Pastors’ Views on Sermon Length

Survey of American Protestant Pastors
Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors was conducted August 30 -- September 24, 2019
- 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 ±3.3%
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
Survey Responses
85% say that their sermons are less than 40 minutes

Among Protestant Pastors

- Less than 15 minutes: 9%
- 15 to less than 20 minutes: 22%
- 20 to less than 30 minutes: 26%
- 30 to less than 40 minutes: 28%
- 40 to less than 50 minutes: 10%
- 50 minutes to less than an hour: 2%
- At least an hour: 2%
- Not sure: <1%

Q28: “How long is your typical sermon?”
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 pastor’s ethnicity, age, gender, education, and self-identified Evangelical or Mainline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Self-Identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18-44</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No College Degree</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Mainline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnicity</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65+</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant Statistical Differences

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>100-249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>250+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presbyterian/Reformed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian/Church of Christ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“How long is your typical sermon?”

- White pastors (34%) are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than African American pastors (19%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (9%)
- African American pastors (20%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (28%) are more likely to select “At least 40 minutes” than White pastors (12%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (35%) are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than pastors age 45-54 (24%)
- Pastors age 45-54 (17%) are more likely to select “At least 40 minutes” than pastors age 55-64 (11%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than male pastors (59% v. 26%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “At least 40 minutes” than female pastors (15% v. 9%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (42%) or a Doctoral degree (34%) are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than those with no college degree (10%) or a Bachelor’s degree (9%)
- Pastors with no college degree (23%) or a Bachelor’s degree (25%) are more likely to select “At least 40 minutes” than those with a Master’s degree (10%) or a Doctoral degree (8%)
“How long is your typical sermon?”

- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than Evangelical pastors (54% v. 17%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “At least 40 minutes” than Mainline pastors (18% v. 6%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (45%) and Midwest (40%) are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than those in the South (26%) and West (19%)
- Pastors in the West (22%) are more likely to select “At least 40 minutes” than those in the South (12%) and Midwest (14%)
- Lutherans (86%), Methodists (52%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (47%) are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than Baptists (2%), Pentecostals (3%), and Christian/Church of Christ (18%)
- Baptists (23%) and Pentecostals (26%) are more likely to select “At least 40 minutes” than Lutherans (1%), Methodists (1%), Presbyterian/Reformed (5%) and Christian/Church of Christ (9%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (43%) and 50-99 (35%) are more likely to select “Less than 20 minutes” than those at churches of 100-249 (23%) and 250+ (21%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are most likely to select “At least 40 minutes” (22%)
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