

Pastor Attrition Study 2021

A SURVEY OF 1,576 EVANGELICAL AND BLACK PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research

Methodology

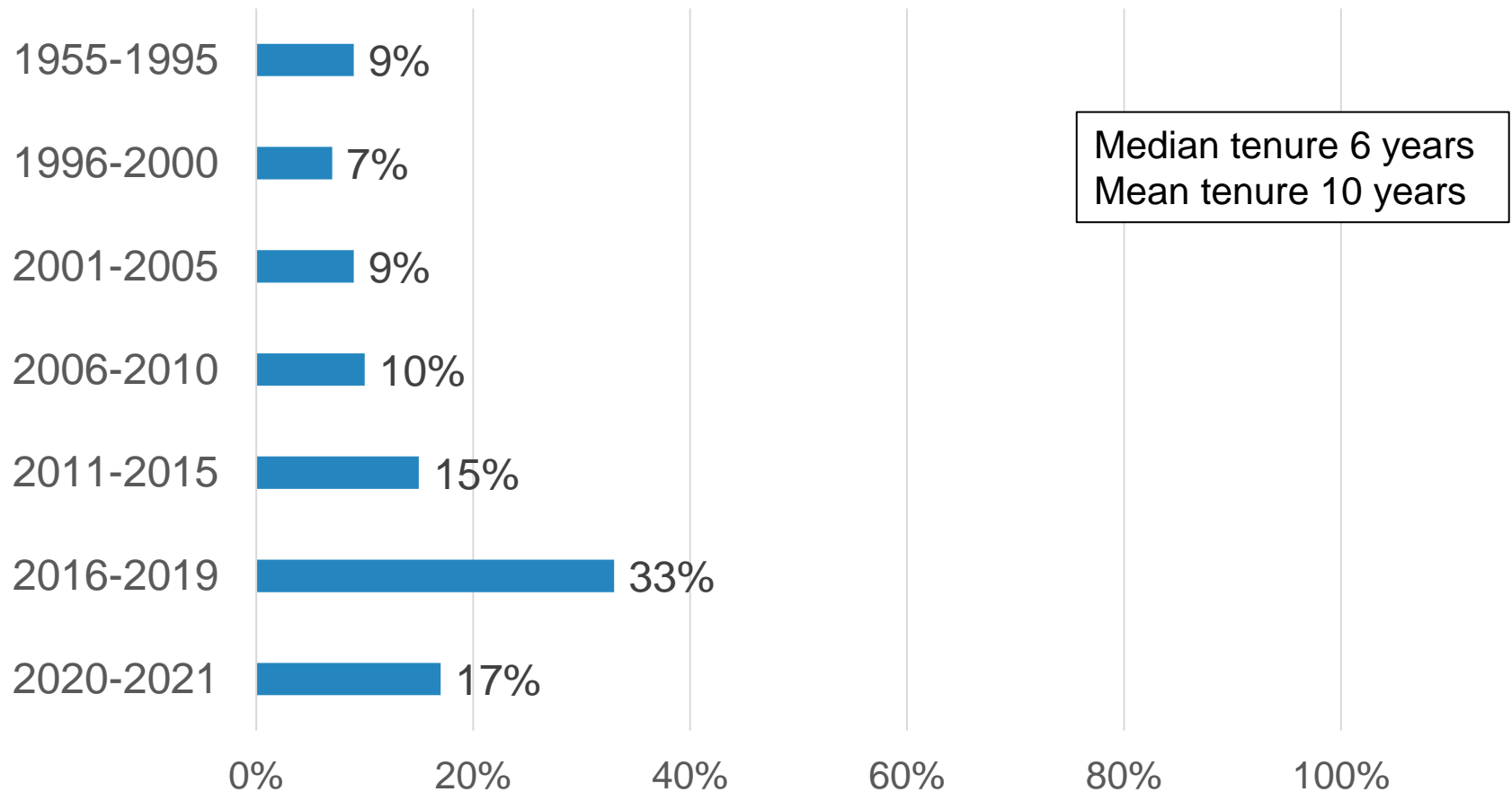
- The study was sponsored by Houston's First Baptist Church and Richard Dockins, MD
- The mixed mode survey of 1,576 Evangelical and Black Protestant pastors was conducted August 17–September 15, 2021, using both phone and online interviews
- Phone: The calling list was a random sample, stratified by church membership, drawn from a list of all churches in all Evangelical and Black Protestant religious traditions except Southern Baptists
- Online: The email list was a random sample drawn from all Southern Baptist congregations with an email address. Invitations were emailed to the pastor by Lifeway Research followed by one reminders
- Each survey was completed by the senior pastor, minister or priest at the church contacted

Methodology

- The completed sample is 1,576 surveys (1,000 phone 576 online)
- Responses were weighted by region, church size, and denominational group to more accurately reflect the population
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 2.7\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Comparisons are made to a phone survey of 1,500 Evangelical and Black Protestant pastors conducted by Lifeway Research March 5-18, 2015. The 2015 Pastor Protection study was sponsored by the North American Mission Board and Richard Dockins, MD

51% of pastors started at their current church in the last 6 years

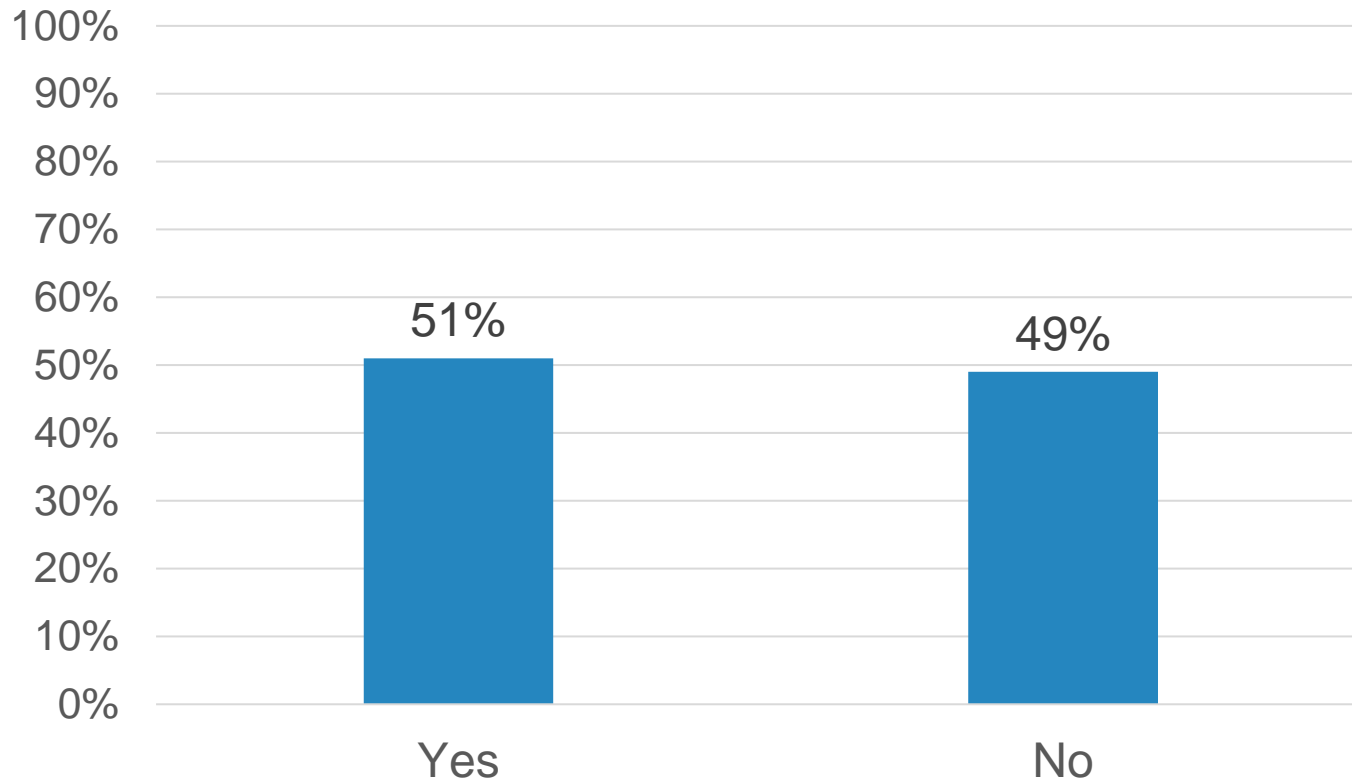
Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

49% of today's pastors previously pastored elsewhere

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

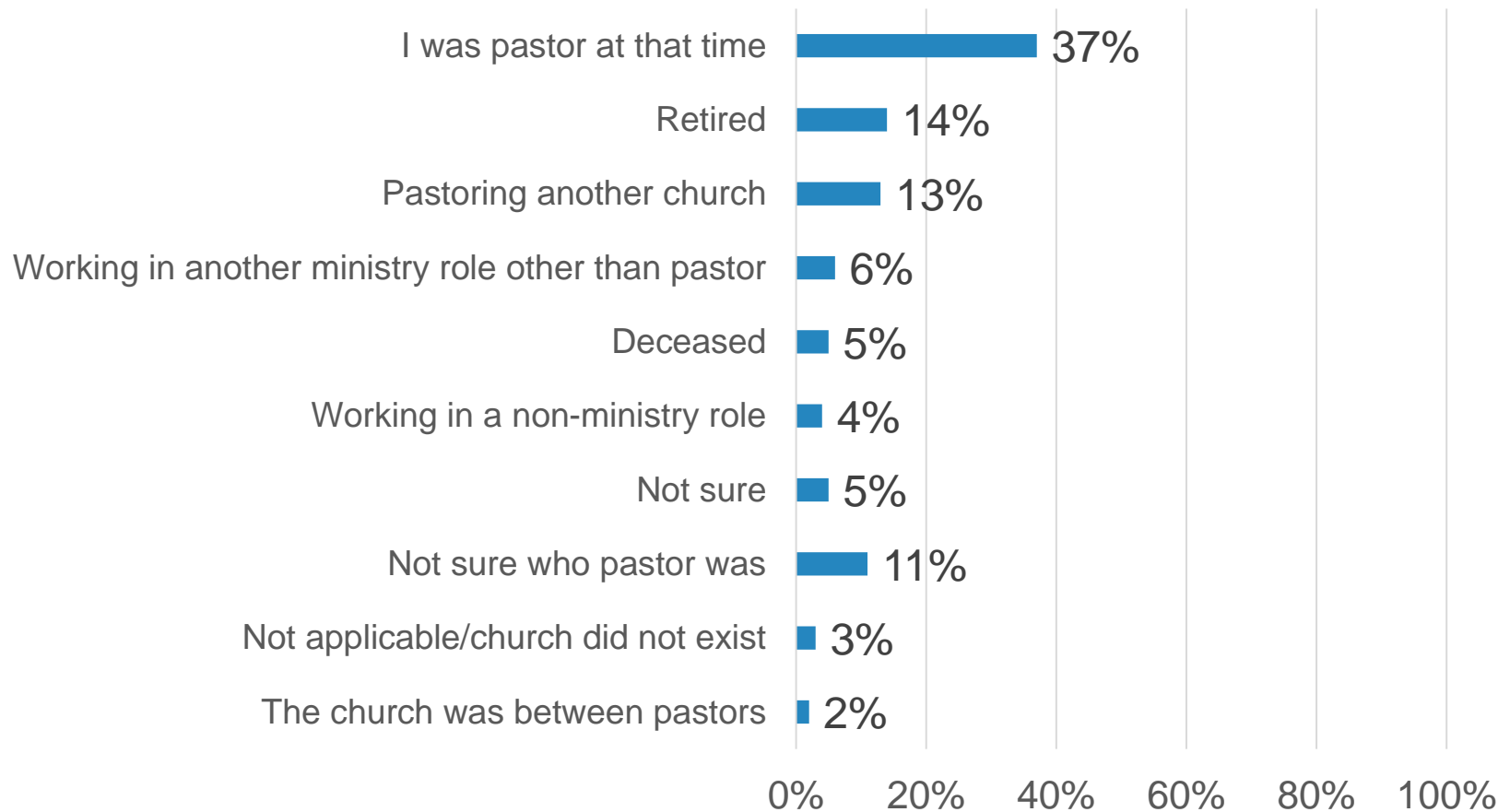


Lifeway research

Q3: "Is this the first church you have served as senior pastor?" *n*=1,576

Where is the pastor who was pastoring this church 10 years ago?

Whereabouts of person who pastored this church in August 2011



Lifeway research

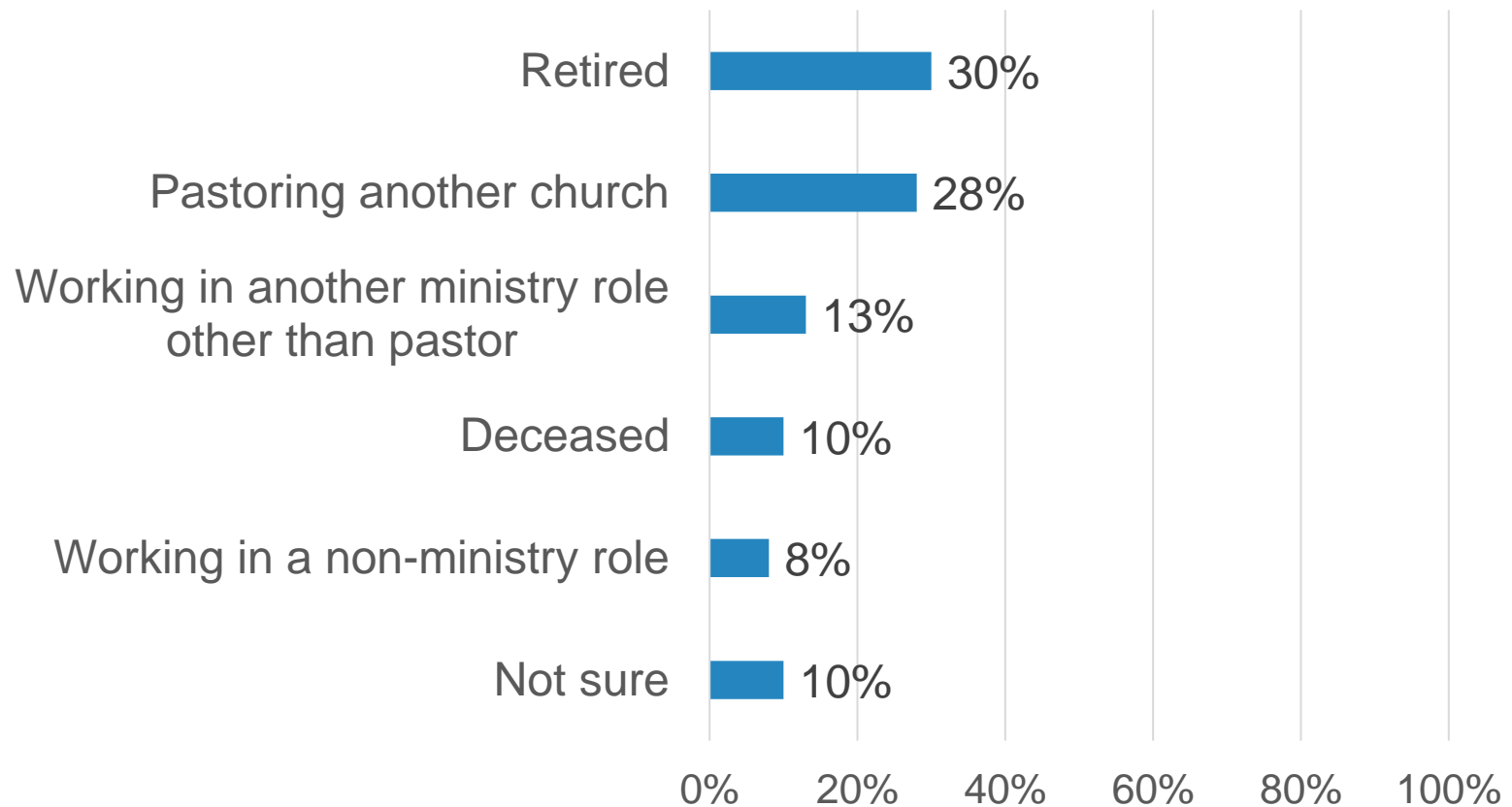
Q2: "In what year did you become the senior pastor of this church?"

