

Protestant Churchgoers' Views on Church Participation during COVID-19

A SURVEY OF 1,000 AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway **research**

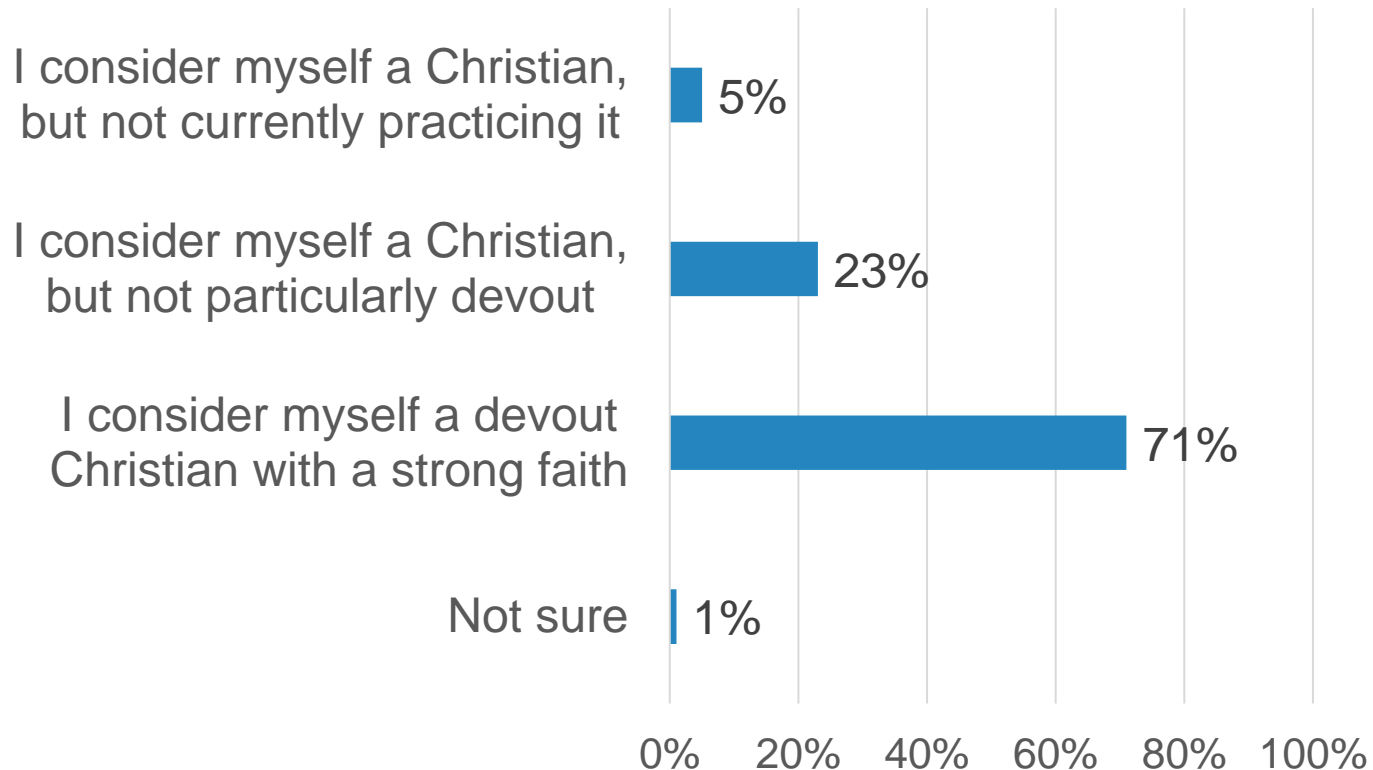
Methodology

- The online survey of 1,000 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted February 5-18, 2021 using a national, pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attended religious services at least once a month in 2019
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, and education to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,000 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weight
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Comparisons are made to a Lifeway Research survey of Protestant churchgoers September 20-27, 2019 using the same methodology

