

Churchgoers Views – Strength of Ties to Church

Representative Survey of 1,010
American Churchgoers

Methodology

LifeWay Research conducted the study August 22 – 30, 2017. The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, GfK provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection.

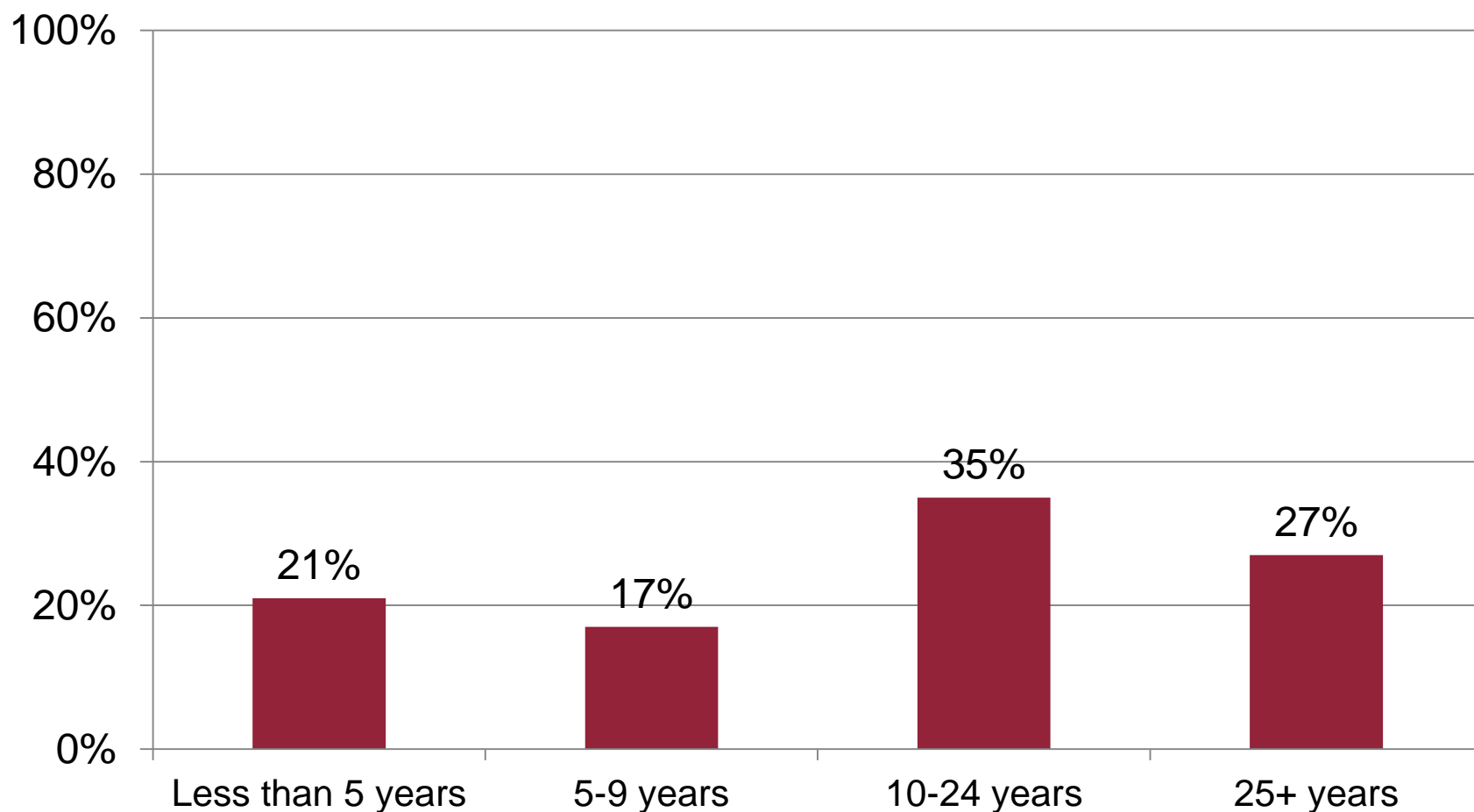
Methodology

For this survey, a nationally representative sample of U.S. Protestant and non-denominational adults (18 and older) which attends religious services once a month or more often was selected from the KnowledgePanel®.