Q4: "Do you know the name of the person who was pastor of your current church in August 2011?"

Q5: "As far as you know, which of the following best describes where that pastor is today?" combined n=1,576

Pastors who have left a church in the past 10 years tend to be retired or pastoring another church

Among pastors who were not at their current church in August 2011 and who can name the pastor at that time



Lifewayresearch

Q5: "As far as you know, which of the following best describes where that pastor is today?" n=747

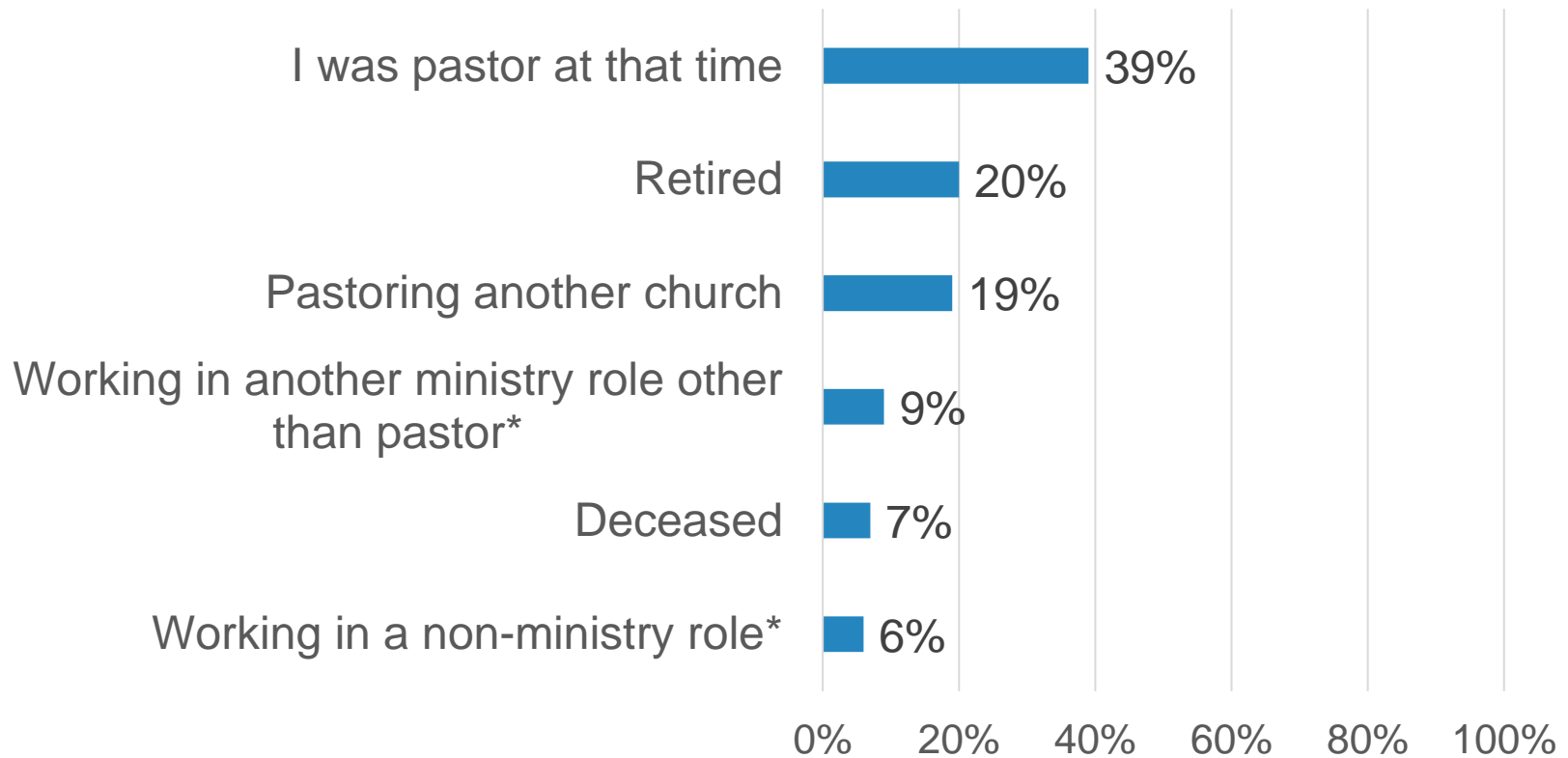
Pastor Attrition

- Defined as pastors who have left the pastorate for reasons other than retirement or death in the last 10 years.
- Cohort studied are those who were pastoring in August 2011
- Estimate of Pastor Attrition assumes that the current whereabouts for pastors unknown to the current pastor of their church is the same as those in which their whereabouts is known.
 - The cumulative *known* attrition rate (10% over 10 years) undercounts attrition where the previous pastor's whereabouts are unknown.
 - **The Pastor Attrition Rate Estimate is 15% over 10 years or about 1.5% a year**

Based on churches where the current pastor knows the whereabouts of the August 2011 pastor applied to all congregations that existed in 2011 and had a pastor

Estimated whereabouts of all August 2011 pastors (known percentages applied to all pastors)

Whereabouts of person who pastored this church in August 2011



*Pastor Attrition

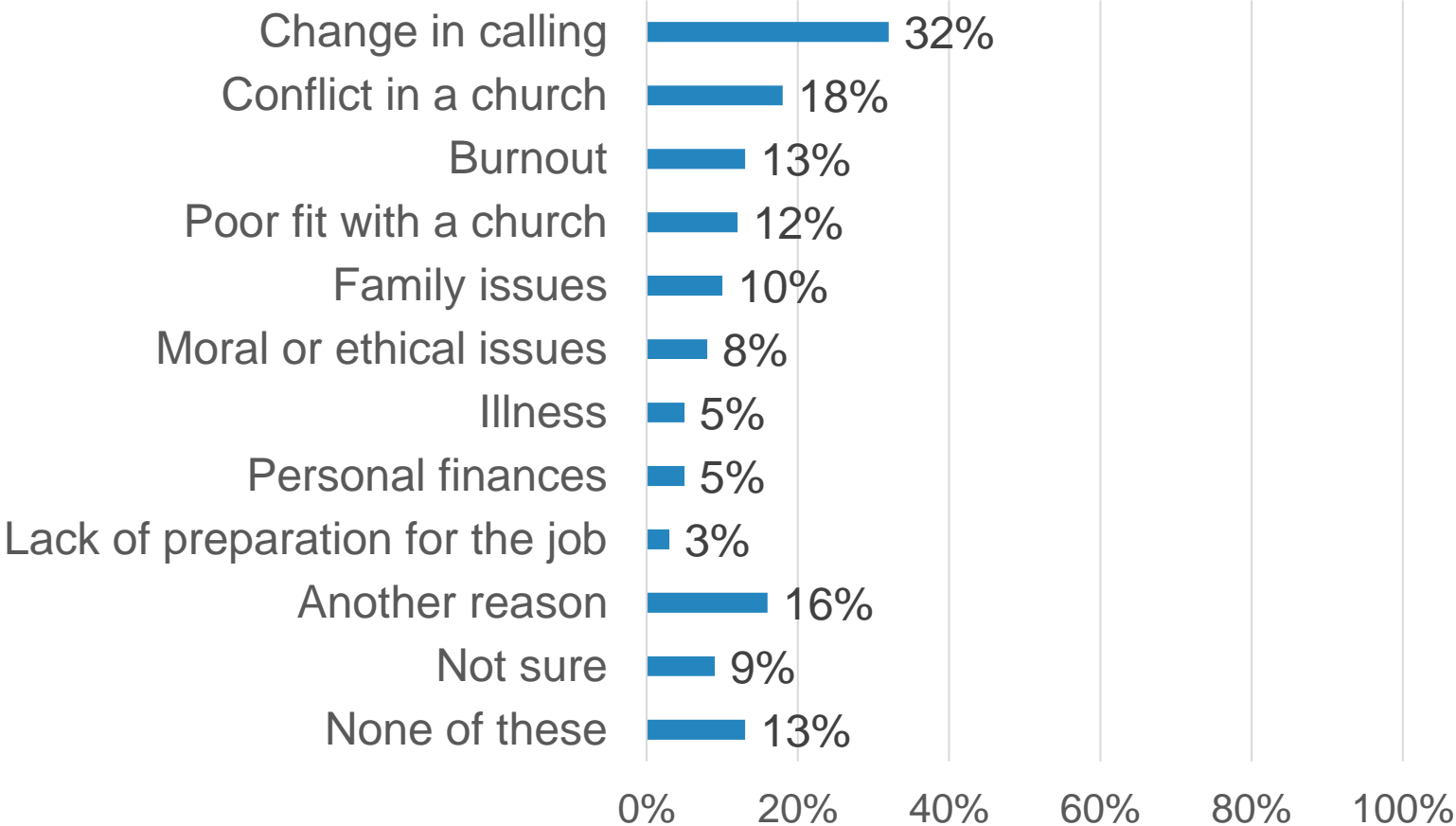
Lifewayresearch

Q5: "As far as you know, which of the following best describes where that pastor is today?"

Base: Churches that existed and had a pastor in August 2011

Top reasons previous pastor left the pastorate: change in calling, conflict, burnout

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

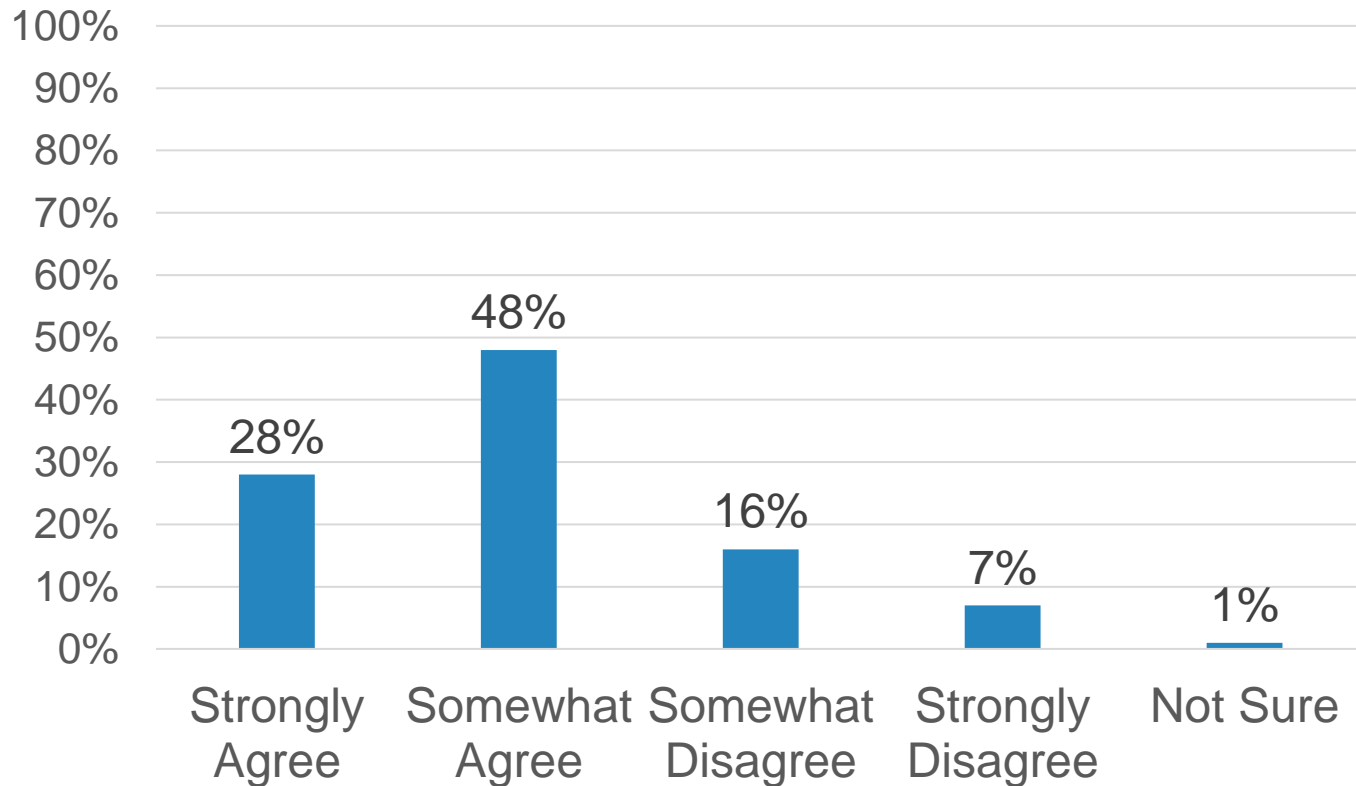


Lifeway research

Q6: "To the best of your knowledge, why did this pastor leave the pastorate? (Select all that apply)" n=166
Base: August 2011 pastor is working in another ministry role other than pastor or working in a non-ministry role

77% of pastors agree their training prepared them for the people side of ministry