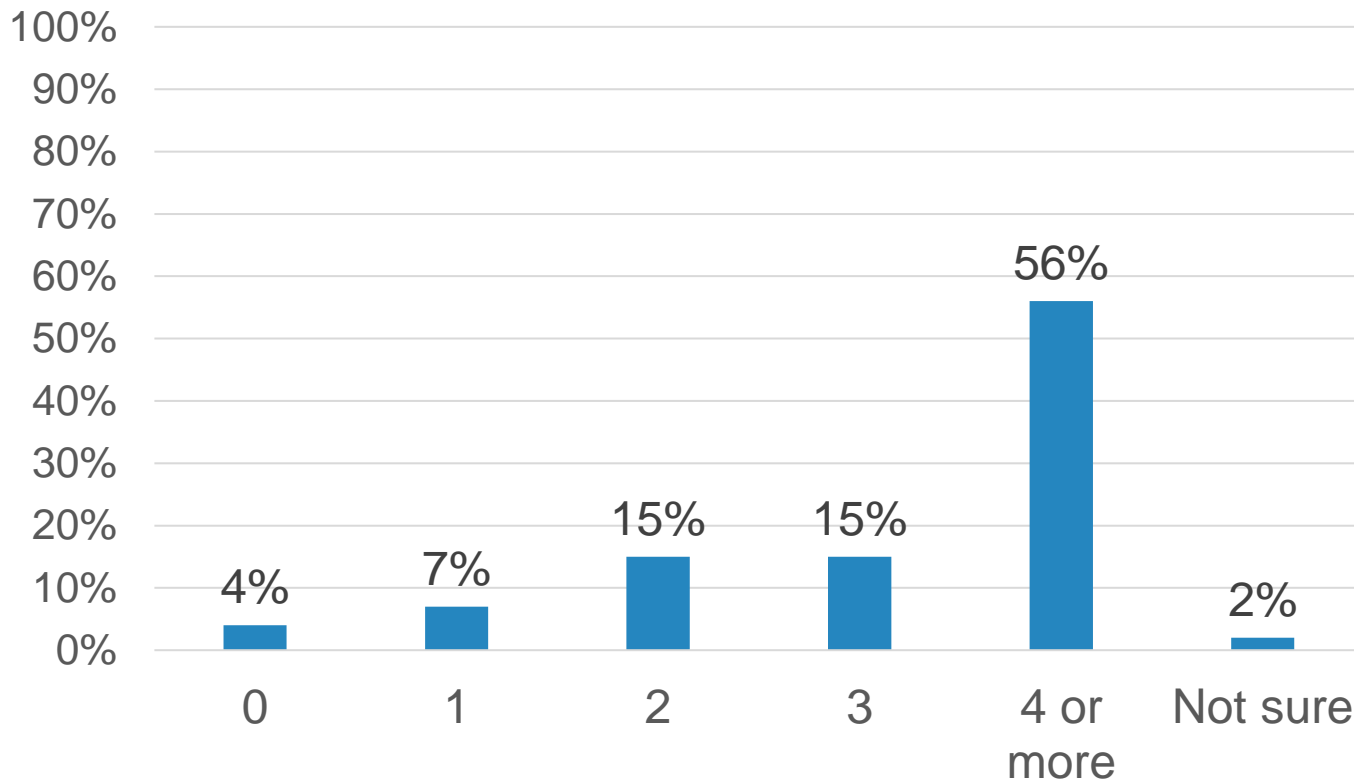
Definitions

- **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

7 out of 10 (71%) consider themselves devout Christians with a strong faith

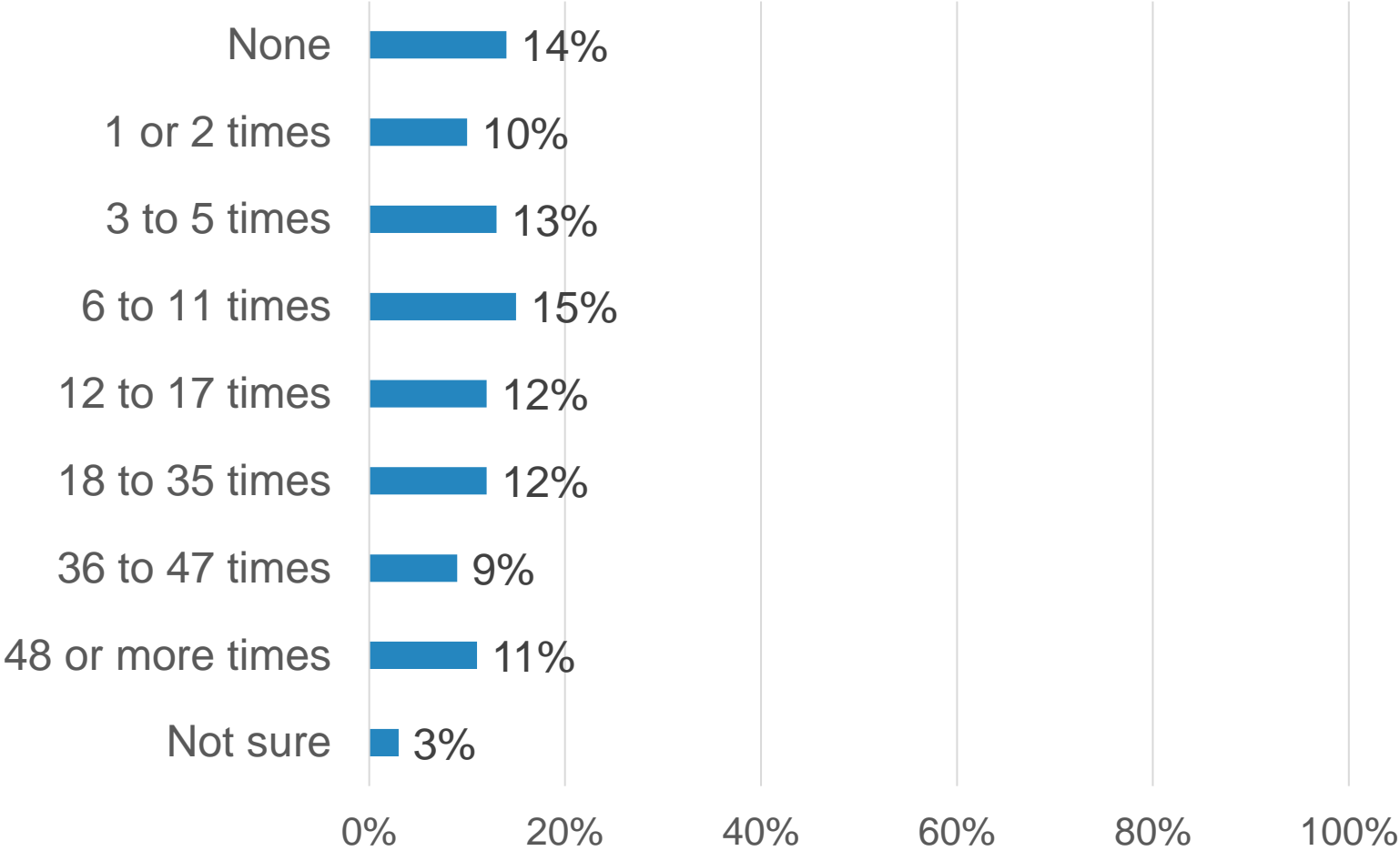


In January 2020, 56% attended a worship service 4 or more times in-person at their church



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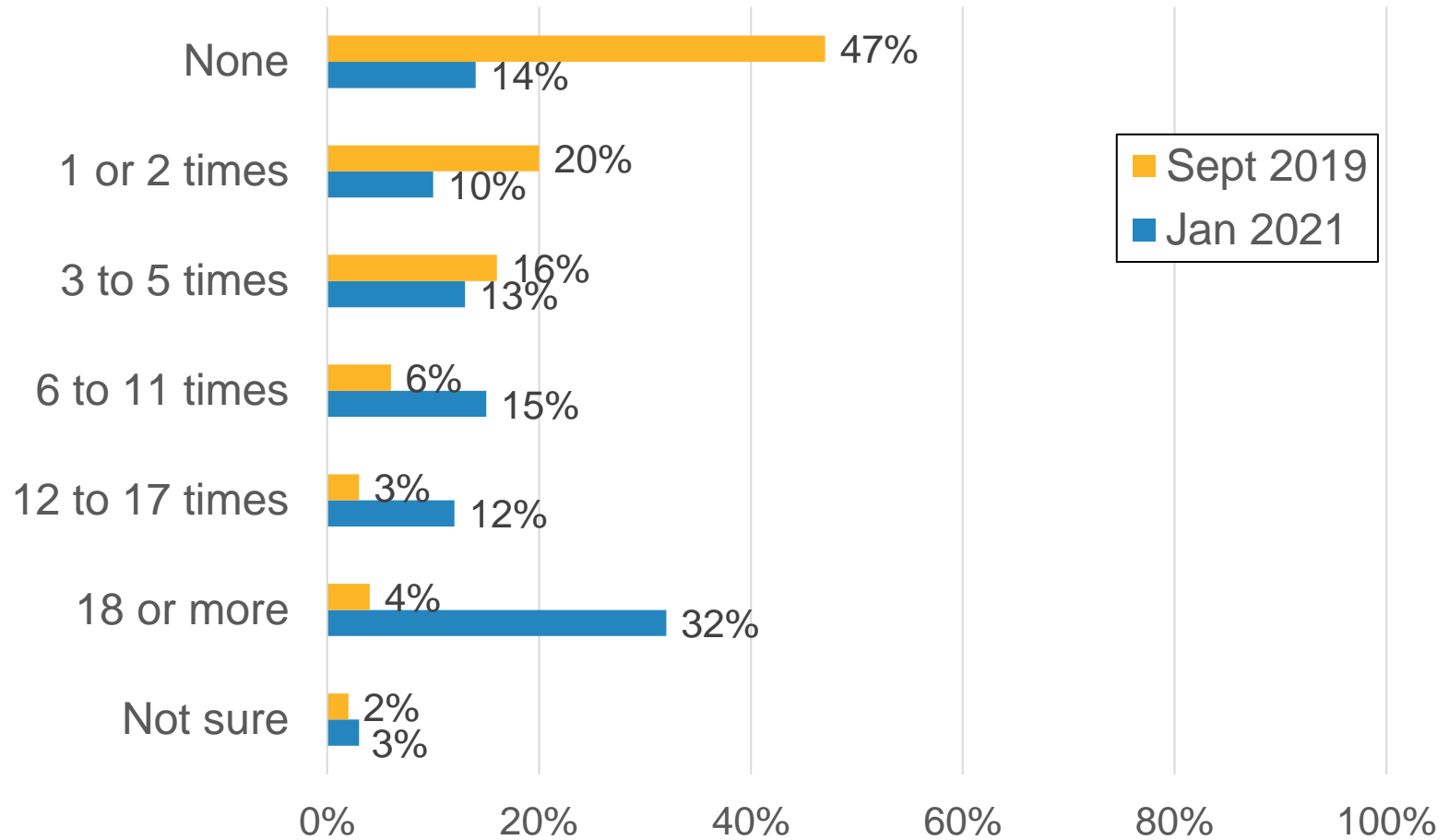
83% watched a live stream service in place of attending in person at least once this last year