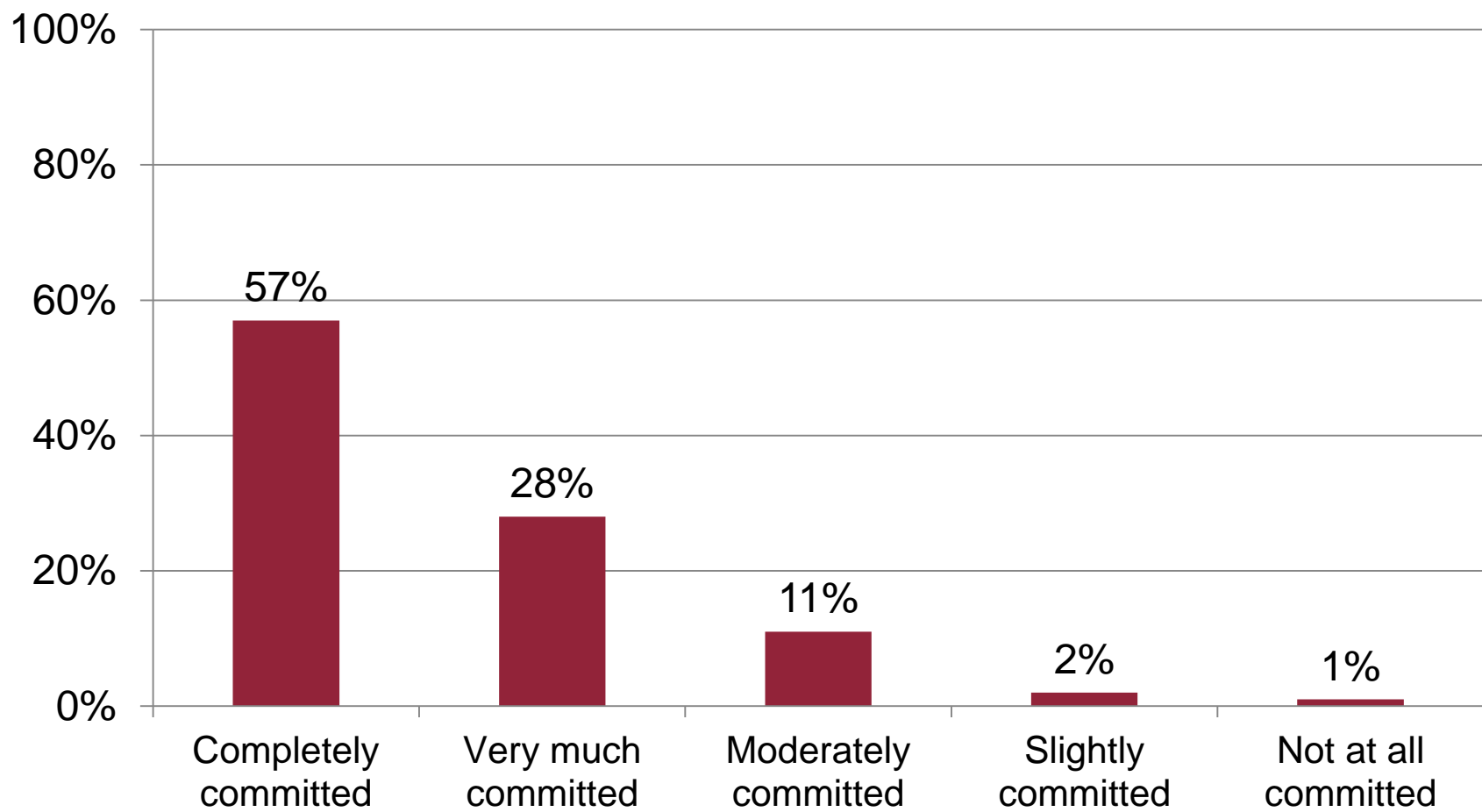
Sample stratification and base weights were used for gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, metro/non-metro, home ownership, education, and income to reflect the most recent US Census data. Study specific weights included for gender by age, race/ethnicity, region, and education to reflect GSS 2016 data. The completed sample is 1,010 surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Survey Responses

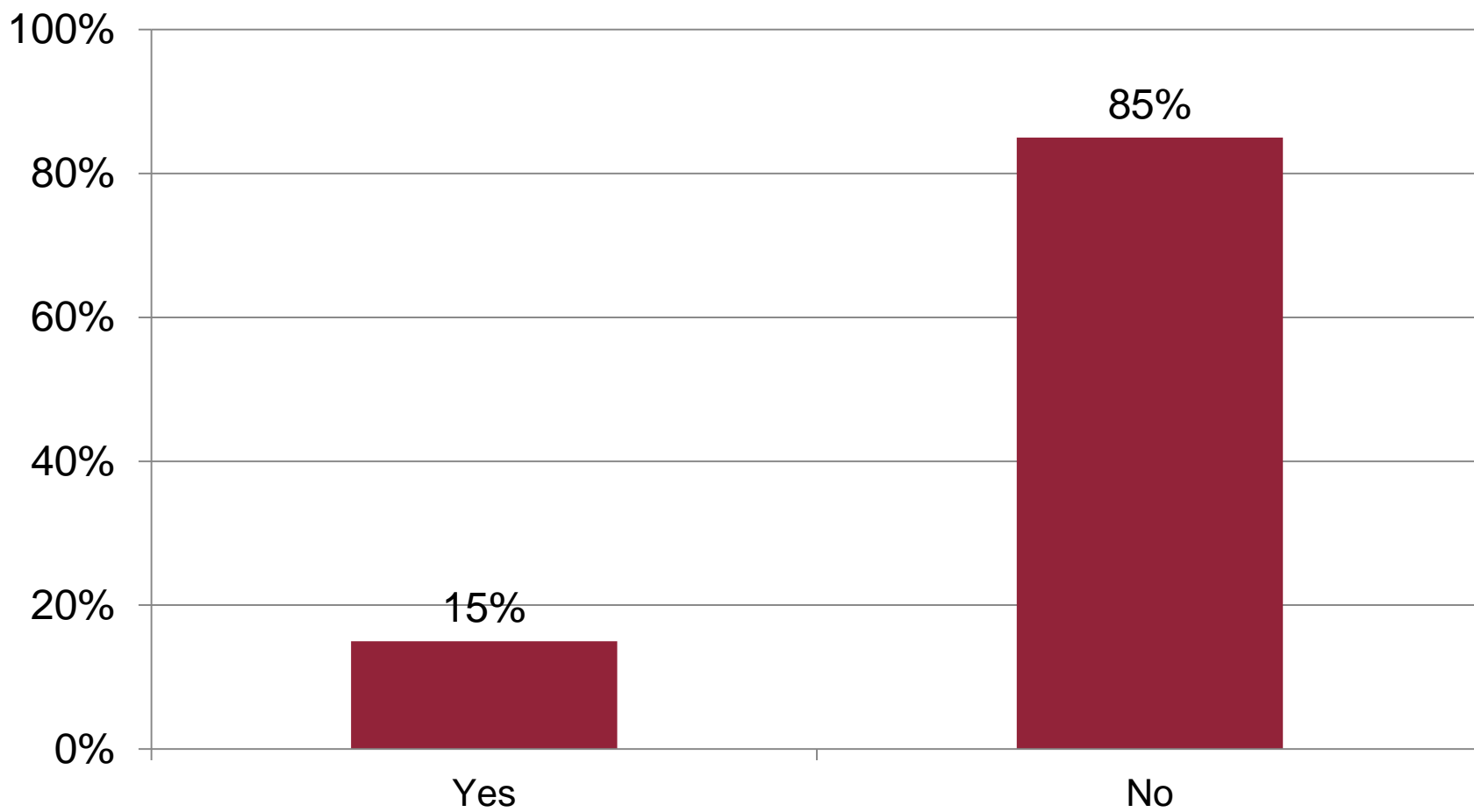
62% have attended their current church for 10 years or longer