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

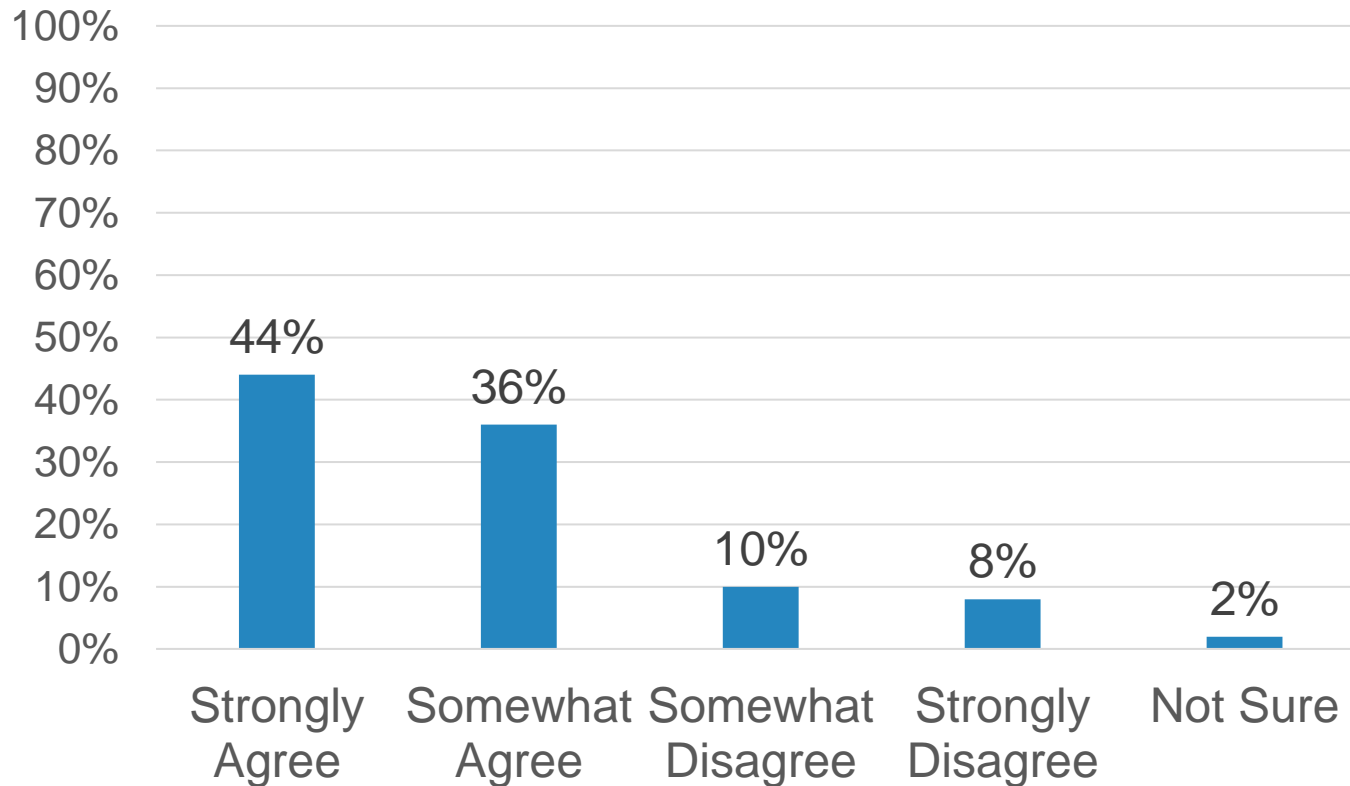


Lifewayresearch

Q7: "My seminary or ministry training prepared me to handle the people side of ministry." *n*=1493

80% of pastors agree they will need to confront conflict in this church in the future

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

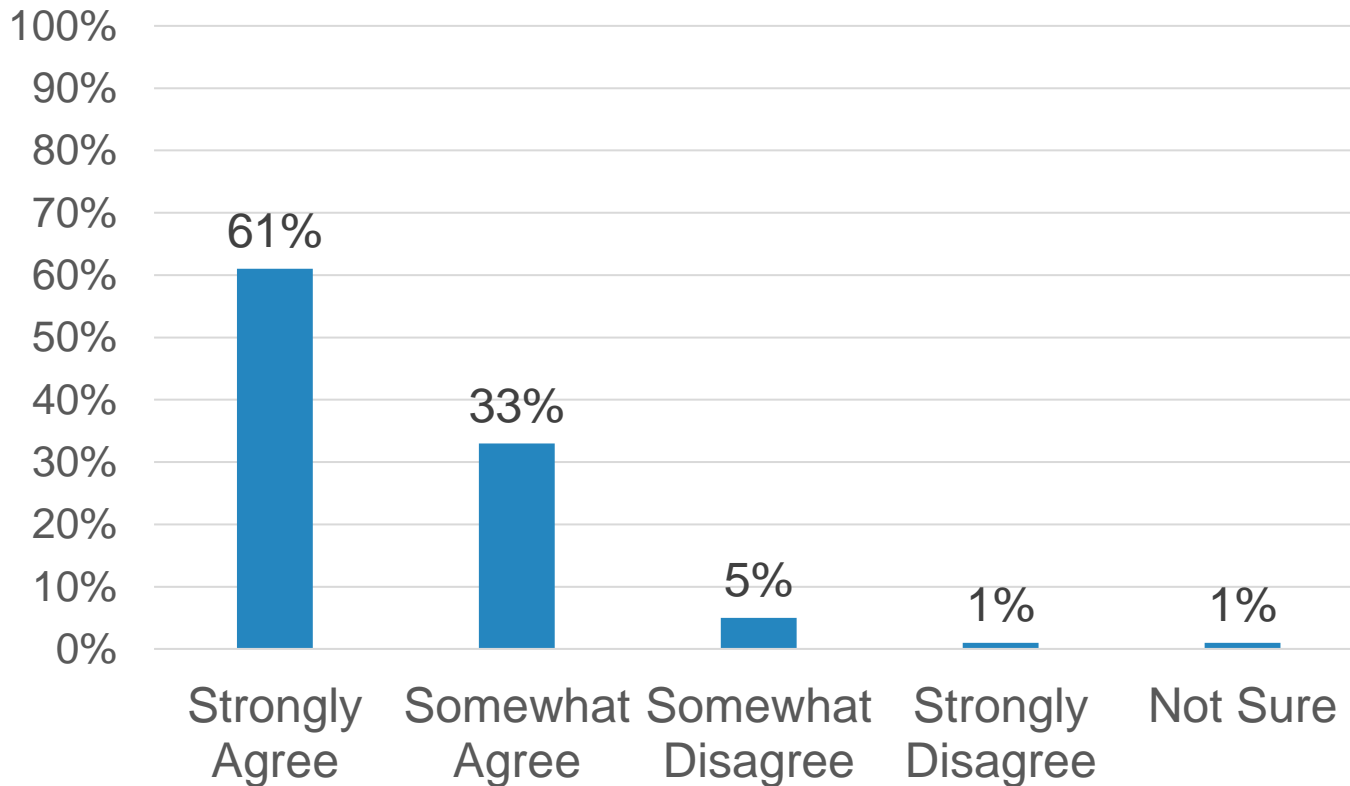


Lifewayresearch

Q8: "I expect I will need to confront conflict in this church in the future." *n*=1,576

94% of pastors agree they consistently protect time with their family

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

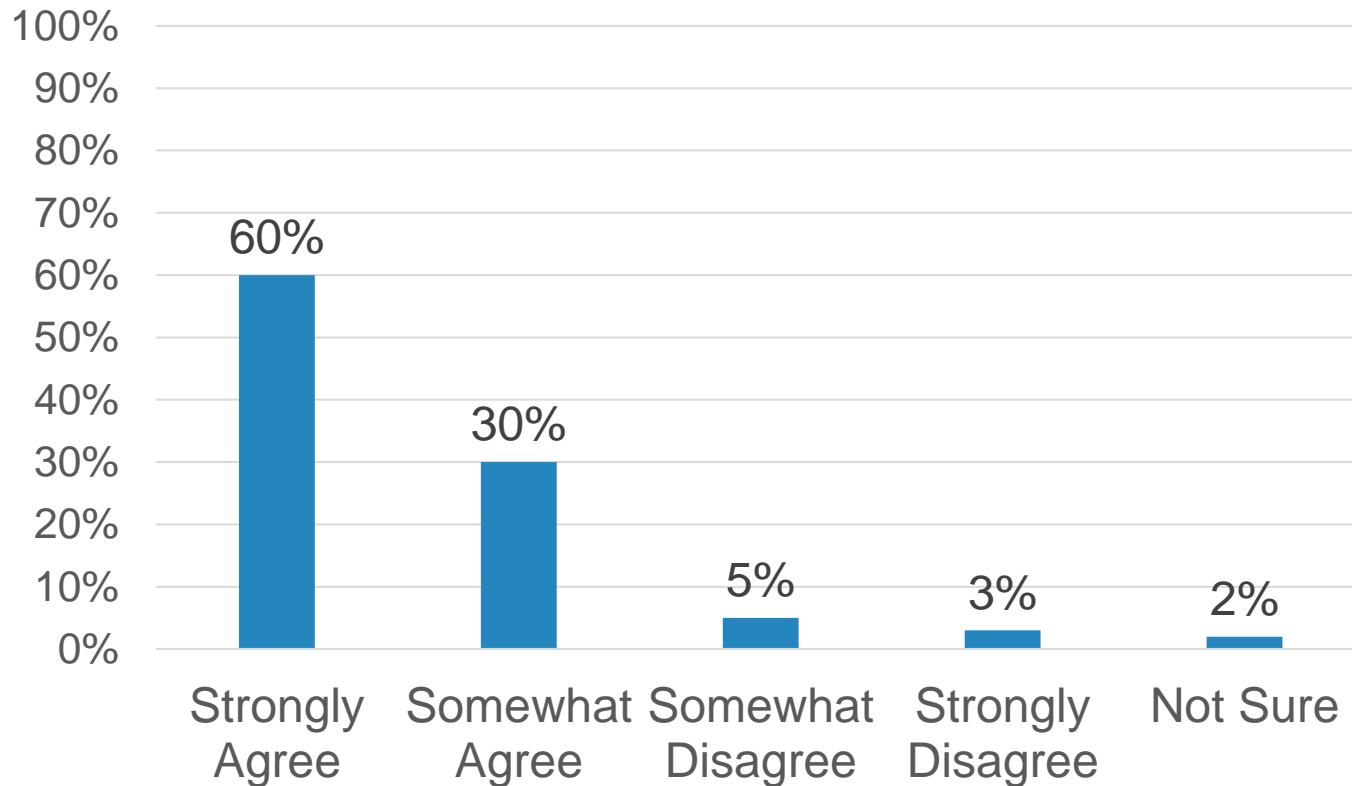


Lifewayresearch

Q9: "I consistently protect my time with my family." *n*=1,567

90% of pastors agree they are sure they can stay at their church as long as they want