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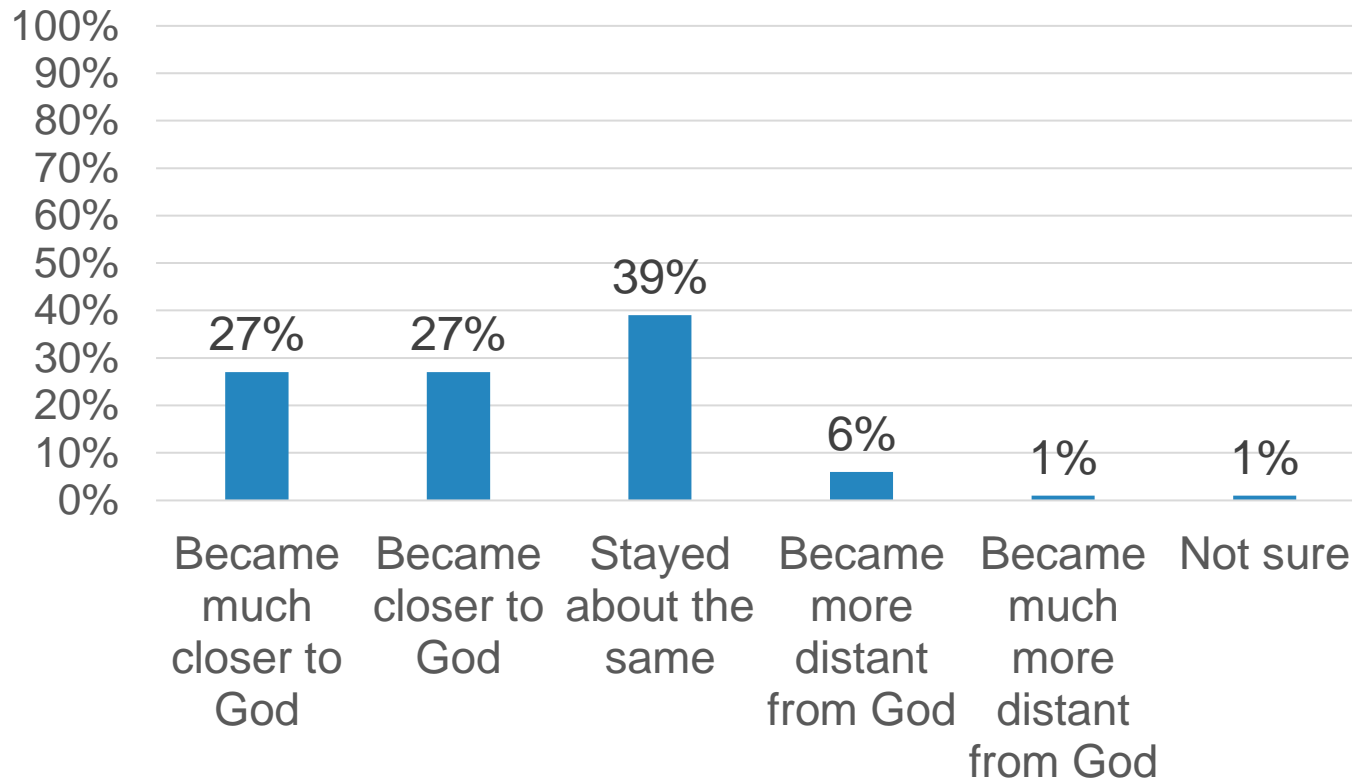
Q12: "In the last year, approximately how many times have you watched a live video stream of a church service instead of attending in person?"

8 times more churchgoers watched at least 18 live stream services instead of in person in 2021 compared to 2019



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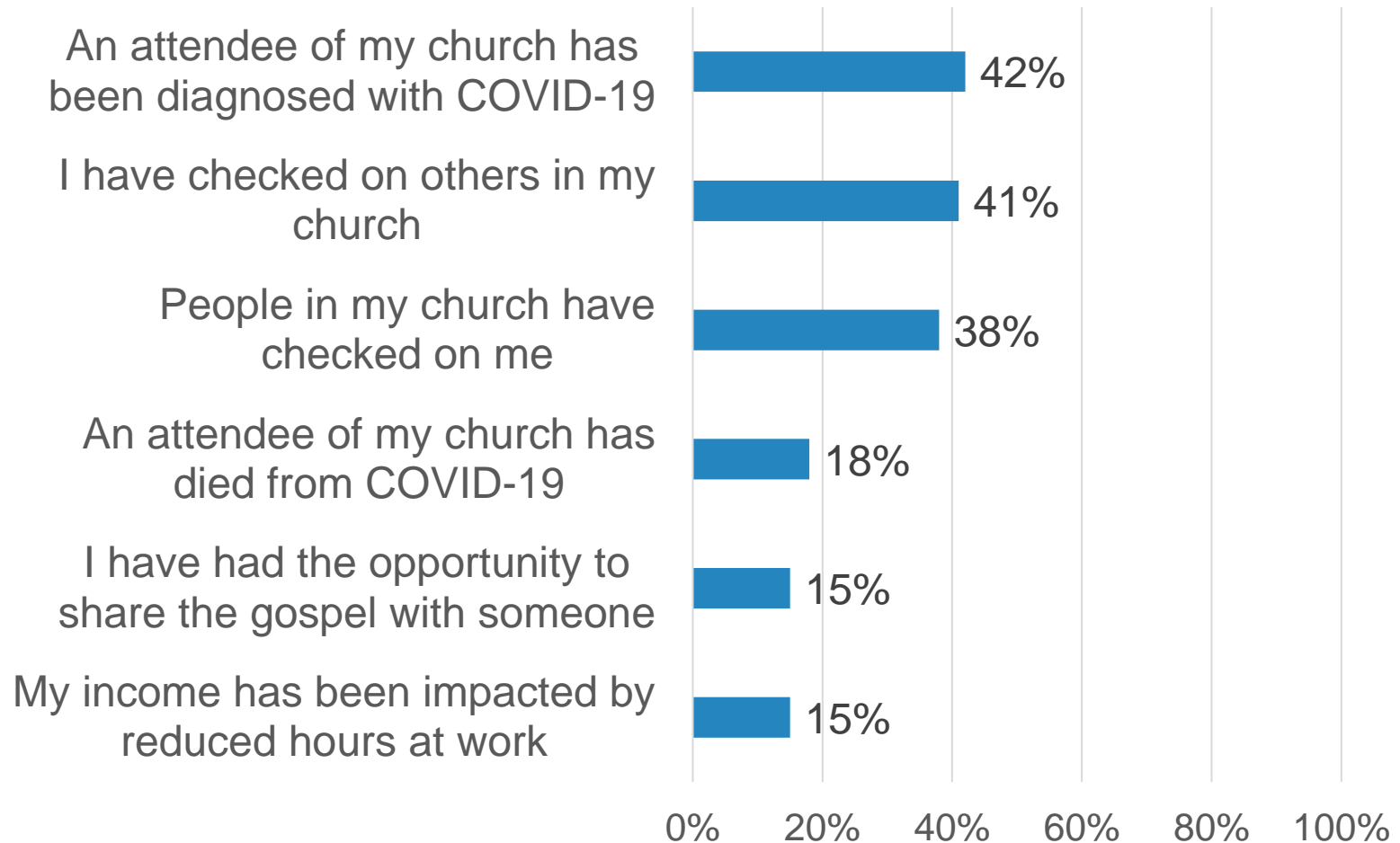
“Overall, how have the events of 2020 impacted your relationship with God?”