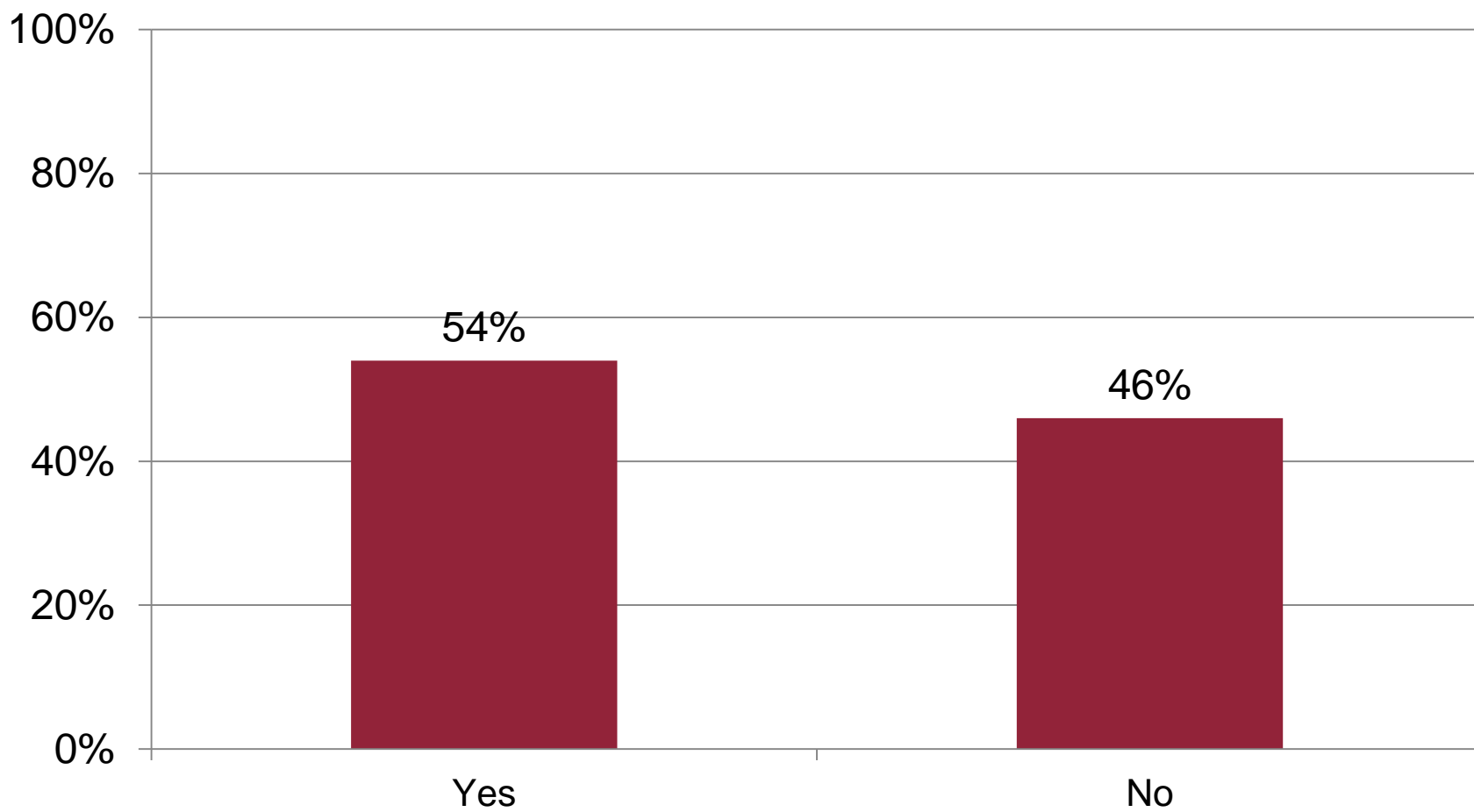
57% are completely committed to continuing to attend their current church