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

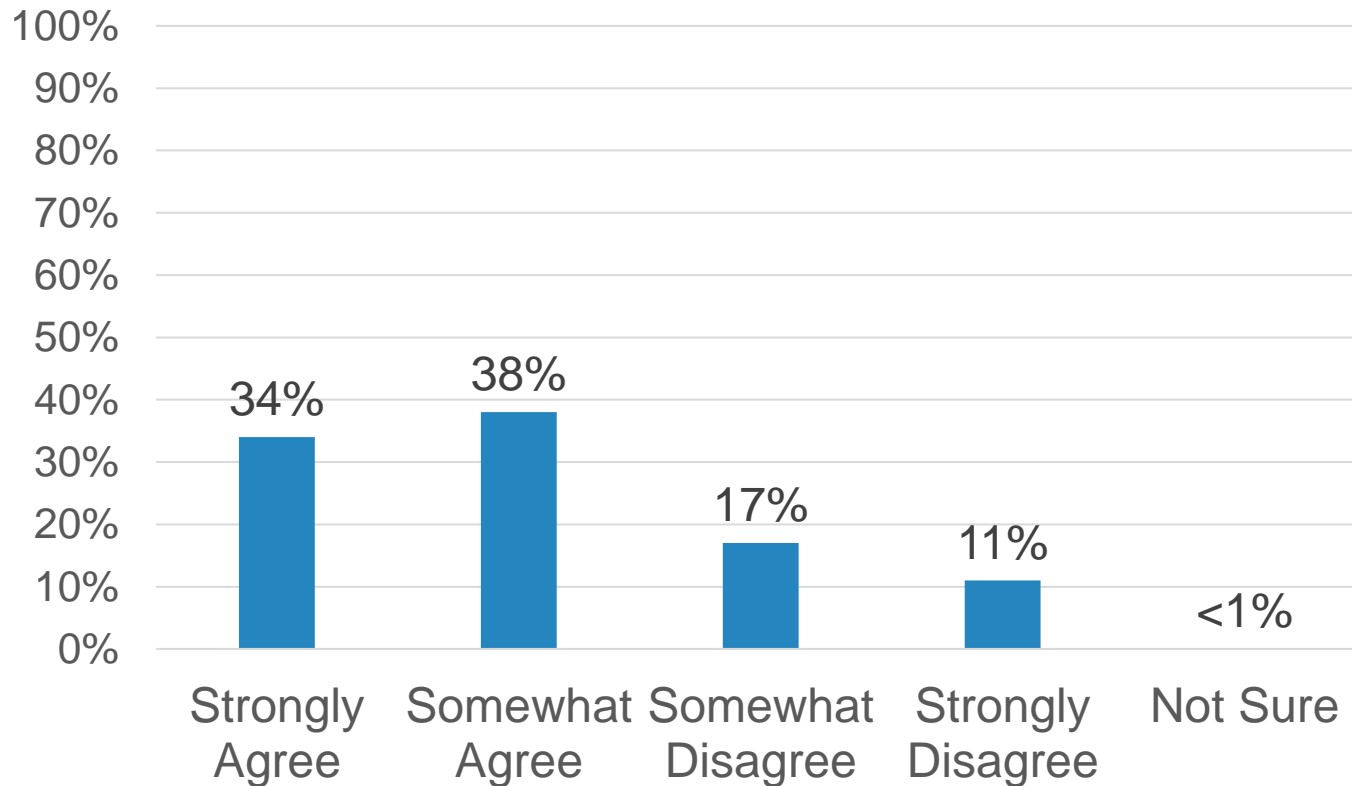


Lifewayresearch

Q10: "I am sure I can stay at this church as long as I want." *n*=1,576

71% of pastors agree they feel they must be 'on-call' 24 hours a day

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

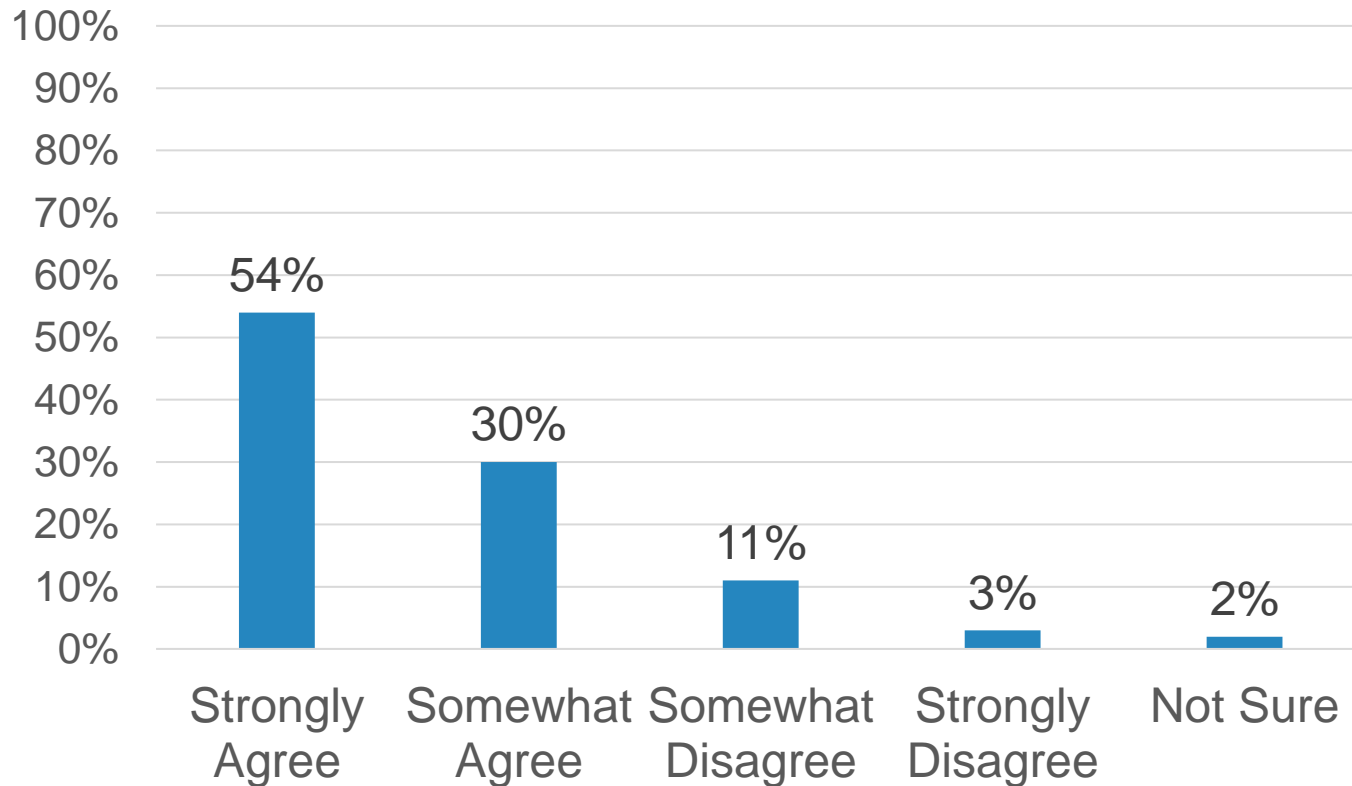


Lifewayresearch

Q11: "I feel I must be 'on-call' 24 hours a day." n=1,576

84% of pastors agree they work hard to protect their image as a pastor

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

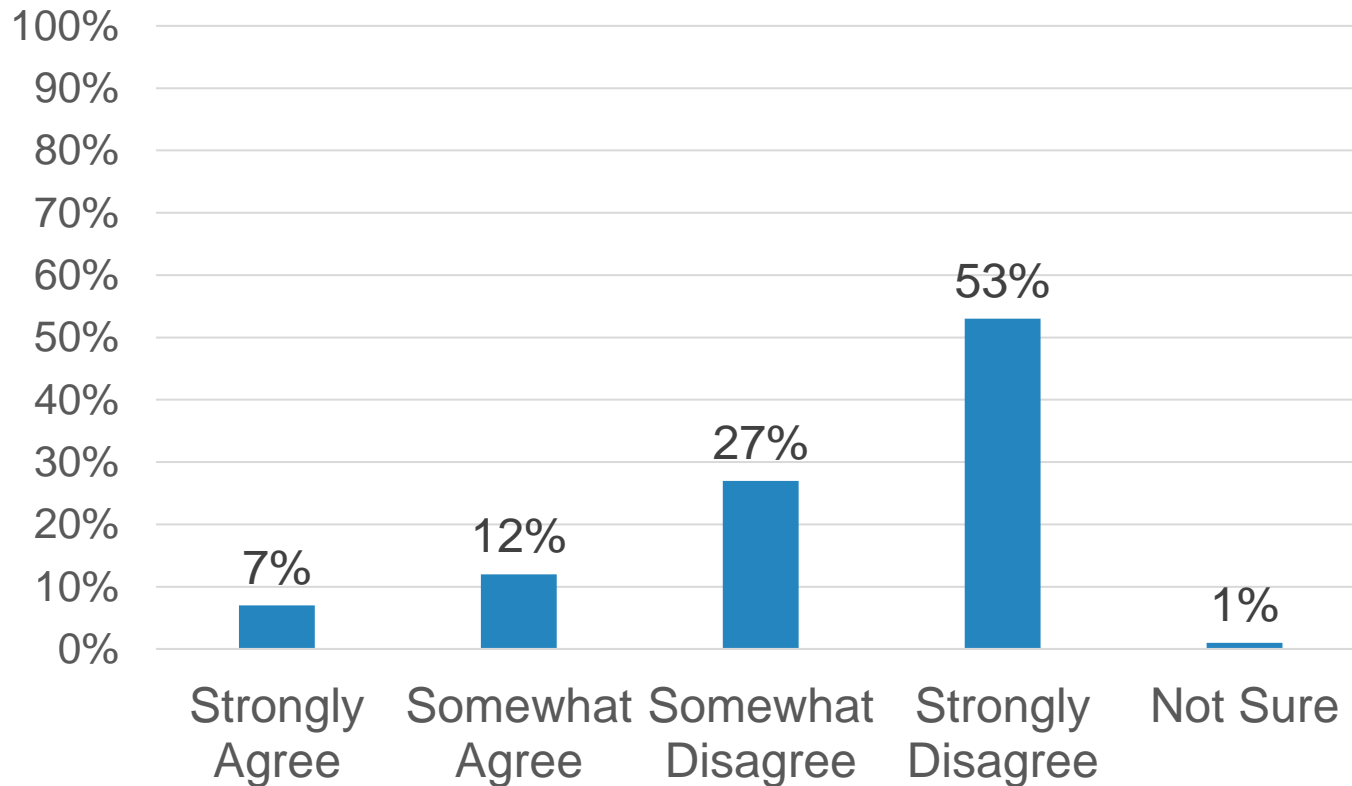


Lifewayresearch

Q12: "I work hard to protect my image as a pastor." *n*=1,576

19% of pastors agree their family resents the demands of pastoral ministry

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

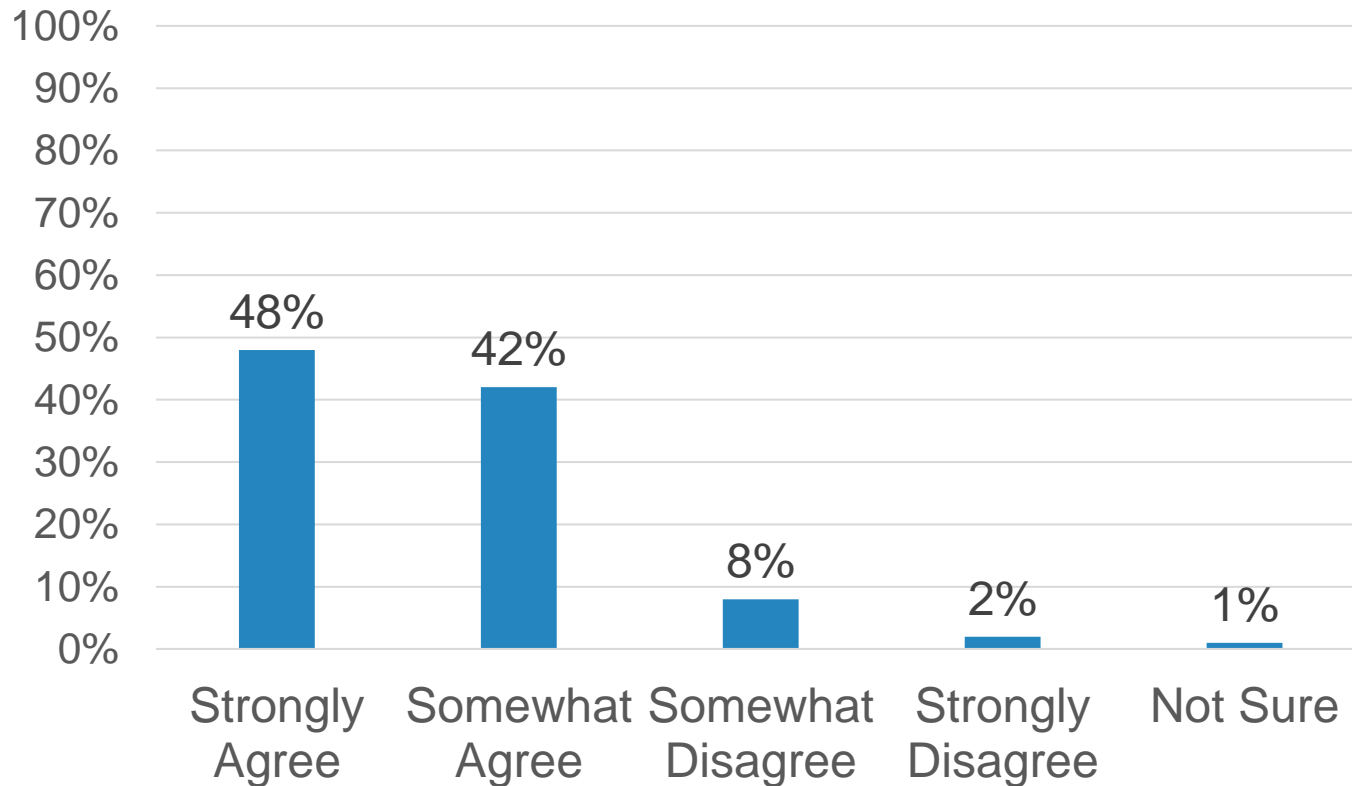


Lifewayresearch

Q13: "My family resents the demands of pastoral ministry." *n*=1,565

90% of pastors agree they consistently listen for signs of conflict in their church

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

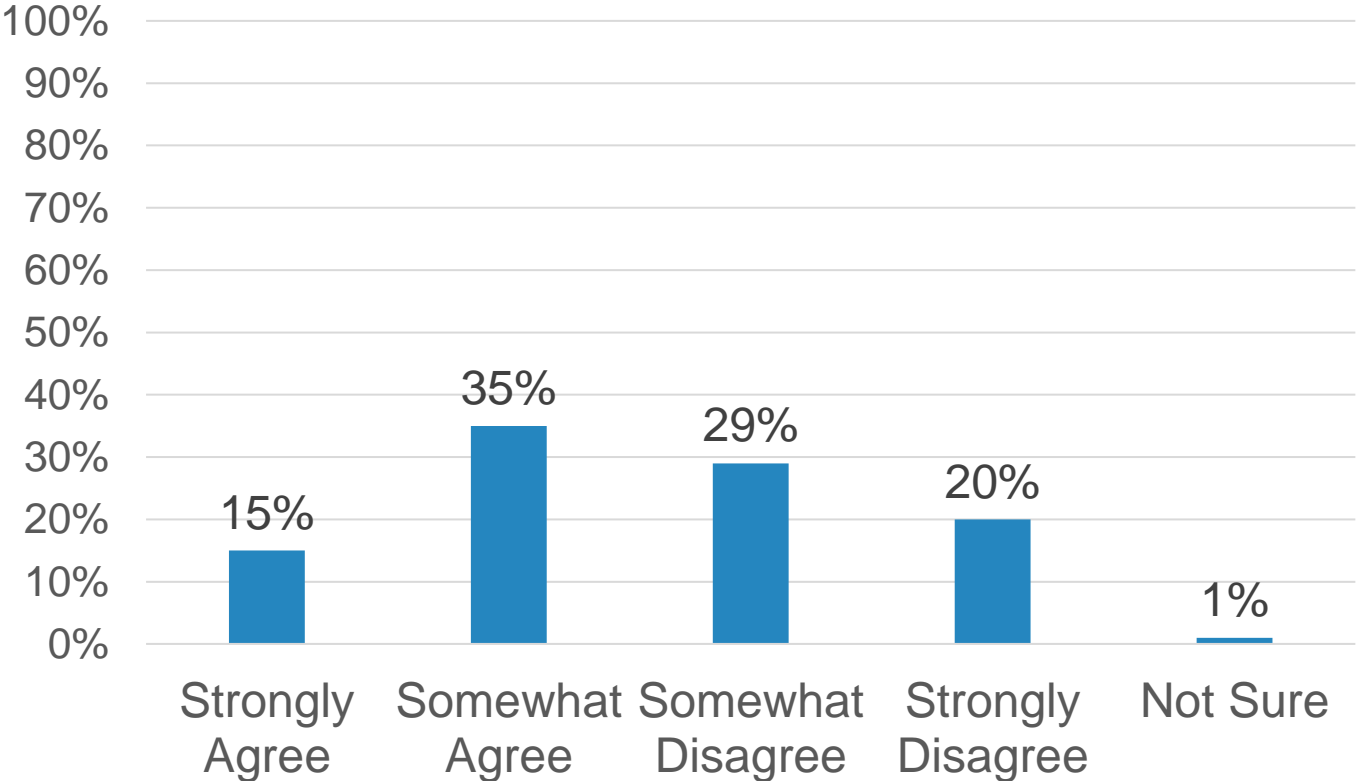


Lifewayresearch

Q14: "I consistently listen to people in our church for signs of conflict." n=1,576

50% of pastors agree they often feel the demands of ministry are greater than they can handle

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

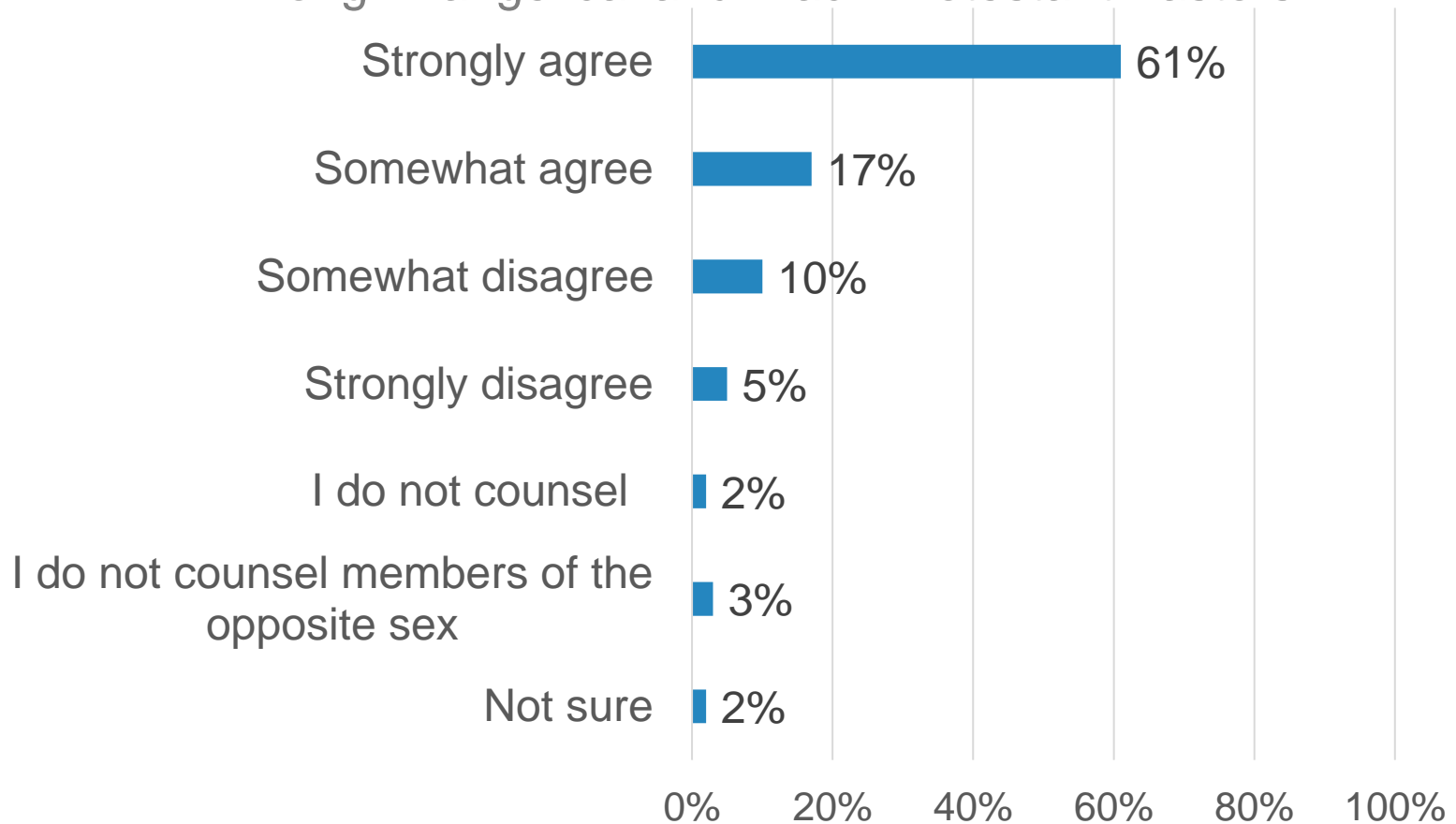


Lifeway research

Q15: "I often feel the demands of ministry are greater than I can handle." n=1,576