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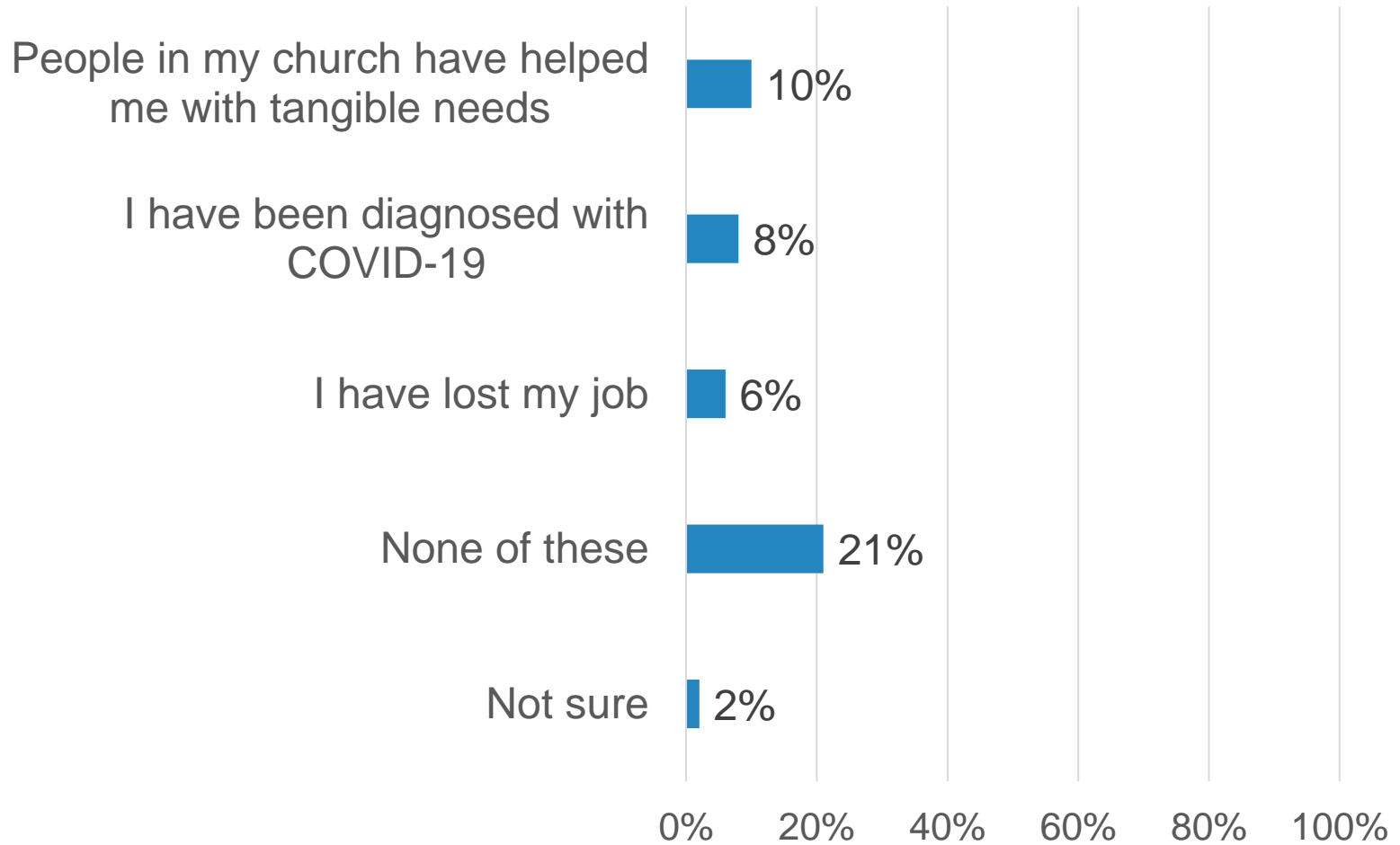
Q:18 “Overall, how have the events of 2020 impacted your relationship with God?”

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”



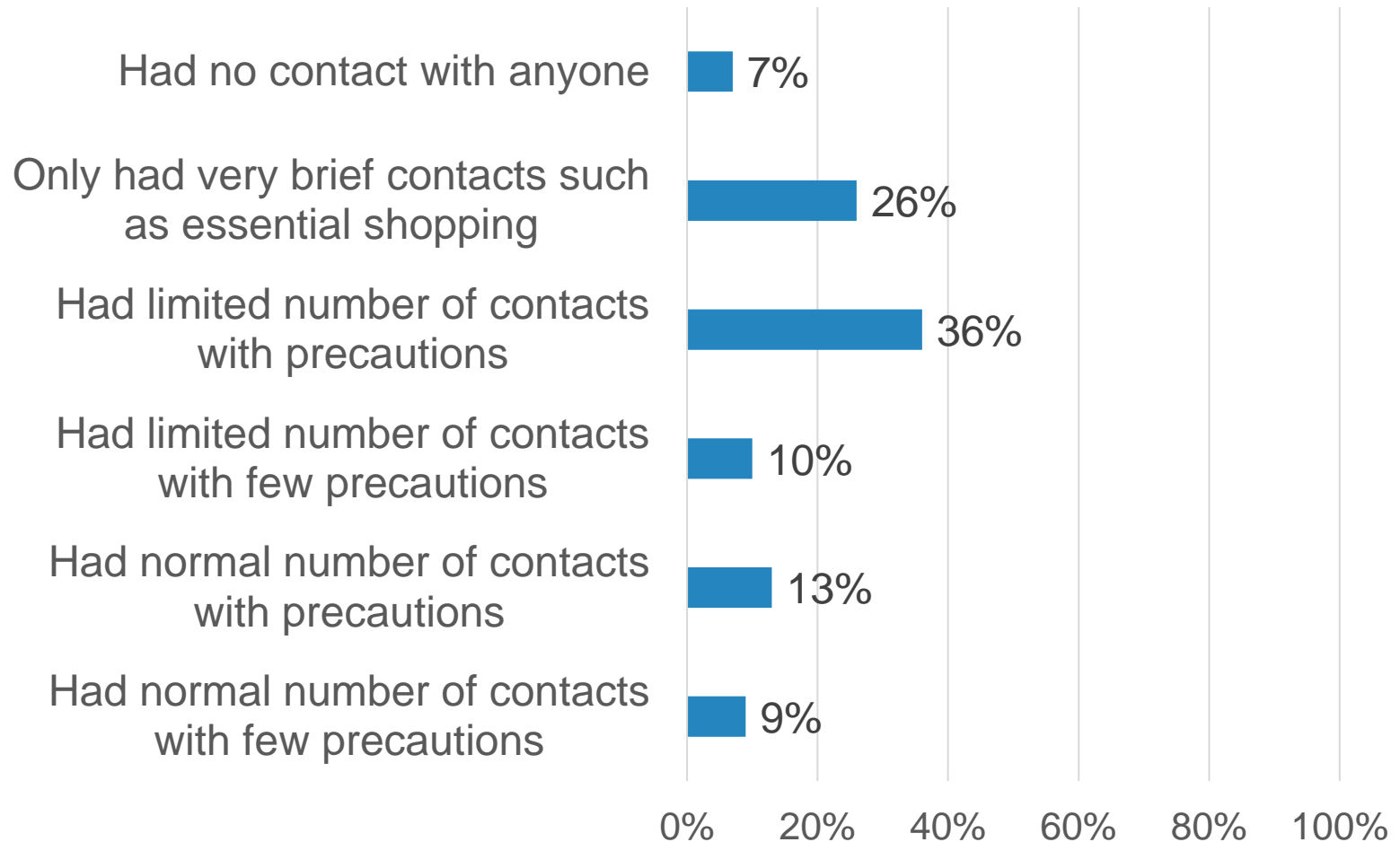
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“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?” Continued