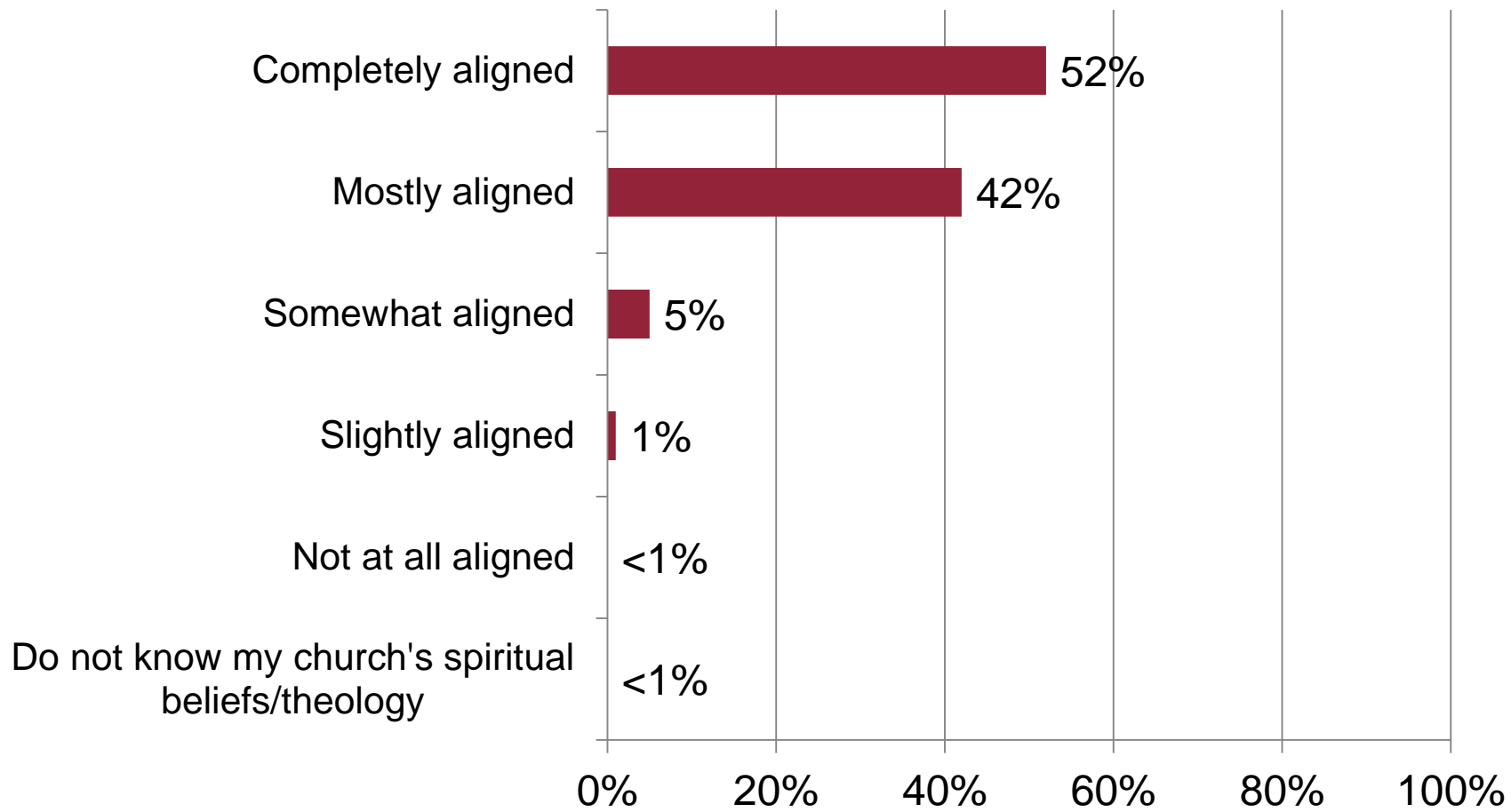
Only 15% say that, in the last six months, they have considered switching to another church in their local area



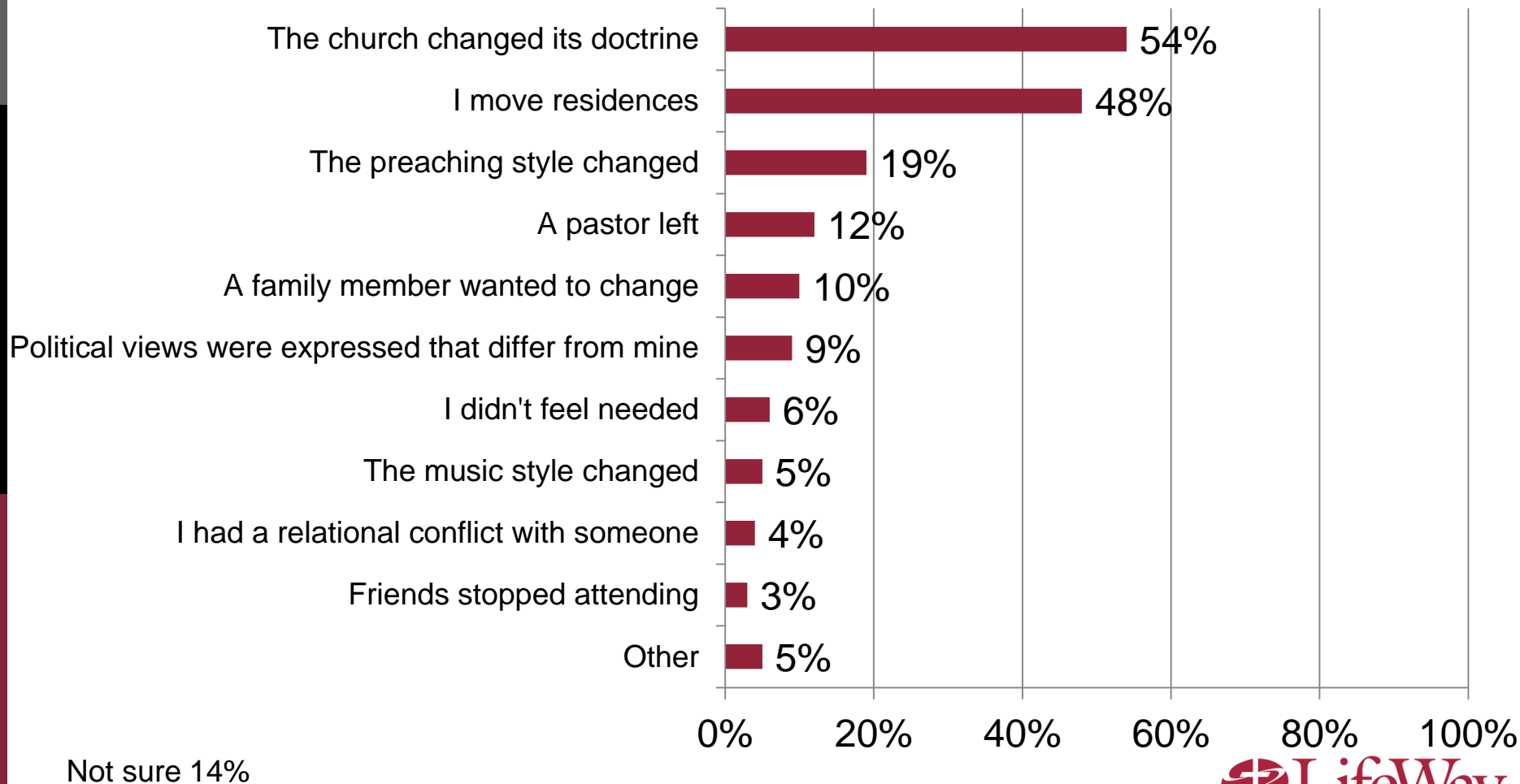
Among those who have considered changing churches in the last six months, 54% have visited other churches