78% have a staff member present when counseling members of the opposite sex

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

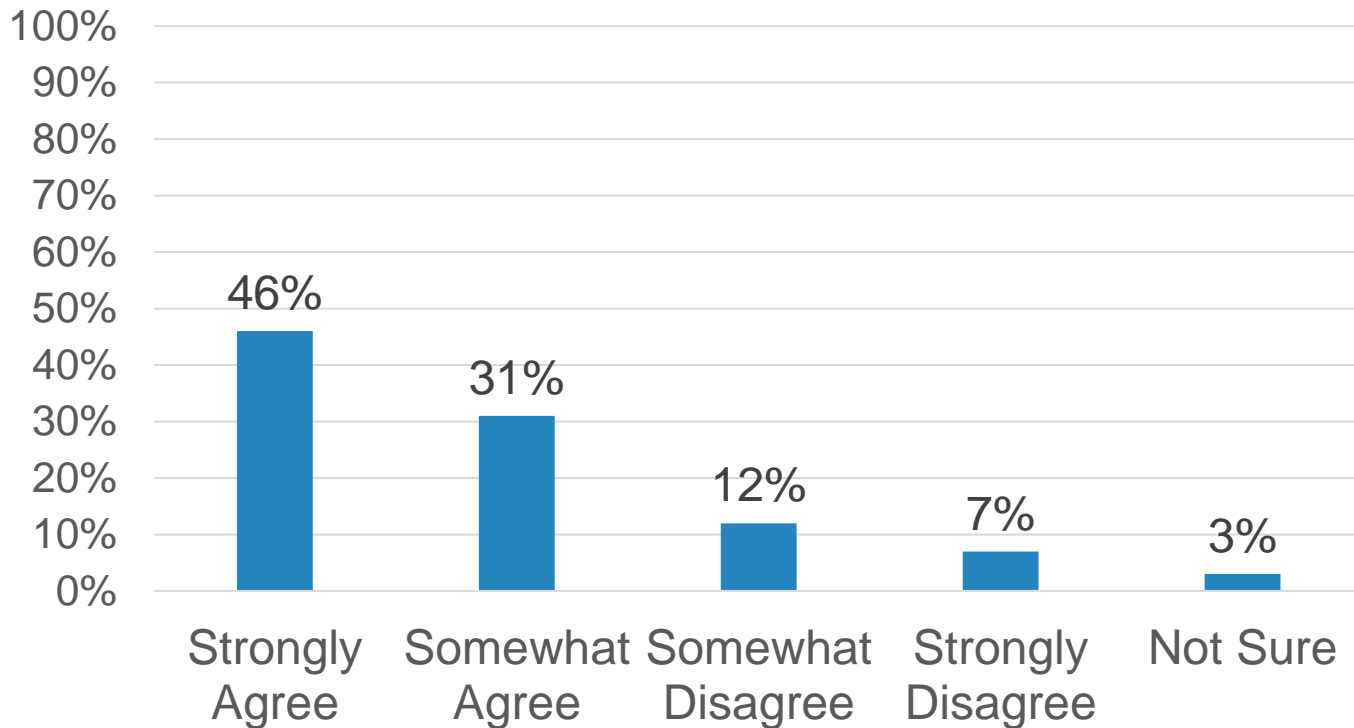


Lifewayresearch

Q16: "I have another staff member present when counseling church members of the opposite sex." n=1,576

77% of pastors refer members to a professional counselor if the situation requires more than two sessions

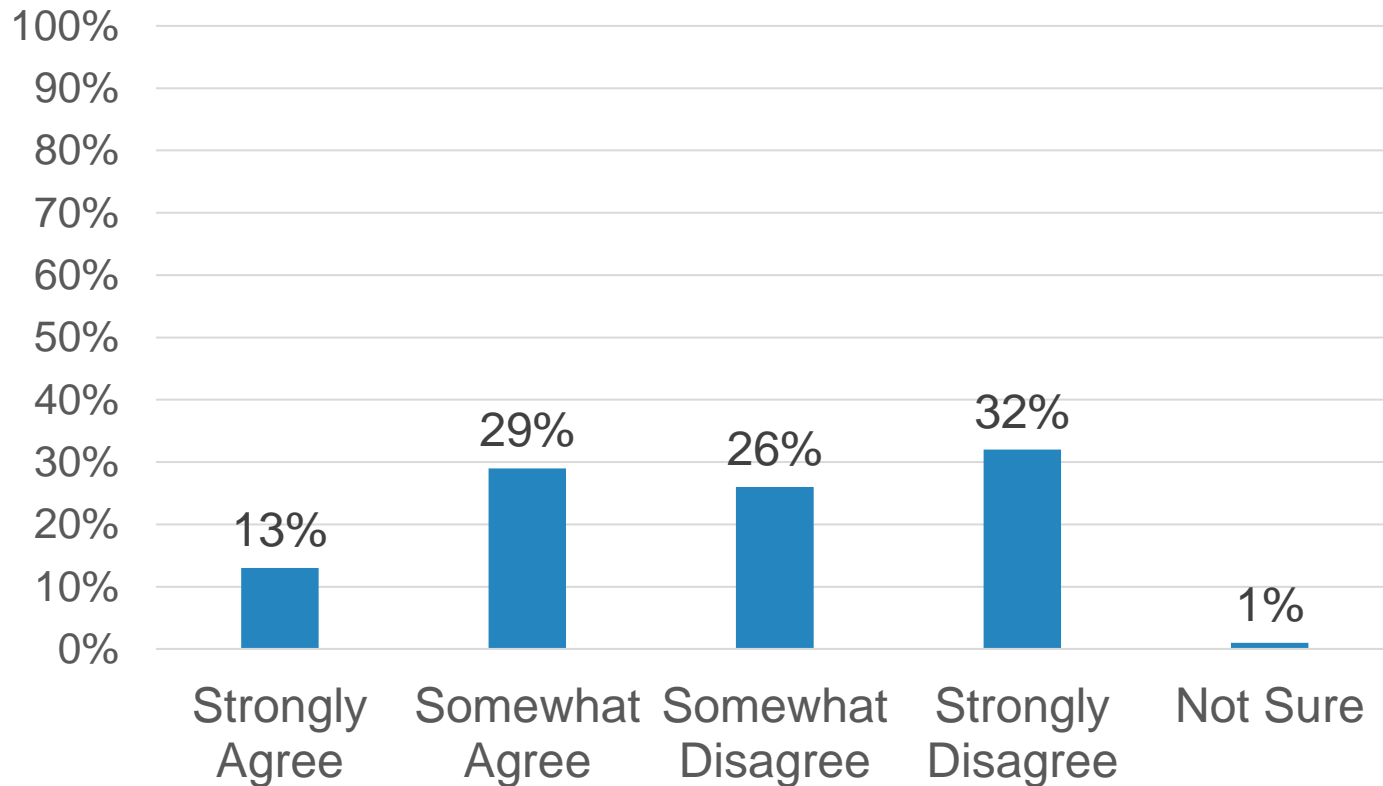
Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

41% of pastors agree they are often concerned about their family's financial security