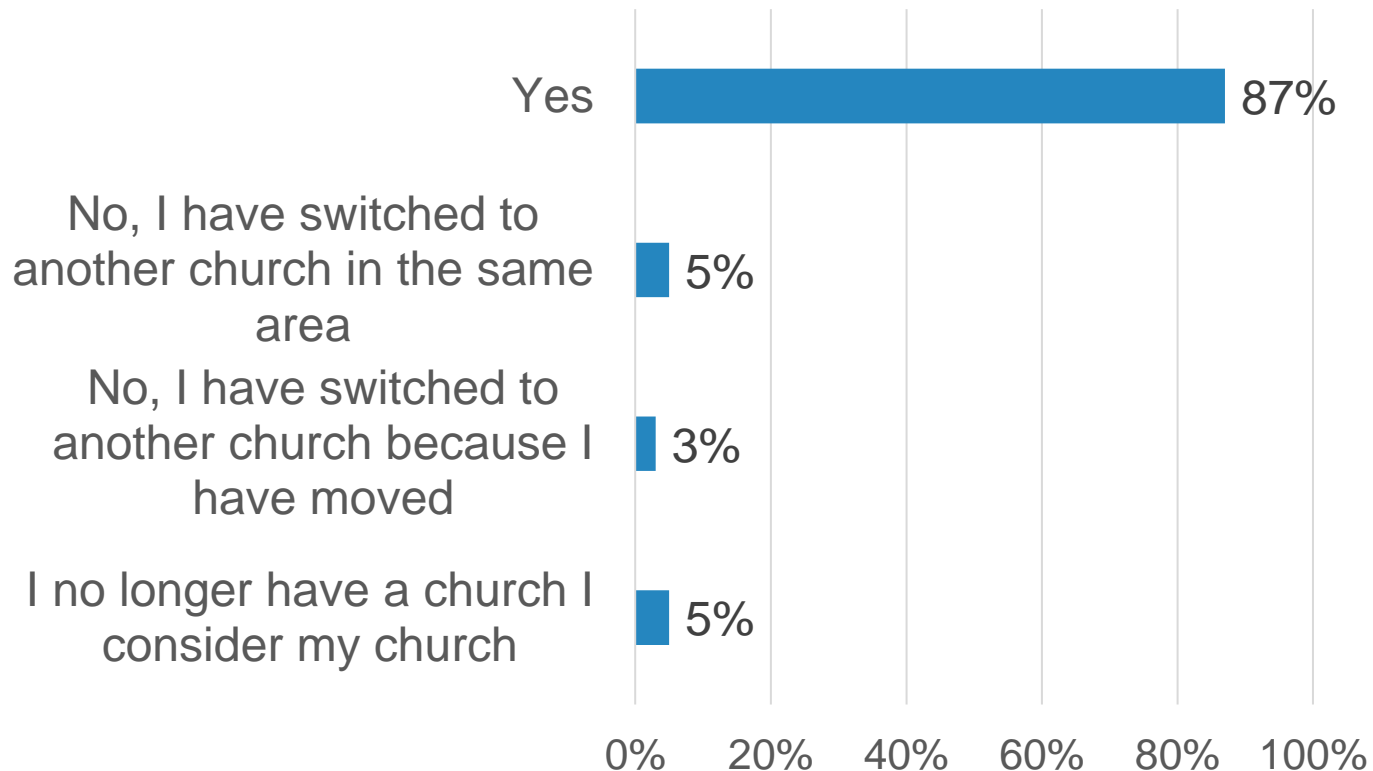
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“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

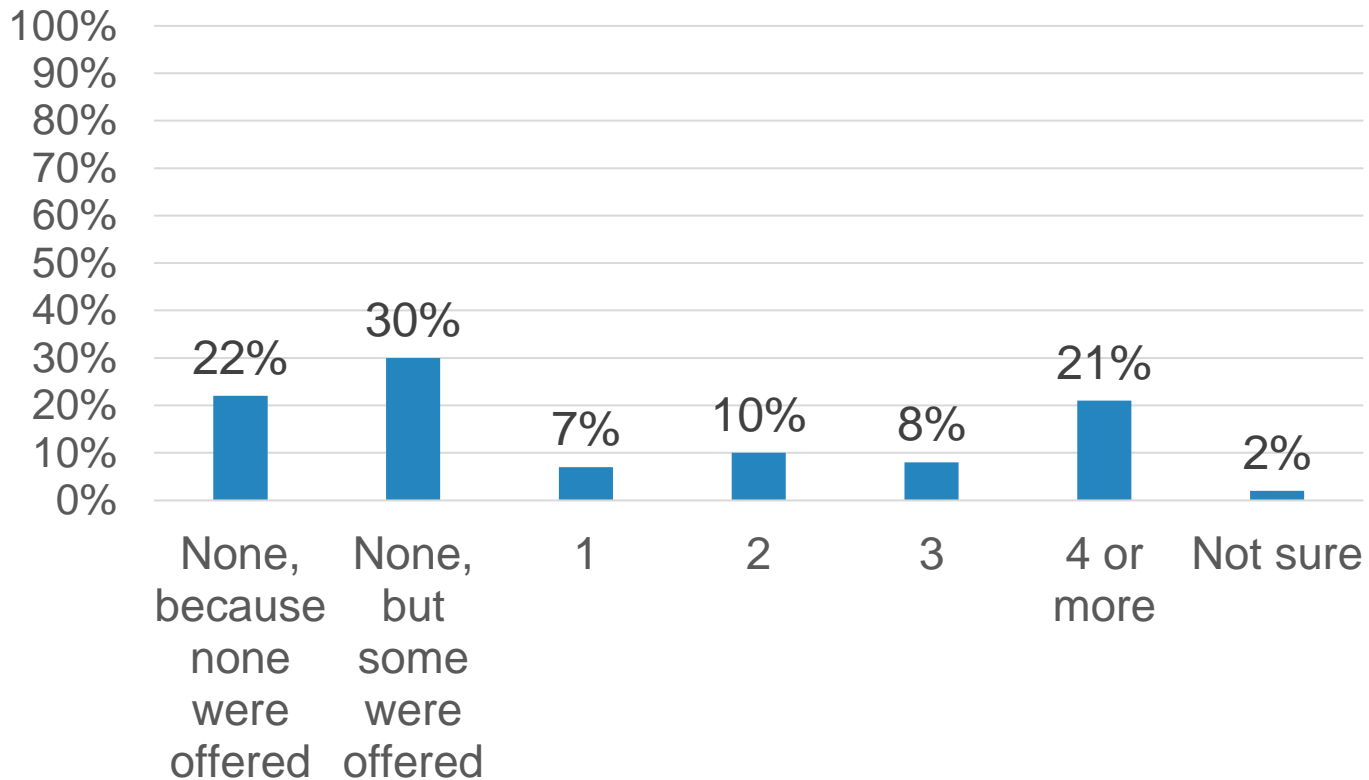


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87% attend the same church as they did in January 2020