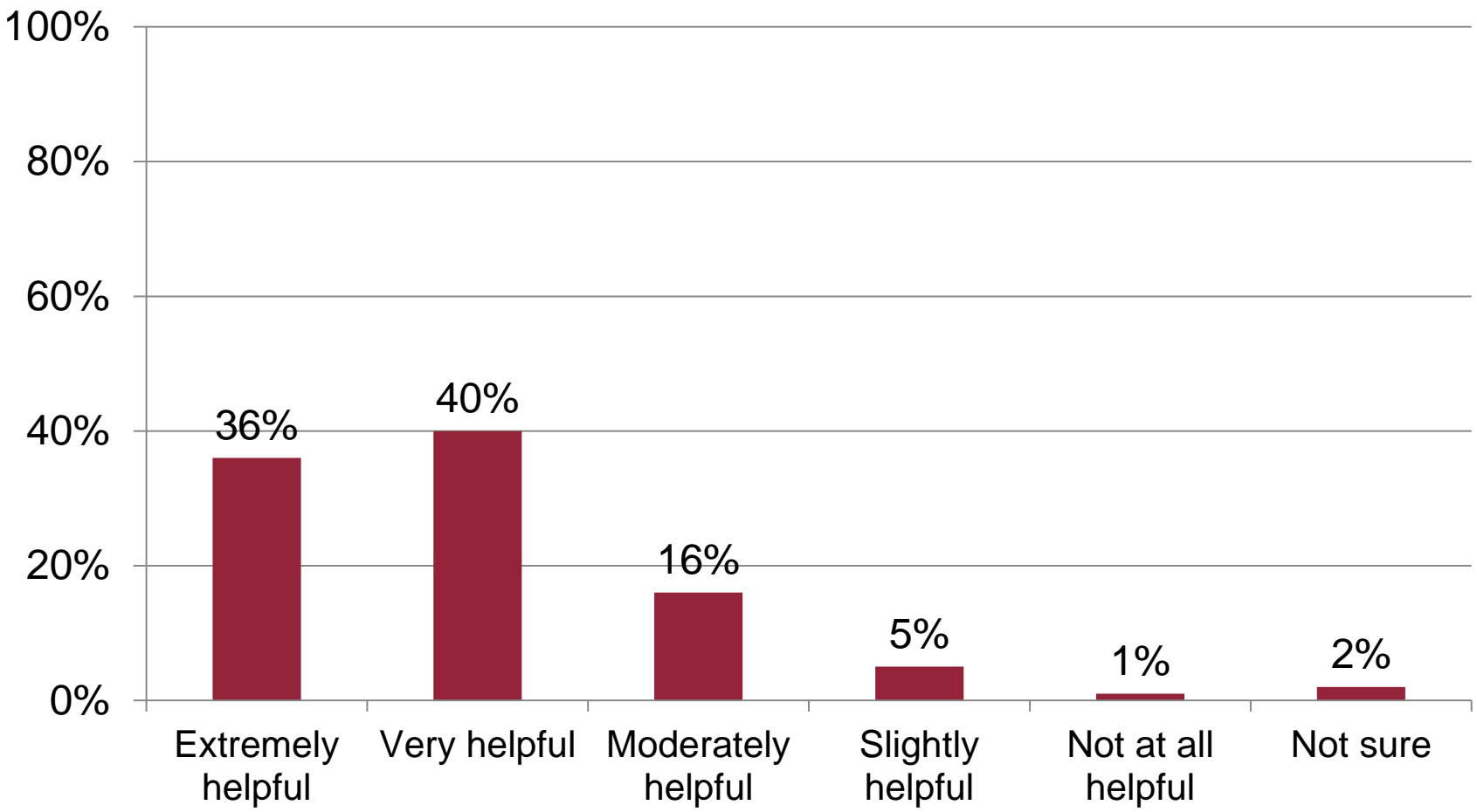
52% say their spiritual beliefs are completely aligned with those of their church



“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”