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

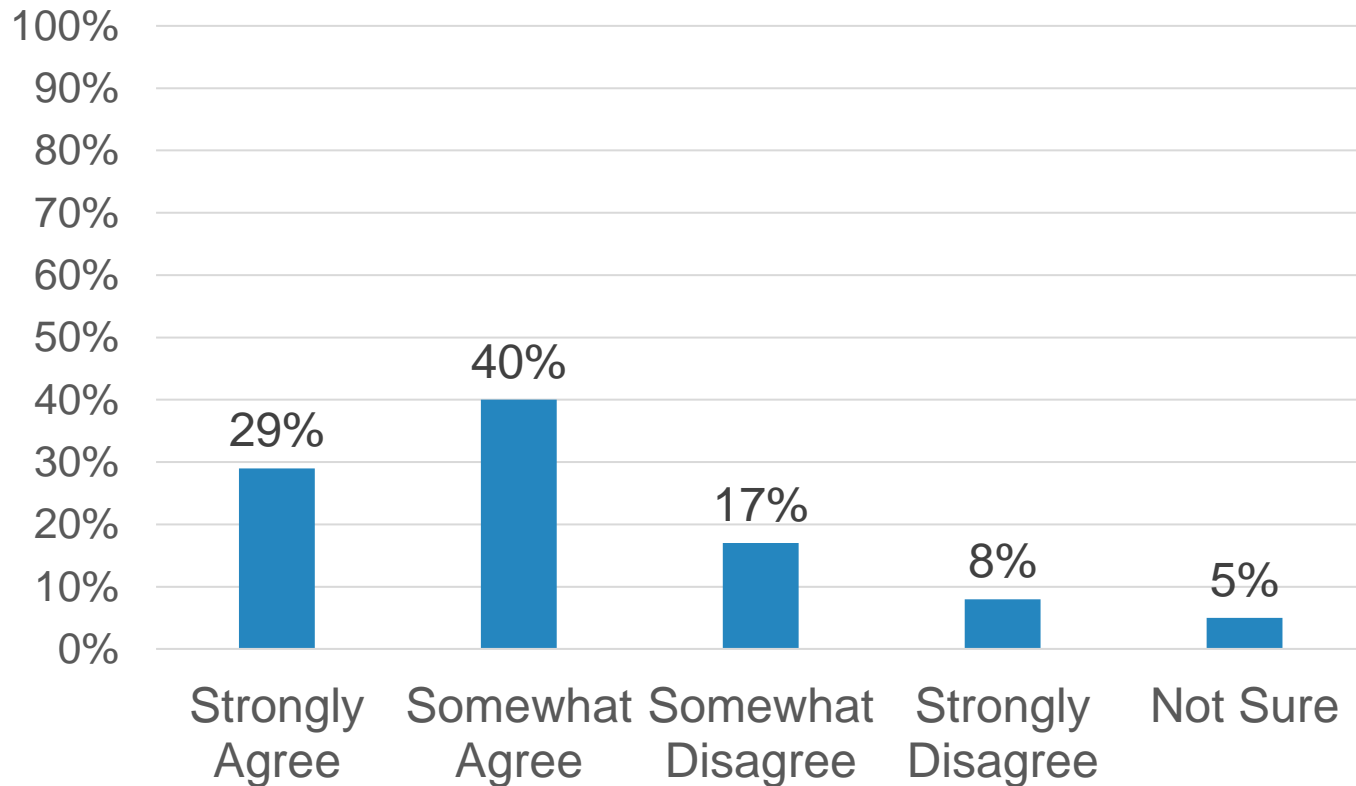


Lifewayresearch

Q18: "I am often concerned about the financial security of my family." *n*=1,559

70% of pastors agree they deserve the respect of their people

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

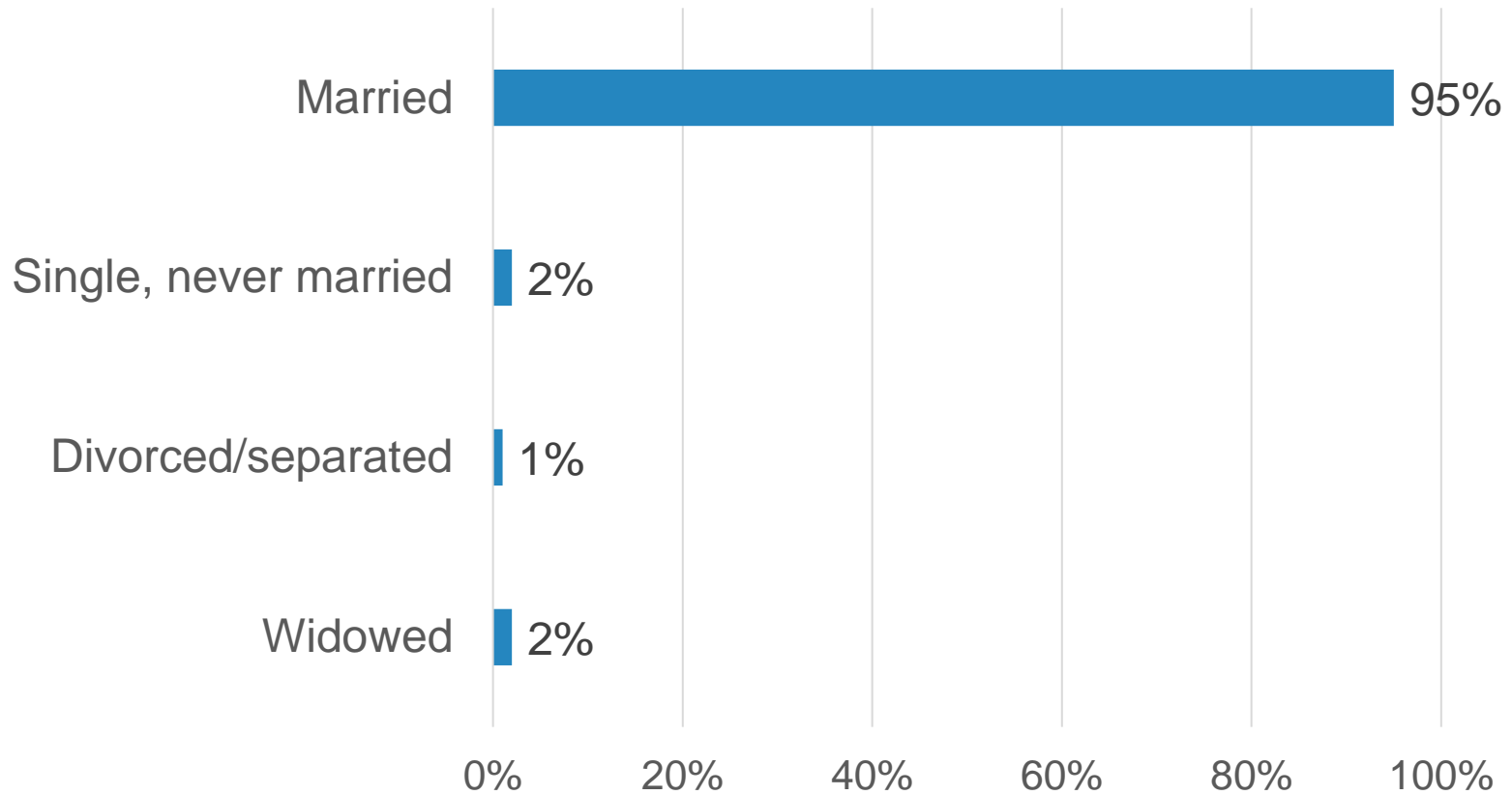


Lifewayresearch

Q19: "I deserve the respect of my people." *n*=1,576

95% of pastors are married

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

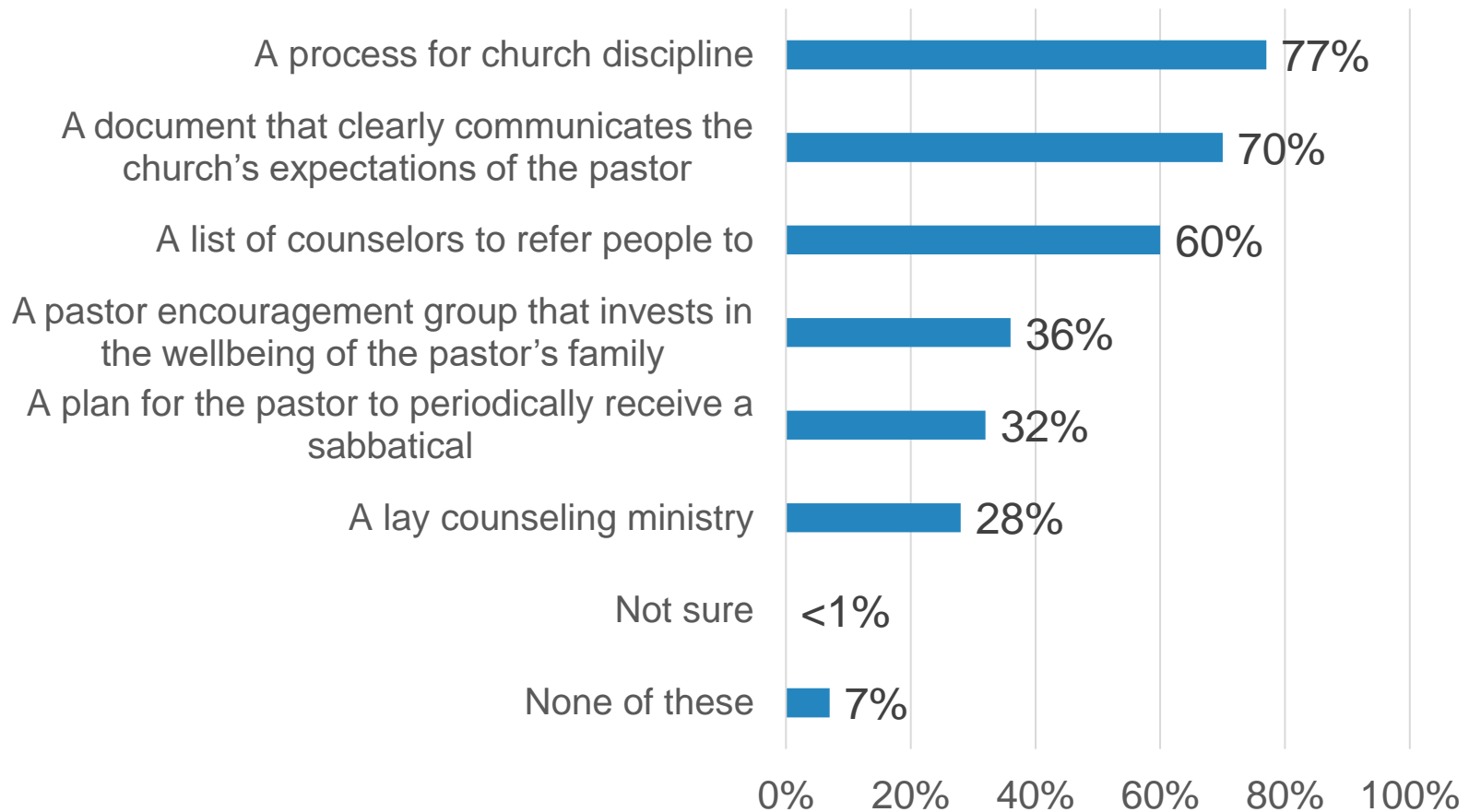


Lifewayresearch

Q20: "Which of the following best describes your marital status?" *n*=1,573

7 in 10 churches have a document that communicates expectations of the pastor

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

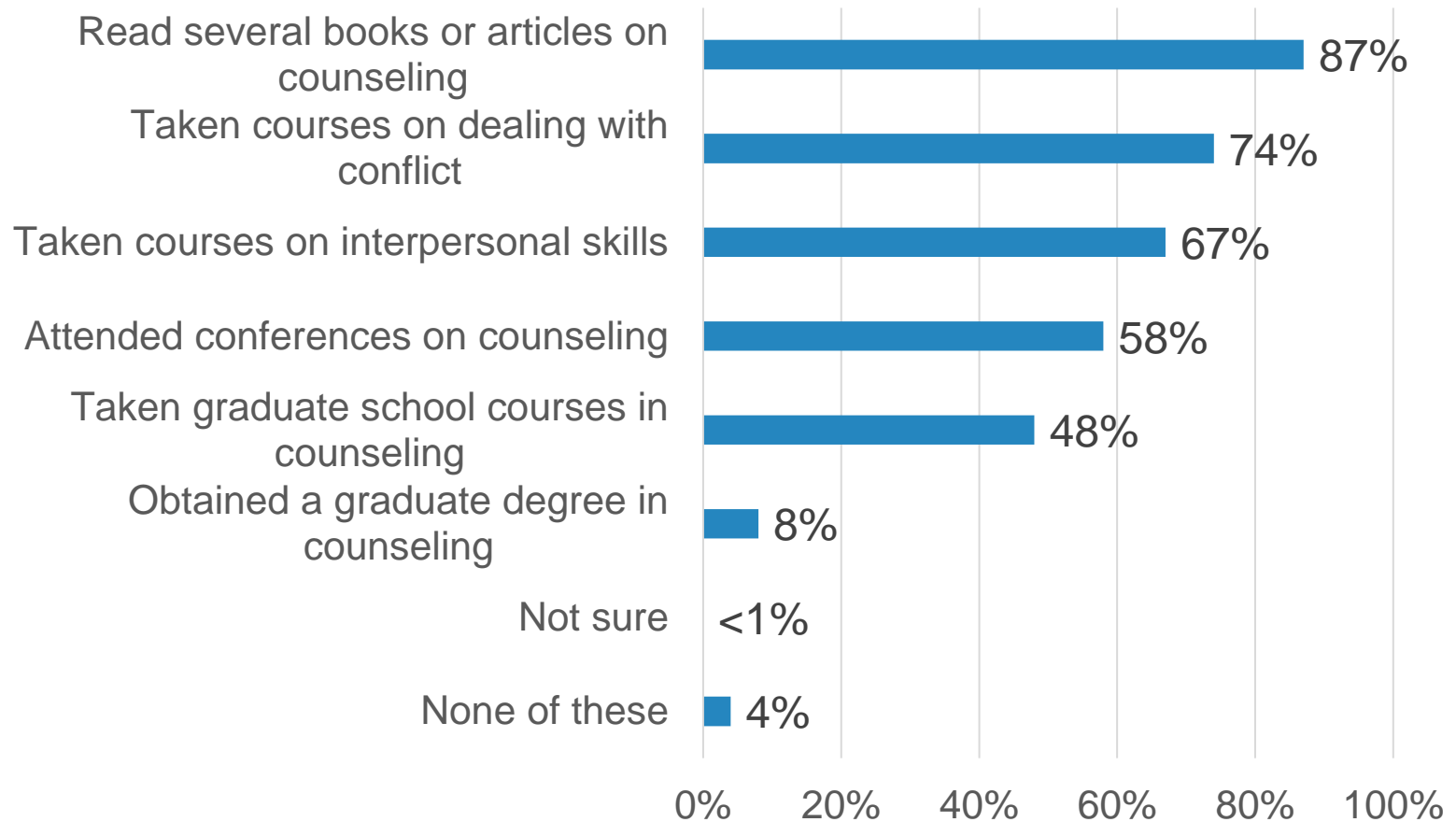


Lifeway research

Q21: "Which if any of the following does your church have in place today? (Select all that apply)" n=1,576

The majority of pastors have had training and coursework in counseling and conflict

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

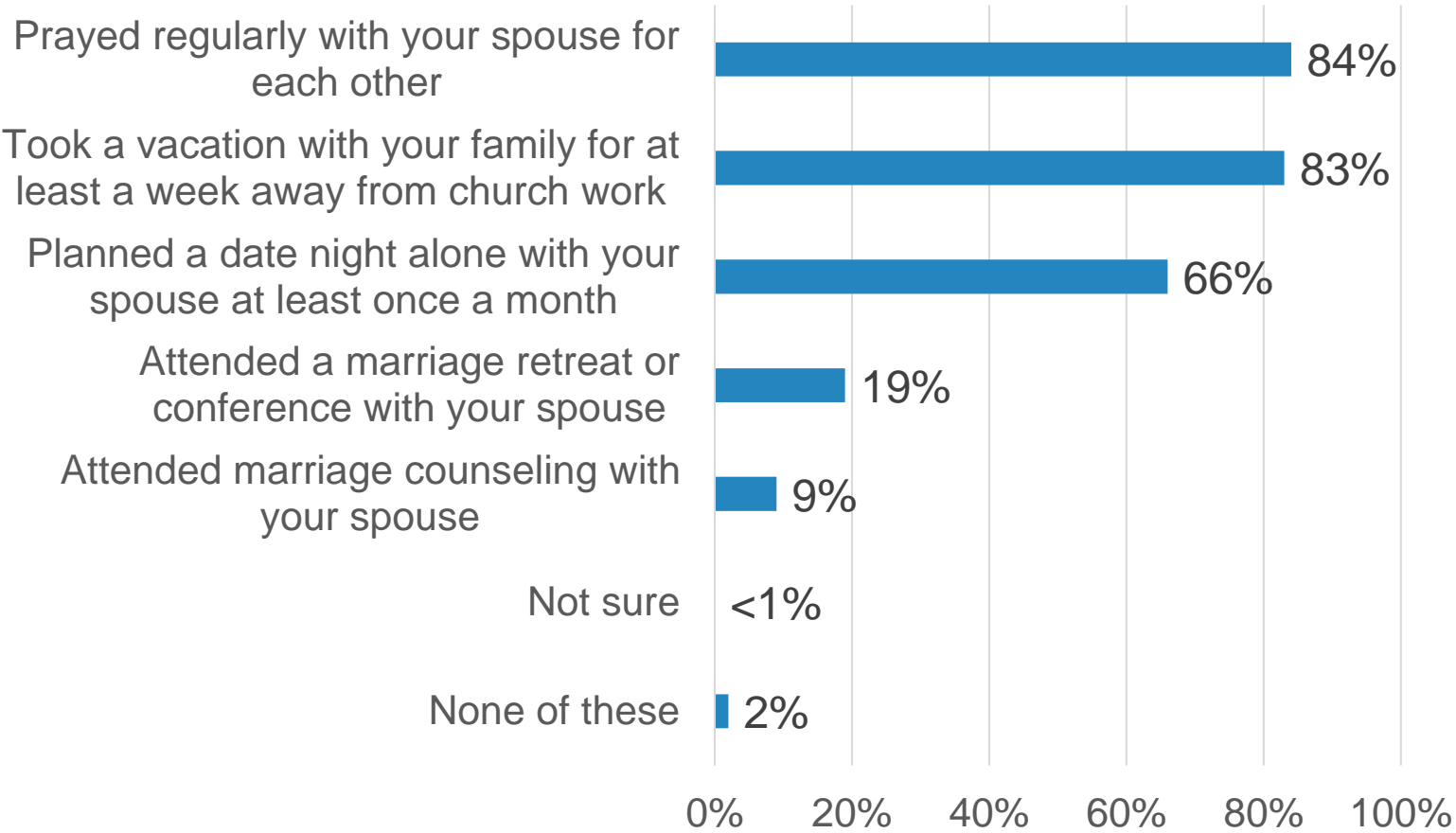


Lifewayresearch

Q22: "Which of the following training, if any, have you received? (Select all that apply)" n=1,576

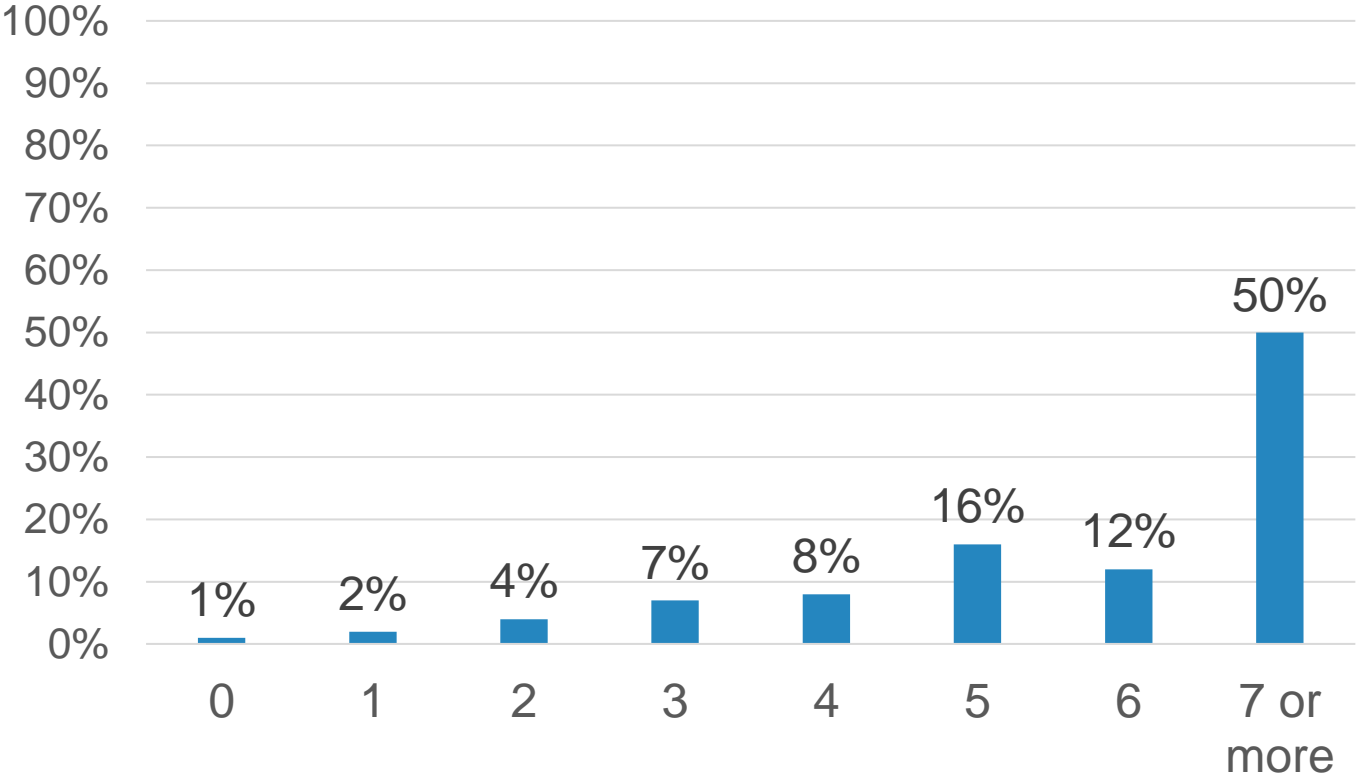
83% of pastors have had a vacation with their family in the past year