In January 2021, 47% of those with a church attended a worship service in person

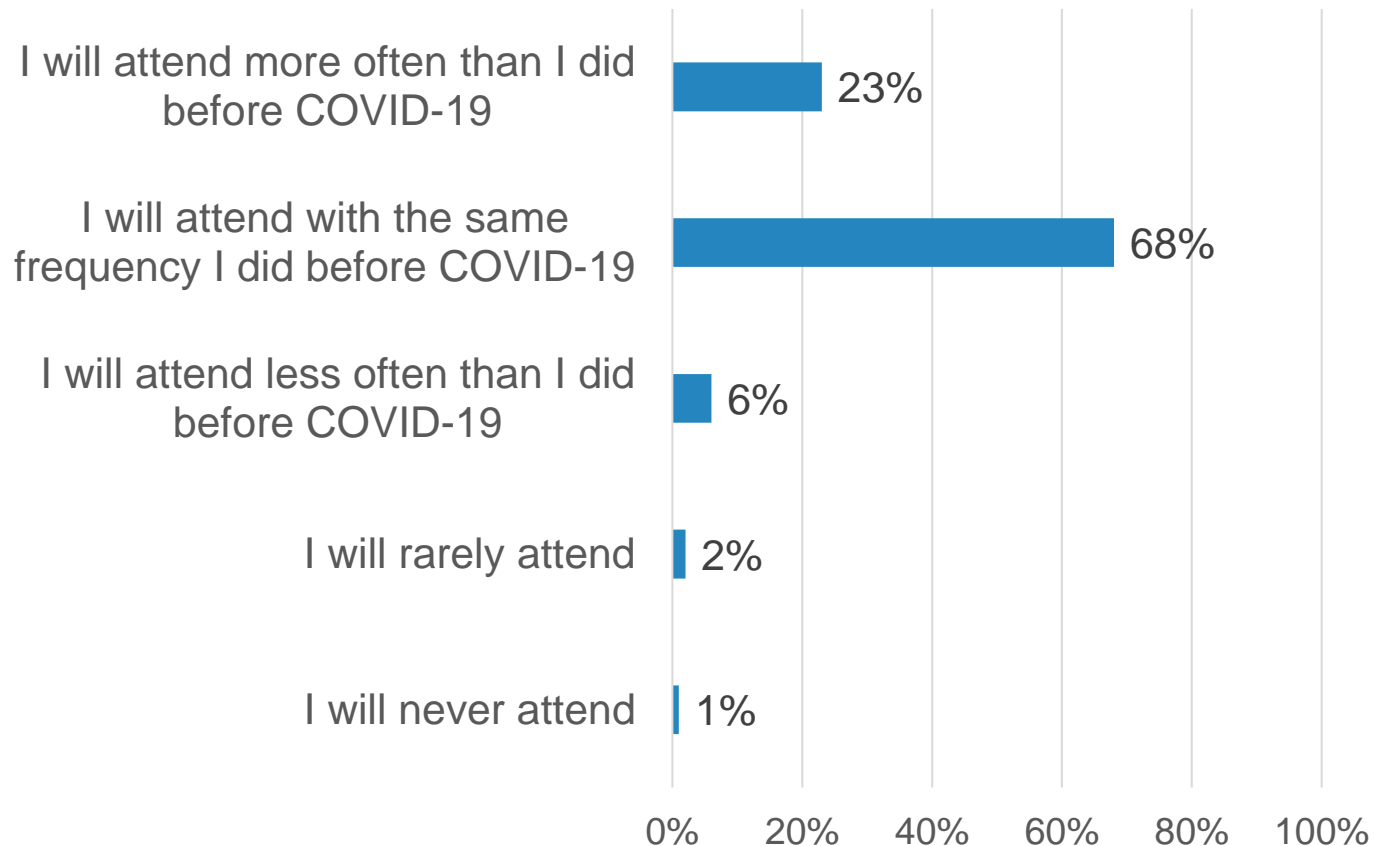


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Q22: "In January 2021, how many times did you attend a worship service in-person at your church? (Select One)"

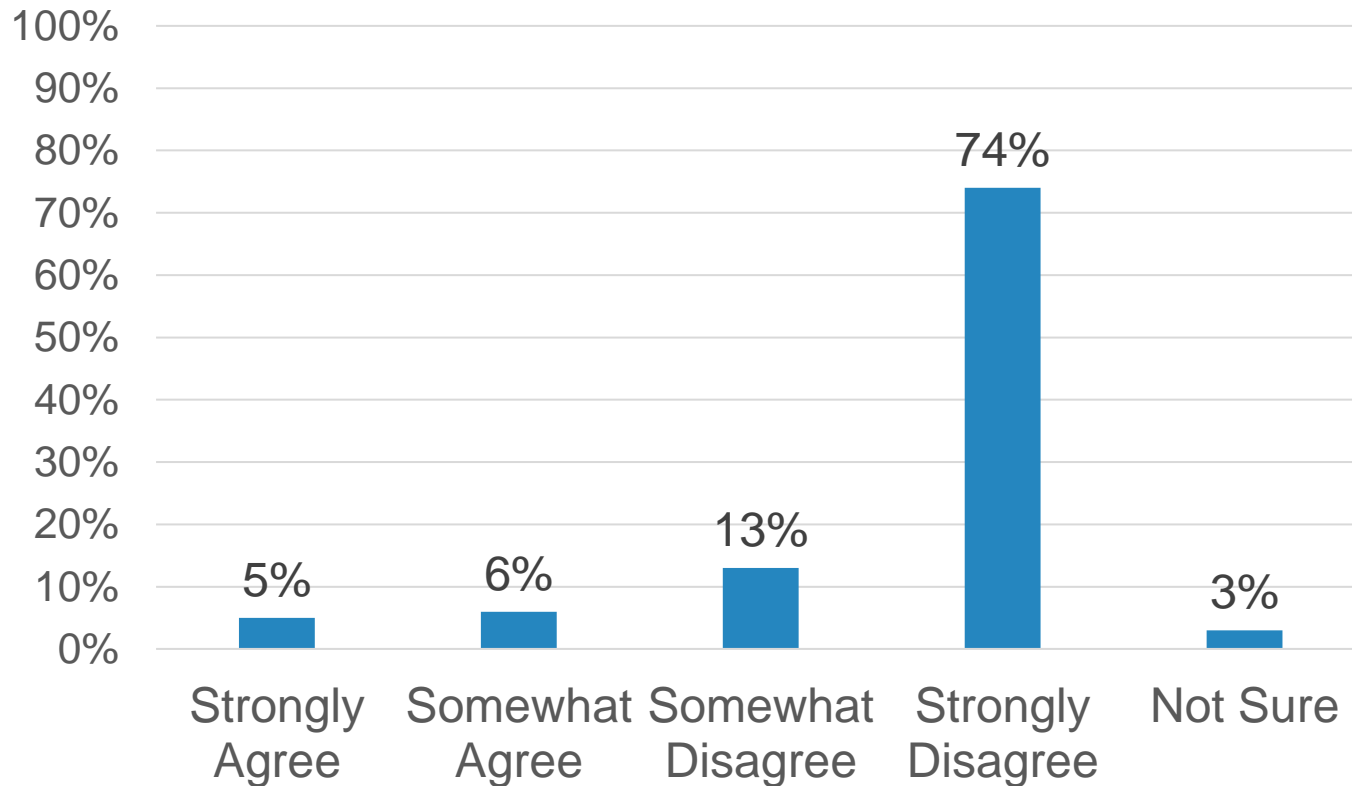
Asked of those who have a church in Q21 n=949