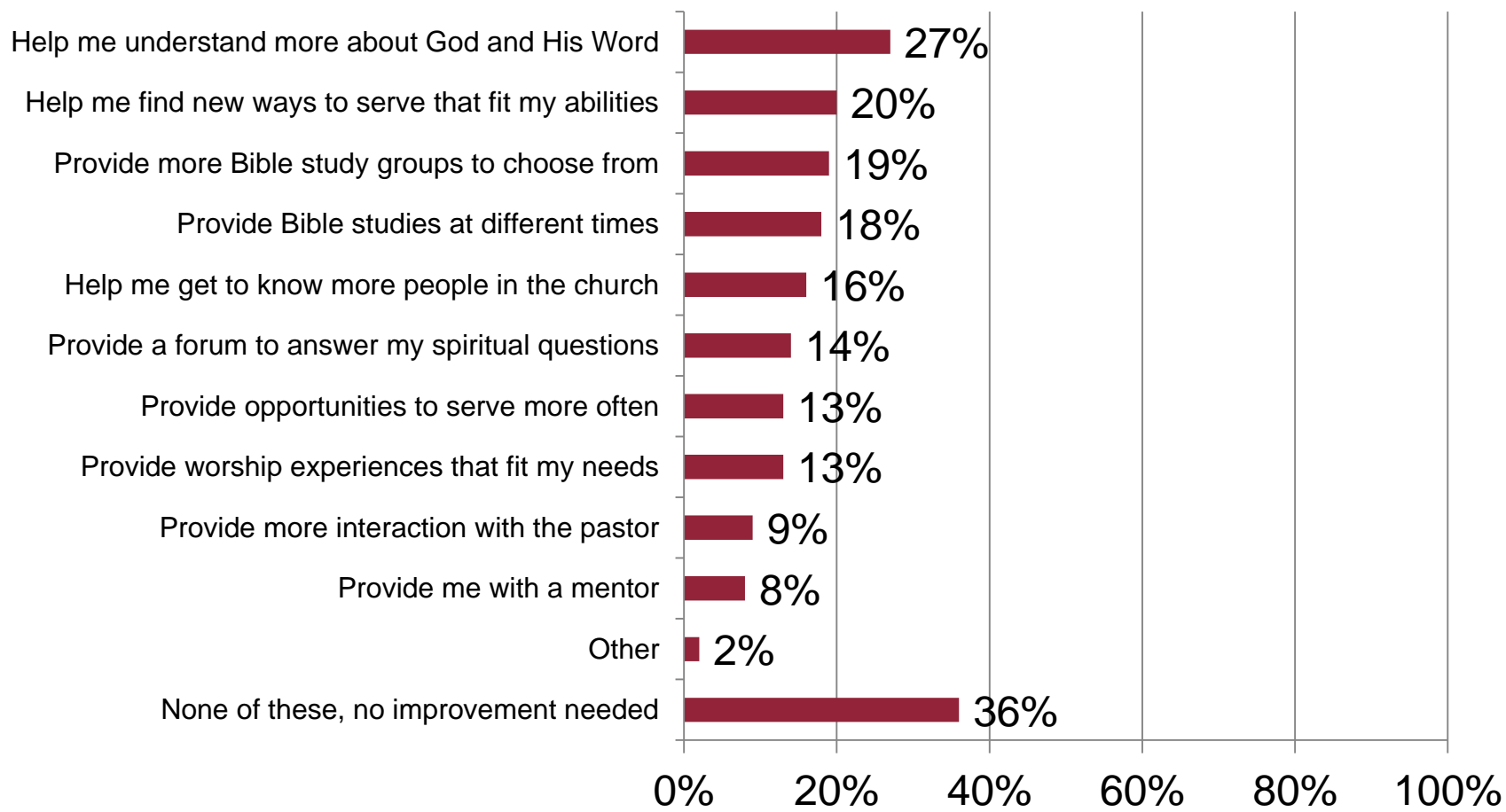
76% say their church is very or extremely helpful in terms of spiritual growth



Q26: "Thinking about the help you receive related to your spiritual growth, would you say your church is..." n=1003



Ways churchgoers would like their church to improve the help they provide related to spiritual growth



Q27: "In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?" n=998

Significant Differences

Gender
Region
Age
Ethnicity
Education Level
Church Service Attendance
Evangelical Beliefs
Church Size (Attendance)
Denomination

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among churchgoers' gender, region, age, ethnicity, and education.

| Gender | Region | Age | Ethnicity | Education |
|--------|-----------|-------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Male | Northeast | 18-34 | White, Non-Hispanic | High School graduate or less |
| Female | Midwest | 35-49 | Black, Non-Hispanic | Some college |
| | South | 50-64 | Hispanic | Bachelor's Degree |
| | West | 65+ | Other Ethnicities | Graduate Degree |

Note: Region is defined by US Census locations

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among churchgoers' service attendance, Evangelical Beliefs, church size (by attendance), and denomination.

| Church Service Attendance | Evangelical Beliefs | Church Size (Attendance) | Denomination |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| At least once a week | Yes | Less than 50 | Baptist |
| Once or twice a month | No | 50-99 | Lutheran |
| | | 100-249 | Methodist |
| | | 250-499 | Non-denominational |
| | | 500-999 | Assemblies of God/Pentecostal |
| | | 1000 or more | |

Evangelical Beliefs

- Evangelical Beliefs are defined using the NAE LifeWay Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
 - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
 - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
 - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
 - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

“How many years have you been attending your current church?”

- Those in the West are the most likely regional group to answer “5-9 years” (25%)
- Those in the Northeast (31%) and Midwest (38%) are more likely to answer “25+ years” than those in the West (18%)
- Those age 18-34 (34%) and 35-49 (26%) are more likely to answer “Less than 5 years” than those 50-64 (16%) and 65+ (12%)
- Those age 65+ are the least likely age group to answer “5-9 years” (9%) and the most likely age group to answer “25+” years (43%)
- White, Non-Hispanics (31%) are more likely to answer “25+ years” than Black, Non-Hispanics (24%) and Hispanics (18%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (28%), 50-99 (24%), 250-499 (24%), and 500-999 (26%) are more likely to answer “Less than 5 years” than those attending a church with attendance of 100-249 (14%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 100-249 (19%), 250-499 (19%), 500-999 (18%), and 1000 or more (19%) are more likely to answer “5-9 years” than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (7%)

“How many years have you been attending your current church?”