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors



Half of pastors spend time alone with the Lord every day of the week

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

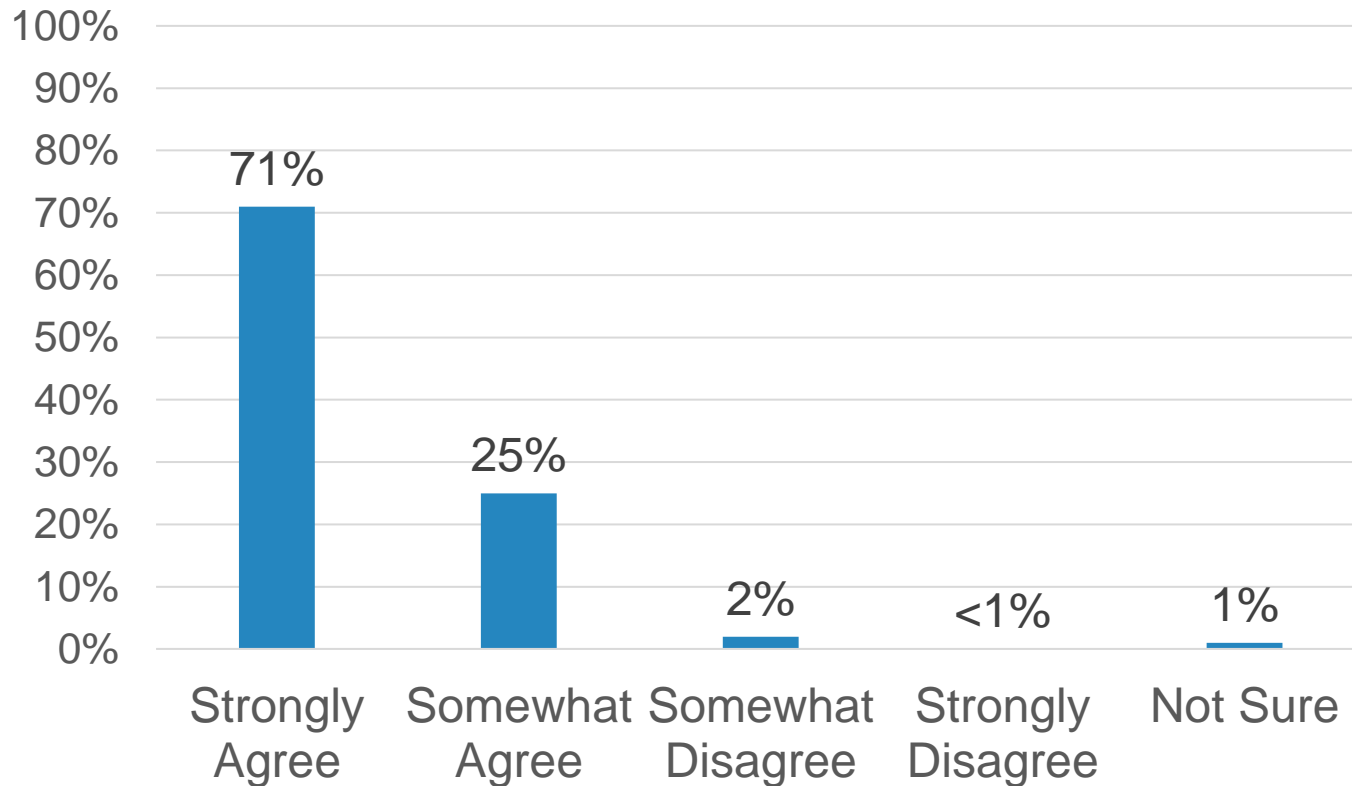


Lifeway research

Q24: "In the last 7 days, how many times have you had personal time alone with the Lord involving Bible study and prayer, other than sermon or lesson preparation?" n=1,576

96% of pastors agree their spouse is very satisfied with their marriage today

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

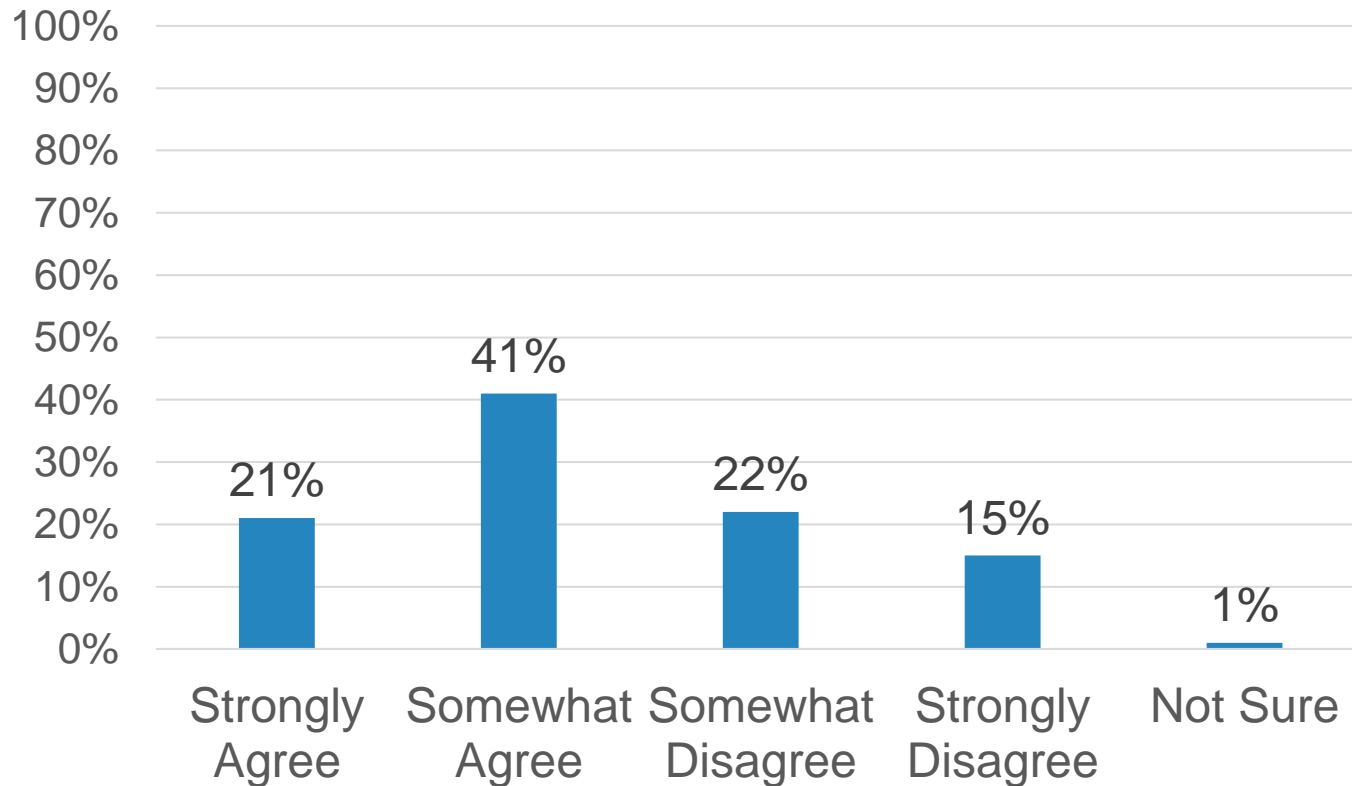


Lifewayresearch

Q25: "My spouse is very satisfied with my marriage today." n=1,502

63% of pastors agree their role is frequently overwhelming

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

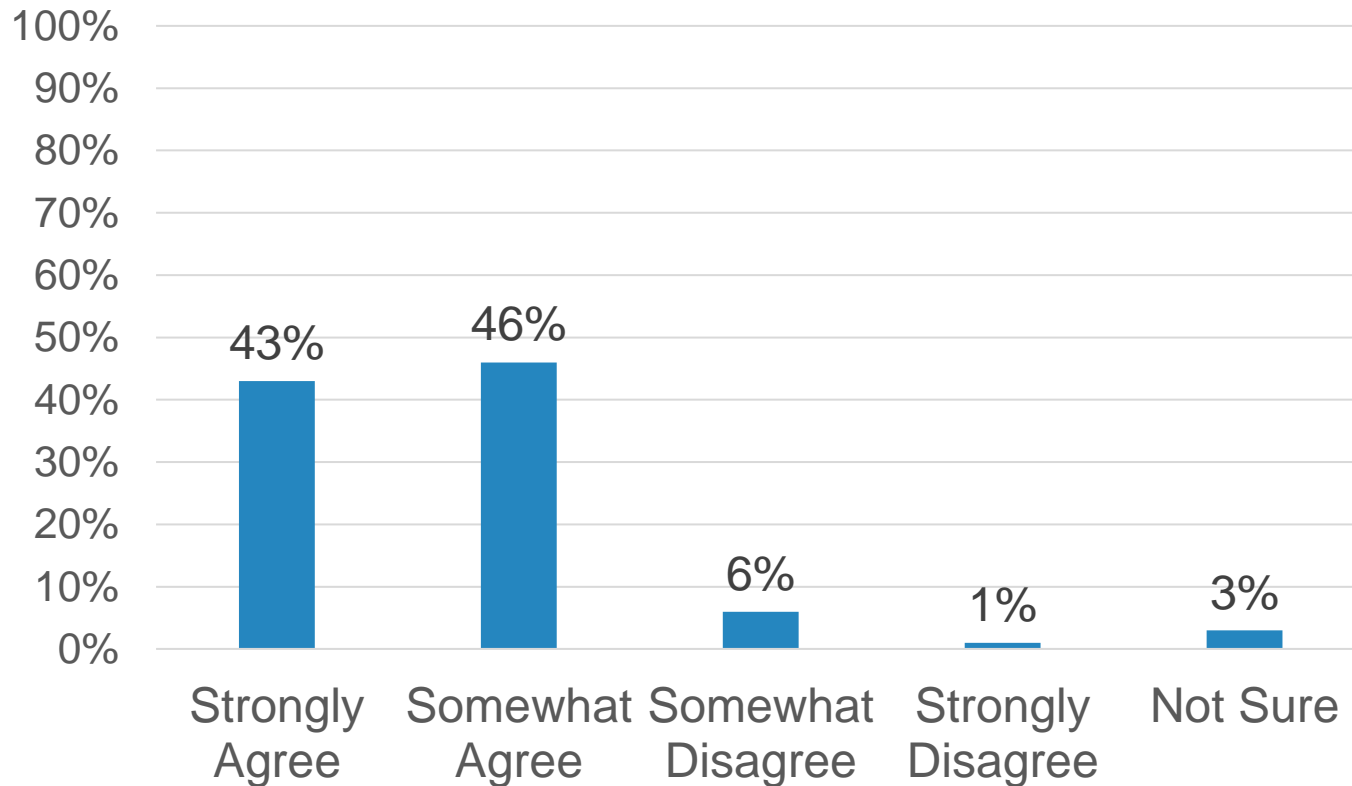


Lifewayresearch

Q26: "The role of being a pastor is frequently overwhelming." *n*=1,576

89% of pastors agree they invest in processes and behaviors to prevent conflict

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

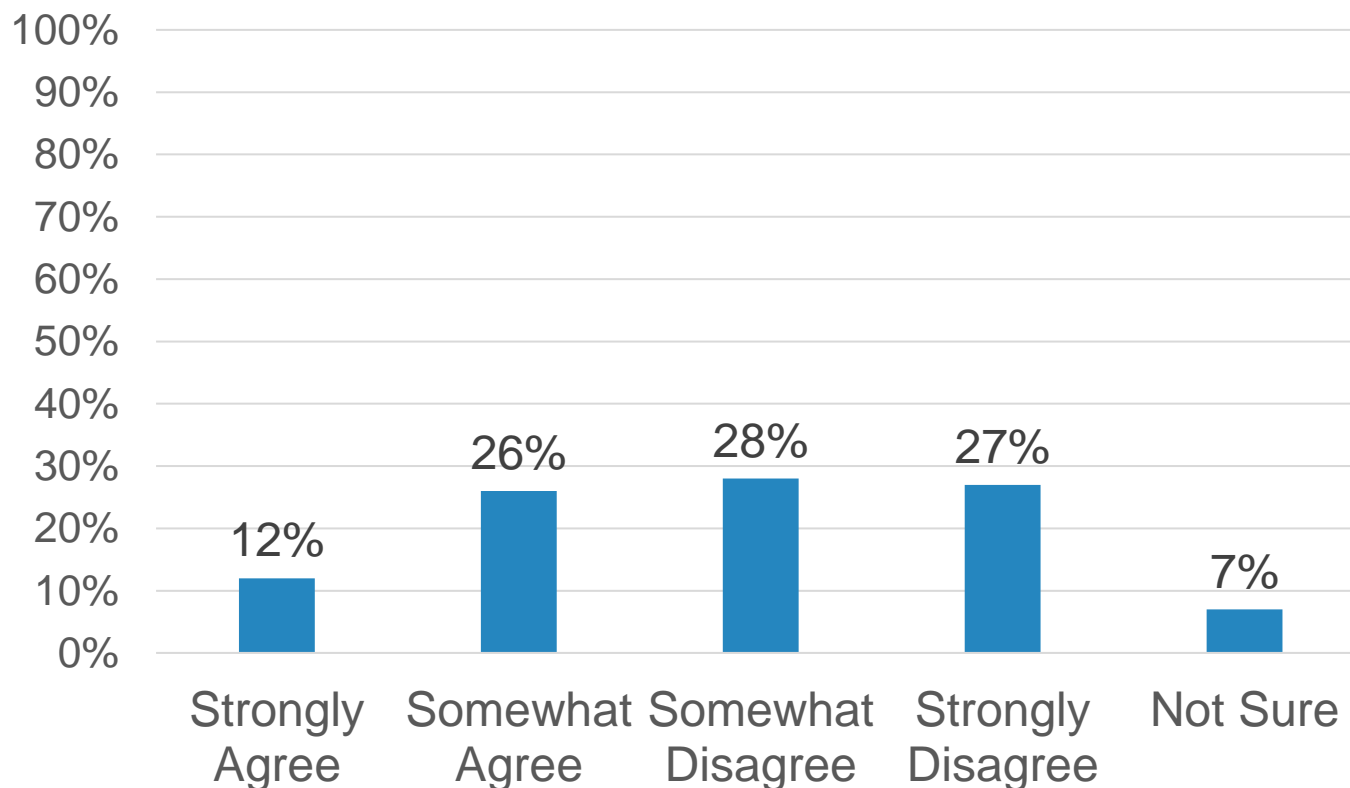


Lifewayresearch

Q27: "I invest in processes and behaviors to prevent conflict." *n*=1,576

38% of pastors agree their church would not have achieved the progress it has without them