91% plan to attend worship services in person as often or more than before COVID-19



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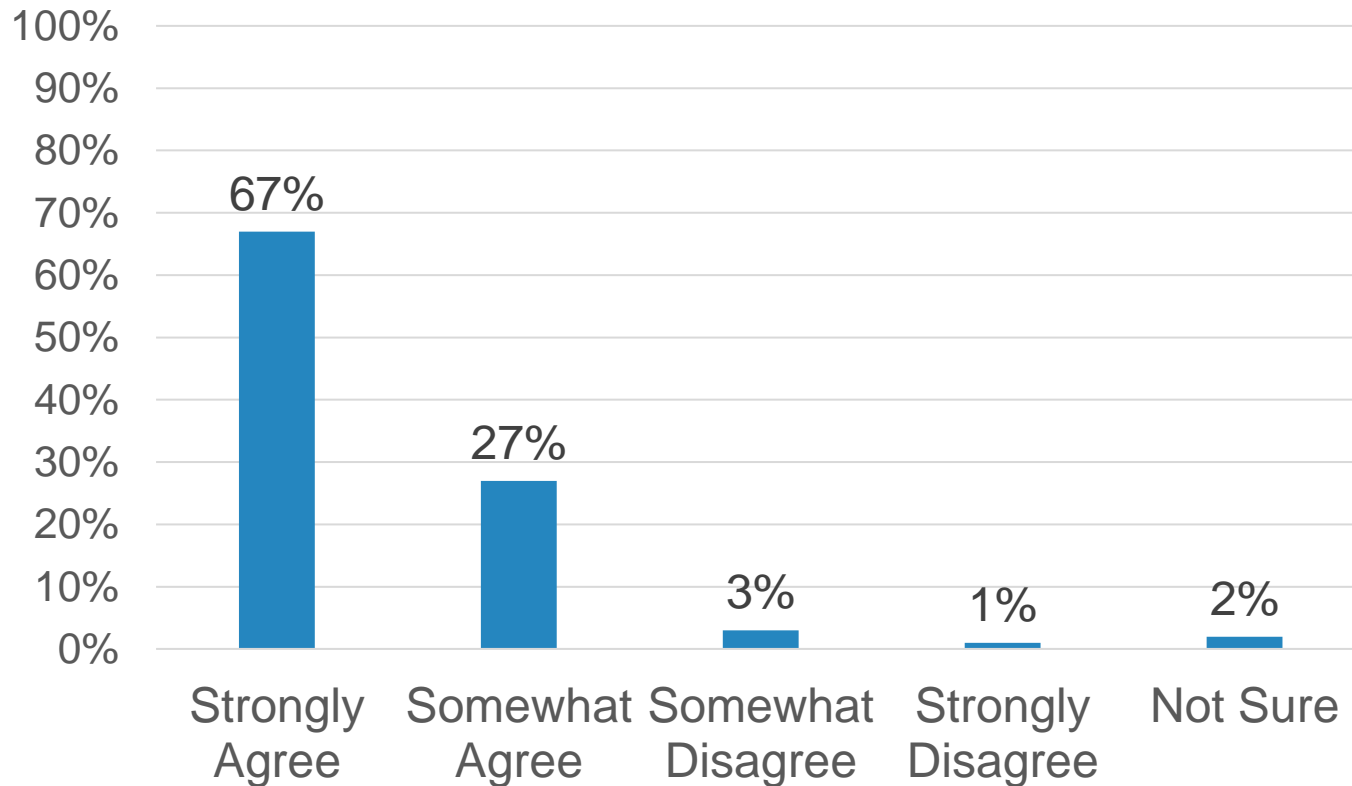
11% say they are currently questioning their Christian faith



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Q33: "I am currently questioning my Christian faith"

94% greatly value the times they can attend worship services in person with others from their church



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Q36: "I greatly value the times I can attend worship services in person with others in my church."

Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Worship Service Attendance, January 2020

Denomination

Evangelical Beliefs

Significant Differences

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

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	REGION	EDUCATION
Male	18-29	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	30-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among worship service attendance, denomination, and evangelical beliefs.

WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE, JANUARY 2020	DENOMINATION	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
0-1 times	Baptist	Yes
2 to 3 times	Lutheran	No
4 or more times	Methodist	
	Non-denominational	

“Which one of the following statements best describes your current faith?”

- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select “I consider myself a Christian, but not currently practicing” (13%)
- Those age 65+are more likely to select “I consider myself a devout Christian with a strong faith” (83%)
- African Americans (12%) and Hispanics (13%) are more likely to select “I consider myself a Christian, but not currently practicing” than Whites (2%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (72%) or with a Bachelor’s Degree (81%) are more likely to select “I consider myself a devout Christian with a strong faith” than those with some college (65%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the most likely to select “I consider myself a devout Christian with a strong faith” (81%)
- Non-denominational (77%) are more likely to select “I consider myself a devout Christian with a strong faith” than Lutherans (60%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I consider myself a devout Christian with a strong faith” than those without evangelical beliefs (87% v. 55%)

“In January 2020 (before COVID-19), about how many times did you attend a worship service in-person at your church?”

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “4 or more” (67%)
- Those with a Bachelor’s Degree (63%) are more likely to select “4 or more” than those with some college (51%) or a Graduate Degree (51%)
- Baptists (61%) are more likely to select “4 or more” than Lutherans (41%) and Methodists (48%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “4 or more” than those without evangelical beliefs (70% v. 44%)

“In the last year, approximately how many times have you watched a live video stream of a church service instead of attending in-person?”

- Those age 50-64 (25%) and 65+ (27%) are more likely to indicate 36 or more times than those 18-29 (11%) and 30-49 (15%)
- African Americans (21%) and Hispanics (18%) are more likely to select “3 to 5 times” than Whites (11%)
- Those in the West (16%) are more likely to select “48 or more times” than those in the Midwest (8%)
- Those with a Bachelor’s Degree (19%) are more likely to select “18 to 35 times” than those who are High School Graduates or less (11%) or with some college (9%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the most likely to select “18 to 35 times” (15%)
- Methodists are the most likely to select “18 to 35 times” (25%)
- Lutherans are the most likely to select “None” (23%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are less likely to indicate 5 or less times than those without evangelical beliefs (29% v. 46%)

“Overall, how have the events of 2020 impacted your relationship with God?”