- Non-denominational (28%) and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (27%) are more likely to answer “Less than 5 years” than Lutherans (11%) and Methodists (10%)
- Non-denominational (24%) and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (21%) are more likely to answer “5-9 years” than Lutherans (10%)
- Baptists (31%), Lutherans (52%), and Methodists (40%) are more likely to answer “25+ years” than Non-denominational (11%) and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (13%)

“How committed are you to continuing to attend your current church?”

- Those age 65+ (63%) are more likely to answer “Completely committed” than those 18-34 (50%)
- Hispanics (3%) are more likely to answer “Not committed at all” than Black, Non-Hispanics (<1%)
- Those who are high school graduates or less (60%) or with some college (60%) are more likely to answer “Completely committed” than those with a Bachelor’s degree (49%)
- Compared to those attending church services once or twice a month, those attending at least once a week are more likely to answer “Completely committed” (62% v. 31%) and less likely to answer “Moderately committed” (7% v. 36%) and “Slightly committed” (1% v. 5%)
- Compared to those without Evangelical Beliefs, those with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to answer “Completely committed” (67% v. 45%) and less likely to answer “Very much committed” (23% v. 35%) and “Moderately committed” (7% v. 17%)
- Baptists (60%) are more likely to answer “Completely committed” than Lutherans (47%)

“In the last 6 months have you considered switching to another church in your local area?”

- Those age 65+ are the most likely age group to answer “No” (92%)
- Those who are high school graduates or less are the most likely education level to answer “No” (90%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are more likely to answer “No” than attending once or twice a month (87% v. 73%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 500-999 (89%) are more likely to answer “No” than those attending a church with attendance of 50-99 (78%)

“In the last 6 months have you visited other churches in your local area that you may consider switching to?”

- No significant differences

“How well do your spiritual beliefs align with those of your church?”

- Those in the Northeast (50%) are more likely to answer “Mostly aligned” than those in the South (39%)
- Those with a graduate degree are the least likely education level to answer “Completely aligned” (35%) and most likely to answer “Mostly aligned” (60%)
- Compared to those attending church services once or twice a month, those attending at least once a week are more likely to answer “Completely aligned” (55% v. 31%) and less likely to answer “Mostly aligned” (40% v. 55%) or “Somewhat aligned” (4% v. 11%)
- Compared to those without Evangelical Beliefs, those with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to answer “Completely aligned” (62% v. 39%) and less likely to answer “Mostly aligned” (33% v. 53%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 1000 or more (60%) are more likely to answer “Completely aligned” than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (46%) and 50-99 (48%)
- Baptists (57%) and Non-denominational (61%) are more likely to answer “Completely aligned” than Lutherans (43%) and Methodists (25%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

I move residences

- Those in the West (58%) are more likely to select than those in the South (45%)
- Those age 65+ (53%) are more likely to select than those 18-34 (43%)
- White, Non-Hispanics (52%) are more likely to select than Black, Non-Hispanics (41%)
- Those with a graduate degree (62%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (44%) or with some college (47%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (42% v. 56%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 50-99 (57%), 500-999 (55%), and 1000 or more (53%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (39%)
- Lutherans (60%) are more likely to select than Baptists (45%) and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (38%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

A family member wanted to change

- Those in the West (13%) are more likely to select than those in the South (8%)
- Those age 35-49 (13%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (7%)
- White, Non-Hispanics (13%) are more likely to select than Black, Non-Hispanics (4%)
- Those with a Bachelor’s degree (14%) or a graduate degree (17%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (7%) or with some college (8%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than attending once or twice a month (9% v. 16%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (8% v. 12%)
- Methodists (16%) are more likely to select than Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (5%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

Friends stopped attending

- Those age 18-34 (5%) and 35-49 (4%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (1%)
- Those with a graduate degree (5%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (2%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than those attending once or twice a month (2% v. 6%)
- Those attending a church with attendance 50-99 (6%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (2%) and 1000 or more (<1%)
- Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (7%) are more likely to select than Baptists (2%) and Non-denominational (1%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

The music style changed

- White, Non-Hispanics (8%) are more likely to select than Black, Non-Hispanics (2%) and Hispanics (1%)
- Those with a graduate degree (10%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (4%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 250-499 (10%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (3%) and 50-99 (4%)
- Assemblies of God/Pentecostals are the least likely denomination to select (1%)

The preaching style changed

- Those with a Bachelor's degree (25%) are more likely to select than those with some college (16%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (16% v. 22%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

A pastor left

- Those in the West (19%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (9%) and South (10%)
- White, Non-Hispanics (14%) are more likely to select than Black, Non-Hispanics (9%)
- Those with a Bachelor’s degree (18%) or a graduate degree (17%) are more likely to select than those with some college (8%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than those attending once or twice a month (11% v. 19%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (9% v. 16%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

The church changed its doctrine

- Those in the West (63%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (44%) and South (52%)
- Those age 35-49 (60%) are more likely to select than those 18-34 (47%)
- White, Non-Hispanics (59%) are more likely to select than Black, Non-Hispanics (45%)
- Those with a Bachelor's degree (66%) or a graduate degree (64%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (46%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are more likely to select than those attending once or twice a month (56% v. 41%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (59% v. 48%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 50-99 (59%), 250-499 (59%), 500-999 (64%), and 1000 or more (60%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (42%)
- Non-denominational (68%) are more likely to select than Baptists (53%), Methodists (46%), and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (52%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

Political views were expressed that differed from mine

- Males (13%) are more likely to select than females (7%)
- Those in the Midwest (12%) are more likely to select than those in the South (7%)
- White, Non-Hispanics (12%) are more likely to select than Black, Non-Hispanics (6%)
- Those with a graduate degree (17%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (7%) or with some college (8%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than those attending once or twice a month (8% v. 18%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (6% v. 13%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (14%) and 250-499 (13%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of 1000 or more (5%)
- Methodists (21%) are more likely to select than Baptists (8%), Non-denominational (7%), and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (5%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

I had a relational conflict with someone

- Black, Non-Hispanics are the least likely ethnic group to select (1%)
- Those with a Bachelor's degree (8%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (2%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than those once or twice a month (3% v. 10%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (2% v. 7%)
- Lutherans (9%) and Methodists (8%) are more likely to select than Non-denominational (2%)

“Which if any of the following would cause you to strongly consider changing churches?”

