</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No College Degree</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presbyterian/Reformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Holiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“When was the last time your church formally disciplined a member?”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (20%) and 250+ (20%) are more likely to answer “Within the last year” than those with attendance of 50-99 (13%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (65%) and 50-99 (63%) are more likely to answer “A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know” than those with attendance of 100-249 (48%) and 250+ (38%)
- Pastors in the West are the most likely to answer “Within the last year” (24%)
- Pastors in the South (56%) and Midwest (59%) are more likely to answer “A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know” than those in the West (46%)
- Male pastors are more likely to answer “More than a year” than female pastors (28% v. 12%) and less likely to answer “A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know” (53% v. 72%)
“When was the last time your church formally disciplined a member?” (continued)

• Pastors age 18-44 (21%) are more likely to answer “Within the last year” than those 55-64 (14%)
• Pastors age 18-44 (59%) are more likely to answer “A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know” than those 45-54 (50%)
• African-American pastors are more likely to answer “Within the last year” than White pastors (34% v. 15%) and less likely to select “More than a year ago” (11% v. 27%)
• Those with a Bachelor’s degree are the most likely to answer “Within the last year” (26%)
• Those with no college degree (59%) or a Master’s degree (58%) are more likely to answer “A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know” than those with a Bachelor’s degree (46%)
“When was the last time your church formally disciplined a member?” (continued)

- Evangelical pastors are more likely to answer “Within the last year” than Mainline pastors (19% v. 11%), more likely to select “More than a year ago” (31% v. 19%), and less likely to answer “A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know” (49% v. 67%)
- Baptists (19%), Pentecostals (29%), and Holiness (23%) are more likely to answer “Within the last year” than Methodists (4%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (9%)
- Methodists are the least likely to answer “More than a year ago” (8%) and the most likely to answer “A member has not been formally disciplined since I came as pastor nor prior as far as I know” (85%)
“Who at your church is officially responsible for administering formal discipline of a church member?”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (17%) are more likely to answer “Elders alone” than those with attendance of 0-49 (10%) and 50-99 (11%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 (53%) and 100-249 (53%) are more likely to answer “Two or more of these groups must agree” than those with attendance of 0-49 (43%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (24%) and 50-99 (20%) are more likely to answer “We have no official policies in place for disciplining” than those with attendance of 100-249 (14%)
- Pastors in the South (9%) are more likely to answer “Pastor alone” than Pastors in the Midwest (5%)
- Male pastors are more likely to answer “Elders alone” than female pastors (15% v. 4%) and less likely to answer “We have no official policies in place for disciplining” (17% v. 29%)
“Who at your church is officially responsible for administering formal discipline of a church member?” (continued)

- Pastors age 18-44 (58%) and 45-54 (54%) are more likely to answer “Two ore more of these groups must agree” than those 65+ (42%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (22%) and 65+ (22%) are more likely to answer “We have no official policies in place for disciplining” than those 18-44 (14%) and 45-54 (14%)
- African-American pastors (21%) are more likely to answer “Pastor alone” than White pastors (6%)
- Those with a Master’s degree (15%) are more likely to answer “Elders alone” than those with a no college degree (7%)
- Those with no college degree (28%) are more likely to answer “We have no official policies in place for disciplining” than those with a Bachelor’s degree (13%) or a Master’s degree (19%)
- Mainline pastors (24%) are more likely to answer “We have no official policies in place for disciplining” than Evangelical pastors (15%)
“Who at your church is officially responsible for administering formal discipline of a church member?” (continued)

- Presbyterian/Reformed are the most likely to answer “Elders alone” (41%) and the least likely to answer “Two or more of these groups must agree” (27%)
- Methodists are the most likely to answer “We have no official policies in place for disciplining” (37%)
Pastor Views on Church Discipline

Survey of Protestant Pastors