- Females are more likely to select “Became closer to God” than Males (31% v. 22%)
- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select “Became much closer to God” (37%)
- African Americans (44%) and Hispanics (38%) are more likely to select “Became much closer to God” than Whites (20%)
- Those in the South are the most likely to select “Became much closer to God” (33%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (29%) are more likely to select “Became much closer to God” than those with a Graduate Degree (19%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the likely to select “Became much closer to God” (32%)

“Overall, how have the events of 2020 impacted your relationship with God?” *(continued)*

- Baptists (37%) and non-denominational (31%) are more likely to select “Became much closer to God” than Lutherans (10%) and Methodists (17%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “Became much closer to God” than those without evangelical beliefs (38% v. 16%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

I have been diagnosed with COVID-19

- Those in the West (12%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (4%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

An attendee of my church has been diagnosed with COVID-19

- Those age 50-64 (46%) and 65+ (45%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (33%)
- Whites (47%) are more likely to select than African Americans (28%) and Hispanics (36%)
- Those in the South (46%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (38%) and West (33%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the most likely to select (47%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (46% v. 37%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

An attendee of my church has died from COVID-19

- Those in the South (20%) are more likely to select than those in the West (13%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 (21%) are more likely to select than those that attended 2 to 3 times in January 2020 (15%)
- Baptists (22%) are more likely to select than non-denominational (12%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

I have lost my job

- Those age 18-29 (12%) and 30-49 (9%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (3%) and 65+ (1%)
- Those with a Graduate degree are the least likely to select (1%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the least likely to select (5%)
- Non-denominational (10%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (3%) and Methodists (4%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

My income has been impacted by reduced hours at work

- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select (26%)
- African Americans are the most likely to select (24%)
- Those with some college (20%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (19%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (9%)
- Non-denominational (18%) are more likely to select than Methodists (9%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

I have had the opportunity to share the gospel with someone

- Those age 18-29 (19%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (11%)
- African Americans are the most likely to select (23%)
- Those in the South (20%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (11%) and West (11%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the most likely to select (19%)
- Lutherans are the least likely to select (2%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (21% v. 10%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

People in my church have checked on me

- Those age 65+ (45%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (34%) and 50-64 (36%)
- Those in the South (41%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (32%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (41%) are more likely to select than those with a Graduate Degree (30%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are more likely to select (45%)
- Baptists (45%) and Methodists (44%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (25%) and non-denominational (31%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (44% v. 33%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

I have checked on others in my church

- Females are more likely to select than males (45% v. 36%)
- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select (50%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 attended are the most likely to select (50%)
- Baptists (48%) and Methodists (54%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (28%) and non-denominational (30%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (47% v. 35%)

“Which of the following have occurred as a result of the coronavirus spreading in 2020 and 2021?”

People in my church have helped me with tangible needs

- Females are more likely to select than males (12% v. 7%)
- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select (19%)
- African Americans (14%) are more likely to select than Whites (9%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (12%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (13%) are more likely to select than those with a Graduate Degree (4%)
- Those that attended a worship service 0-1 times in January 2020 are the least likely to select (4%)

“Which of the following best describes your activities in January 2021 with people not part of your own household?”

- Those age 30-49 (26%) are more likely to select “Normal number of contacts” than those 65+ (16%)
- African Americans (42%) and Hispanics (42%) are more likely to select “None/only brief contacts” than Whites (29%)
- Those that attended a worship service 0-1 times in January 2020 are the least likely to select “Normal number of contacts” (13%)
- Lutherans (51%) and Methodists (51%) are more likely to select “Limited number of contacts” than Baptists (38%)
- Baptists are the most likely to select “None/only brief contacts” (40%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are less likely to select “Limited number of contacts” than those without evangelical beliefs (42% v. 49%)

“Is the church you consider your church today the same one you attended in January 2020?”

- Those age 50-64 (89%) and 65+ (92%) are more likely to select “Yes” than those 18-29 (81%)
- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select “No, I have switched to another church because I moved” (9%)
- Whites (89%) are more likely to select “Yes” than African Americans (81%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (89%) or with a Graduate Degree (92%) are more likely to select “Yes” than those with some college (82%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the most likely to select “Yes” (90%)
- Lutherans (95%) are more likely to select “Yes” than Baptists (86%) and non-denominational (84%)

“In January 2021, how many times did you attend a worship service in-person at your church?”

- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select “1-3 times” (41%)
- African Americans (30%) and Hispanics (31%) are more likely to select “None, none offered” than Whites (18%)
- Whites (34%) are more likely to select “None, some offered” than African Americans (21%) and Hispanics (20%)
- Those in the Northeast (33%) and West (29%) are more likely to select “None, none offered” than those in the South (18%)
- Those that attended a worship service 2 to 3 times in January 2020 are the most likely to select “1-3 times” (37%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the most likely to select “4 or more times” (34%)
- Baptists (26%) and non-denominational (31%) are more likely to select “1-3 times” than Methodists (13%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “4 or more times” than those without evangelical beliefs (34% v. 10%)

“When COVID-19 is no longer an active threat to people’s health, which best reflects your plans for attending worship services at your church in person.”

- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select “I will attend more often than I did before COVID-19” than those 65+ (43%)
- Whites are the most likely to select “I will attend the same frequency I did before COVID-19” (76%)
- Those in the South (27%) are more likely to select “I will attend more often than I did before COVID-19” than those in the Northeast (16%) and Midwest (19%)
- Those with some college (12%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (11%) are more likely to select “I will attend less/rarely/never” than those who are High School Graduates or less (6%)
- Those that attended a worship service 0-1 times in January 2020 (13%) and 2-3 times (14%) are more likely to select “I will attend less/rarely/never” than those that attended 4 or more times in January 2020 (6%)

“When COVID-19 is no longer an active threat to people’s health, which best reflects your plans for attending worship services at your church in person.” *(continued)*

- Baptists (27%) are more likely to select “I will attend more often than I did before COVID-19” than Lutherans (17%) and Methodists (16%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I will attend more often than I did before COVID-19” than those without evangelical beliefs (28% v. 19%)

“I am currently questioning my Christian faith.”

- Males are more likely to Agree than Females (14% v. 9%)
- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to Agree (24%)
- Whites are the most likely to Disagree (90%)
- Those in the Northeast (14%) and South (13%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Midwest (5%)
- Those with a Bachelor’s Degree (16%) are more likely to Agree than those with some college (9%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 (88%) are more likely to Disagree than those that attended 2 to 3 times in January 2020 (83%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Disagree than those without evangelical beliefs (92% v. 82%)

“I greatly value the times I can attend worship services in person with others in my church.”

- Those age 65+ (97%) are more likely to Agree than those 18-29 (91%) and 30-49 (92%)
- Those that attended a worship service 4 or more times in January 2020 are the most likely to Agree (97%)
- Baptists (95%) are more likely to Agree than Lutherans (90%) and non-denominational (91%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (97% v. 90%)

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