I didn't feel needed

- Hispanics are the least likely ethnic group to select (<1%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (4% v. 8%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 50-99 (9%) and 250-499 (9%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (3%)

“Thinking about the help you receive related to your spiritual growth, would you say your church is...”

- Those in the West (42%) are more likely to answer “Extremely helpful” than those in the Northeast (28%) and Midwest (29%)
- Those age 35-49 (42%) are more likely to answer “Extremely helpful” than those 65+ (29%)
- Hispanics (47%) are more likely to answer “Extremely helpful” than White, Non-Hispanics (34%)
- Compared to those attending once or twice a month, those attending church services at least once a week are more likely to answer “Extremely helpful” (38% v. 25%) and “Very helpful” (42% v. 28%), and less likely to answer “Moderately helpful” (13% v. 35%) and “Slightly helpful” (4% v. 8%)
- Compared to those without Evangelical Beliefs, those with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to answer “Extremely helpful” (49% v. 21%) and less likely to answer “Very helpful” (36% v. 46%), “Moderately helpful” (11% v. 23%), and “Slightly helpful” (3% v. 7%)

“Thinking about the help you receive related to your spiritual growth, would you say your church is...”

- Those attending a church with attendance of 500-999 (46%) and 1000 or more (50%) are more likely to answer “Extremely helpful” than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (29%), 50-99 (30%), and 250-499 (33%)
- Baptists (38%), Non-denominational (48%), and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (36%) are more likely to answer “Extremely helpful” than Lutherans (21%) and Methodists (18%)

“In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?”

Help me find new ways to serve that fit my abilities

- Males (24%) are more likely to select than females (17%)
- Those with some college (25%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (16%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (23% v. 16%)

Help me understand more about God and His word

- Those in the Midwest (33%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (21%) and West (24%)
- Those age 18-34 are the most likely age group to select (37%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (30% v. 23%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (33%) and 50-99 (32%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of 100-249 (22%)

“In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?”

Provide more Bible study groups to choose from

- Those age 65+ are the least likely age group to select (11%)
- Those who are high school graduates or less are the least likely education level to select (14%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than attending once or twice a month (18% v. 26%)
- Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (31%) are more likely to select than Baptists (17%) and Lutherans (18%)

Provide more interaction with the pastor

- Those age 18-34 (14%) are more likely to select than those 35-49 (8%) and 50-64 (8%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (7% v. 11%)

“In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?”

Provide Bible studies at different times

- Females (20%) are more likely to select than males (15%)
- Those age 18-34 (23%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (16%)
- Hispanics (23%) are more likely to select than Black, Non-Hispanics (14%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 50-99 (24%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (15%), 100-249 (17%), and 1000 or more (14%)

Provide me with a mentor

- Those age 18-34 (16%) and 35-49 (12%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (3%) and 65+ (2%)
- Hispanics (19%) are more likely to select than White, Non-Hispanics (5%) and Black, Non-Hispanics (8%)
- Those with some college (11%) or a graduate degree (13%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (5%)
- Non-denominational (12%) and Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (13%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (4%) and Methodists (2%)

“In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?”

Help me get to know more people in the church

- Those in the Midwest (20%) are more likely to select than those in the South (14%)
- Those age 18-34 (25%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (11%) and 65+ (13%)
- Those with some college (19%) or a Bachelor's degree (19%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (13%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than those attending once or twice a month (14% v. 28%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (14% v. 19%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of 250-499 (22%), 500-999 (22%), and 1000 or more (20%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (9%)

“In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?”

Provide a forum to answer my spiritual questions

- Those in the South (17%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (10%)
- Those age 65+ are the least likely age group to select (9%)
- Black, Non-Hispanics (21%) and Hispanics (28%) are more likely to select than White, Non-Hispanics (9%)
- Assemblies of God/Pentecostals are the most likely denomination to select (37%)

“In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?”

Provide opportunities to serve more often

- Those age 18-34 are the most likely to select (21%)
- Those with some college (16%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (10%)
- Those attending church services at least once a week are less likely to select than those attending once or twice a month (12% v. 18%)
- Assemblies of God/Pentecostals (21%) are more likely to select than Baptists (9%)

Provide worship experiences that fit my needs

- Those with some college (15%) or a Bachelor's degree (18%) are more likely to select than those who are high school graduates or less (10%)
- Those with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to select than those without Evangelical Beliefs (11% v. 15%)
- Those attending a church with attendance of less than 50 (20%) are more likely to select than those attending a church with attendance of 100-249 (12%) and 1000 or more (8%)

“In which, if any, of the following ways would you like your church to improve the help they provide related to your spiritual growth?”

None of these, no improvement needed

- Those in the Northeast (45%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (32%)
- Those age 50-64 (41%) and 65+ (41%) are more likely to select than those 18-34 (27%) and 35-49 (32%)
- White, Non-Hispanics (38%) are more likely to select than Hispanics (27%)
- Assemblies of God/Pentecostals are the least likely denomination to select (22%)

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