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

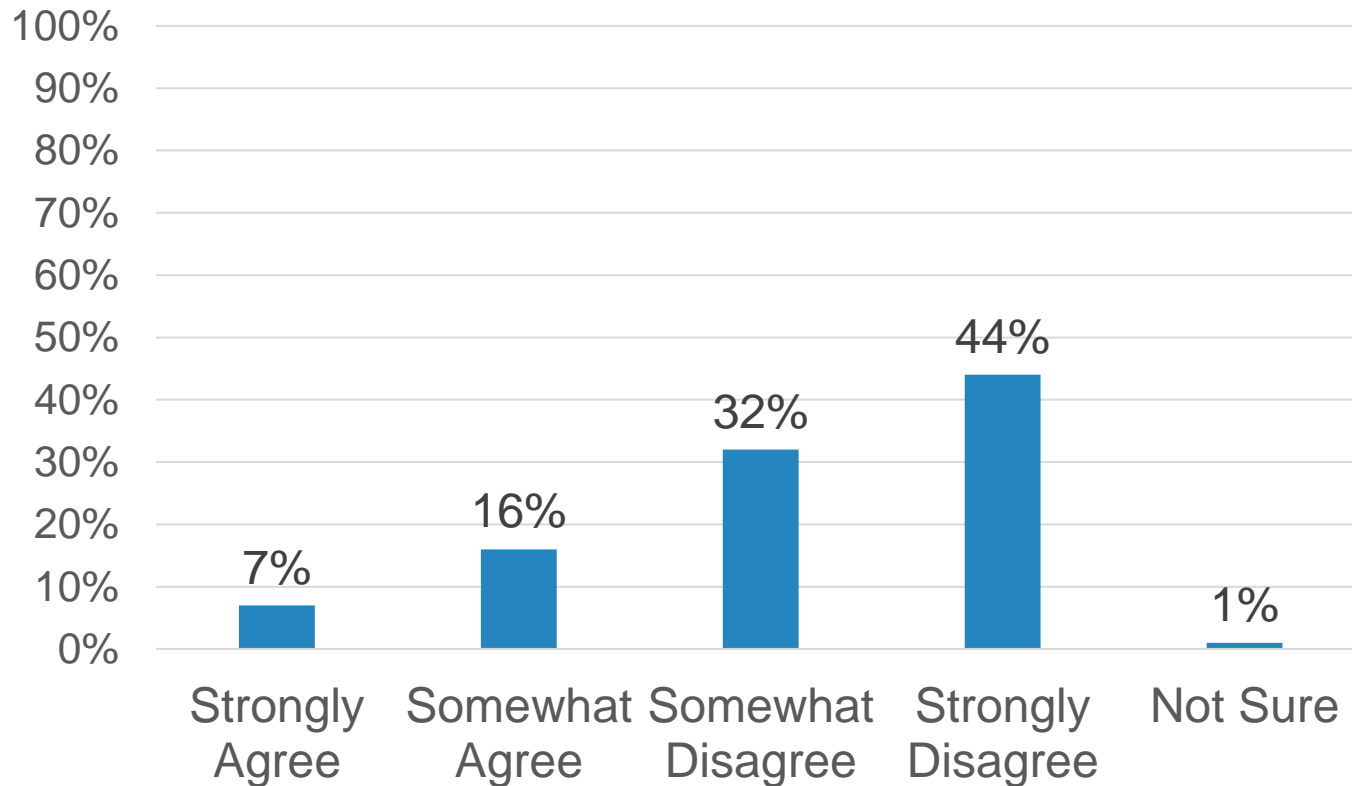


Lifewayresearch

Q28: "This church would not have achieved the progress it has without me." n=1,576

23% of pastors agree their church has unrealistic expectations of them

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

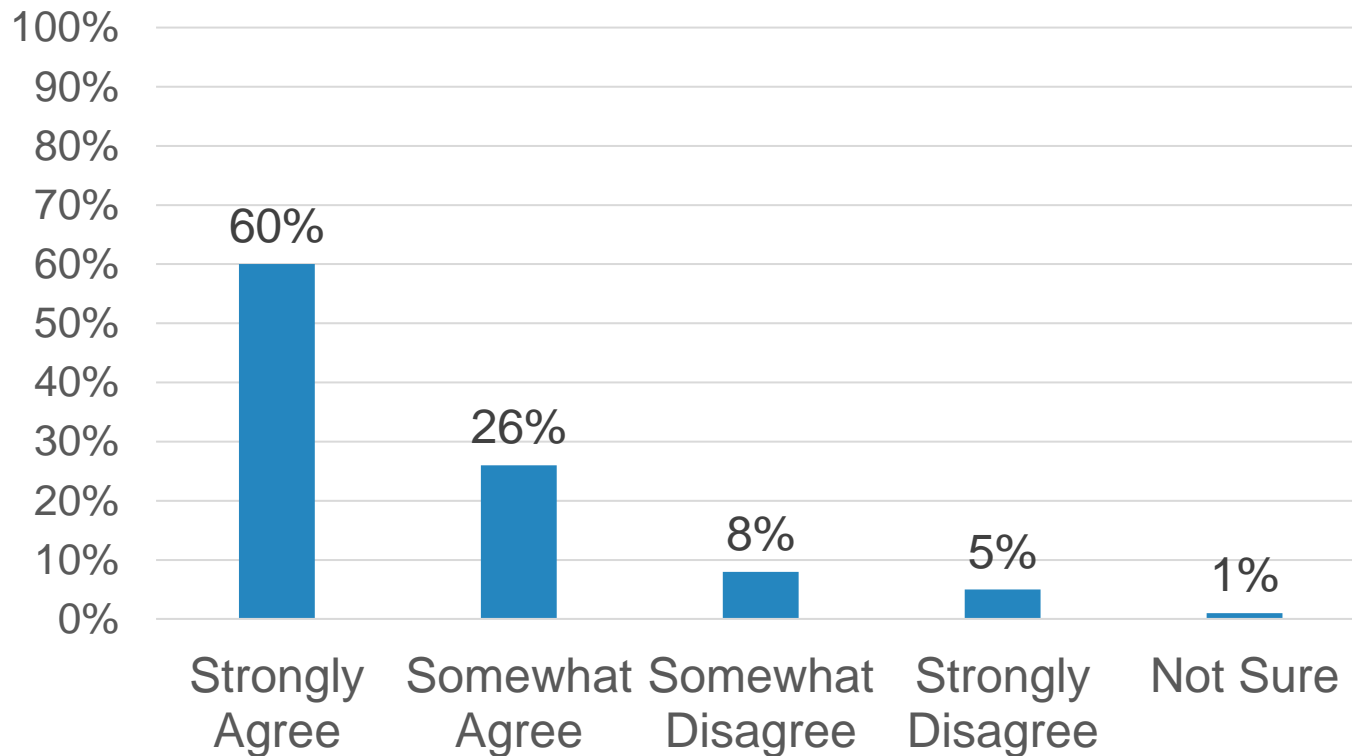


Lifewayresearch

Q29: "My church has unrealistic expectations of me." *n*=1,576

86% of pastors agree they “unplug” from ministerial work and have a day of rest at least one day a week

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

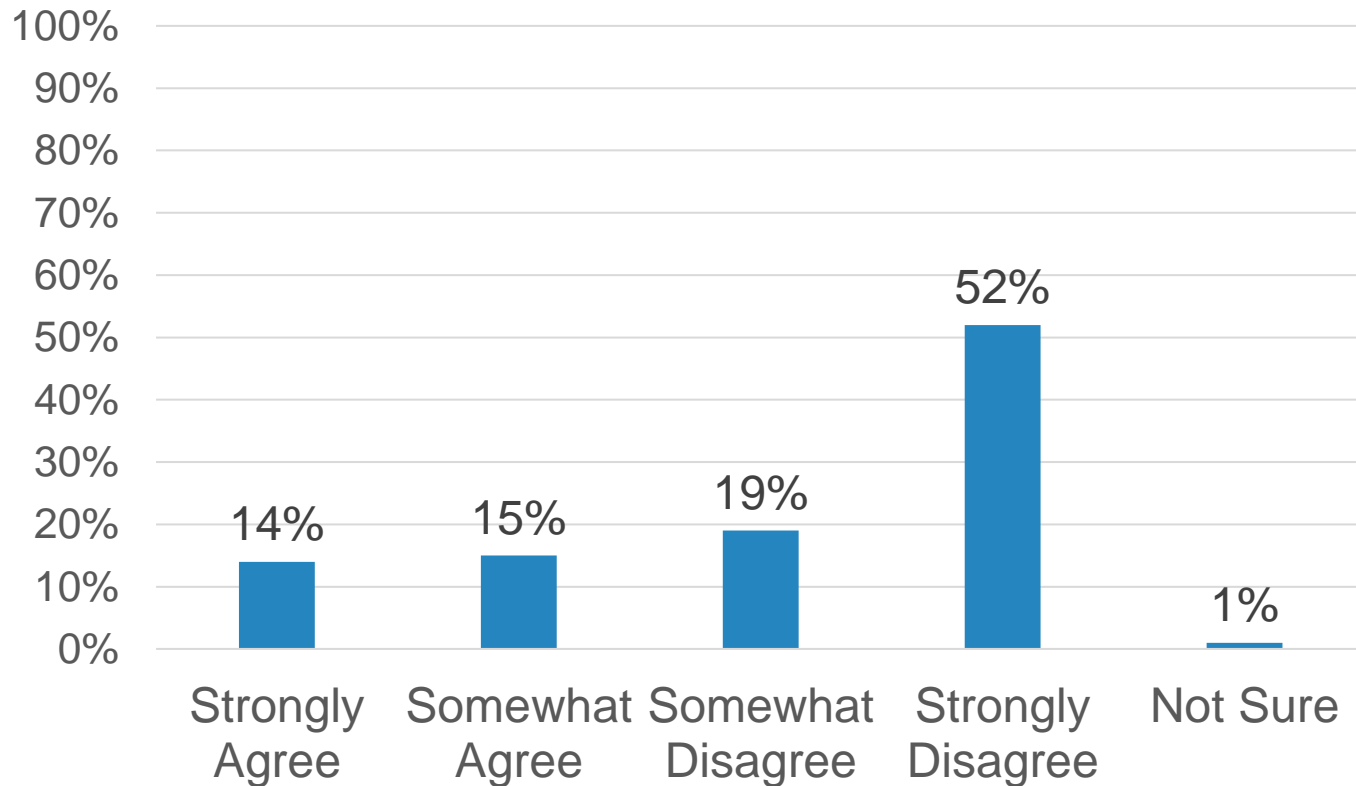


Lifewayresearch

Q30: “At least one day a week I “unplug” from ministerial work and have a day of rest.” n=1,576

28% of pastors agree their church has experienced significant conflict this last year

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

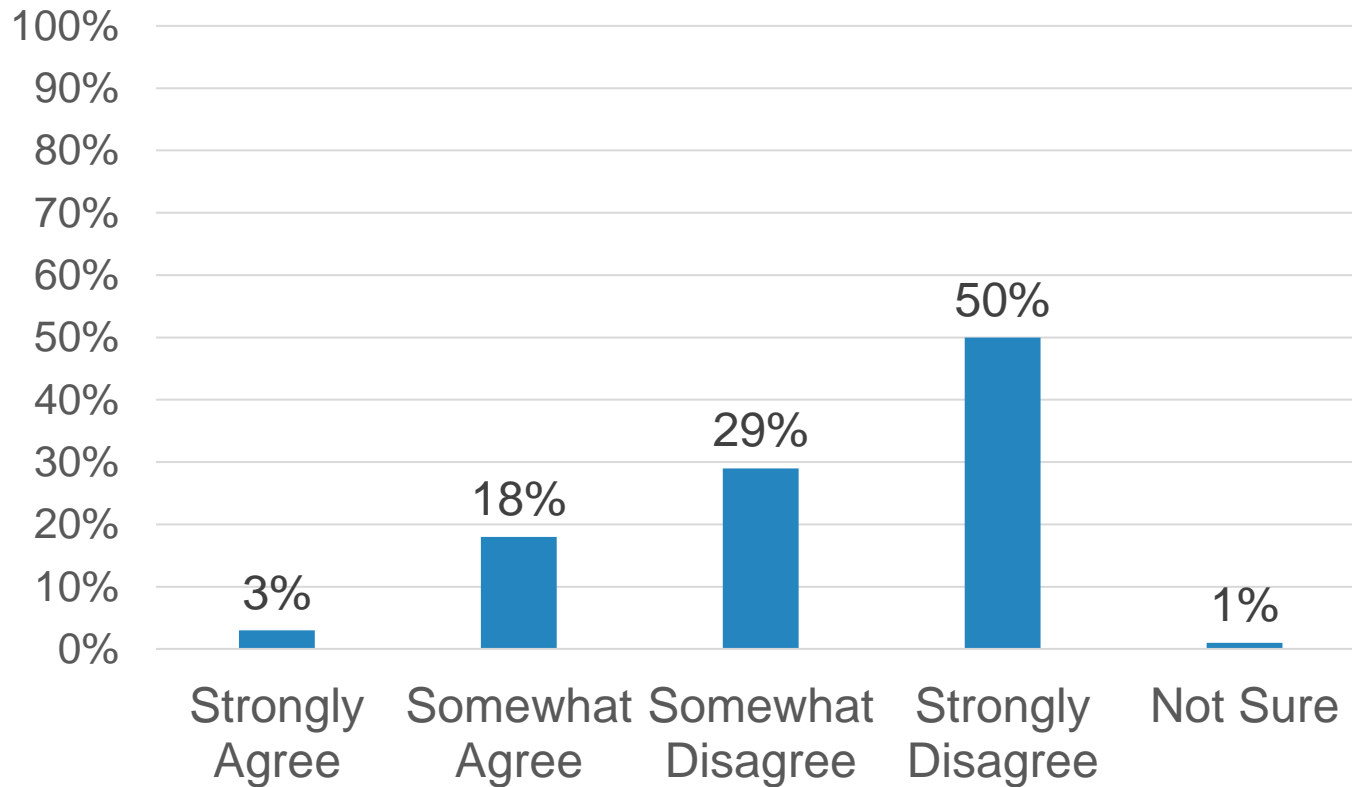


Lifewayresearch

Q31: "Our church has experienced significant conflict this last year." *n*=1,576

21% of pastors frequently get irritated with people at their church

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

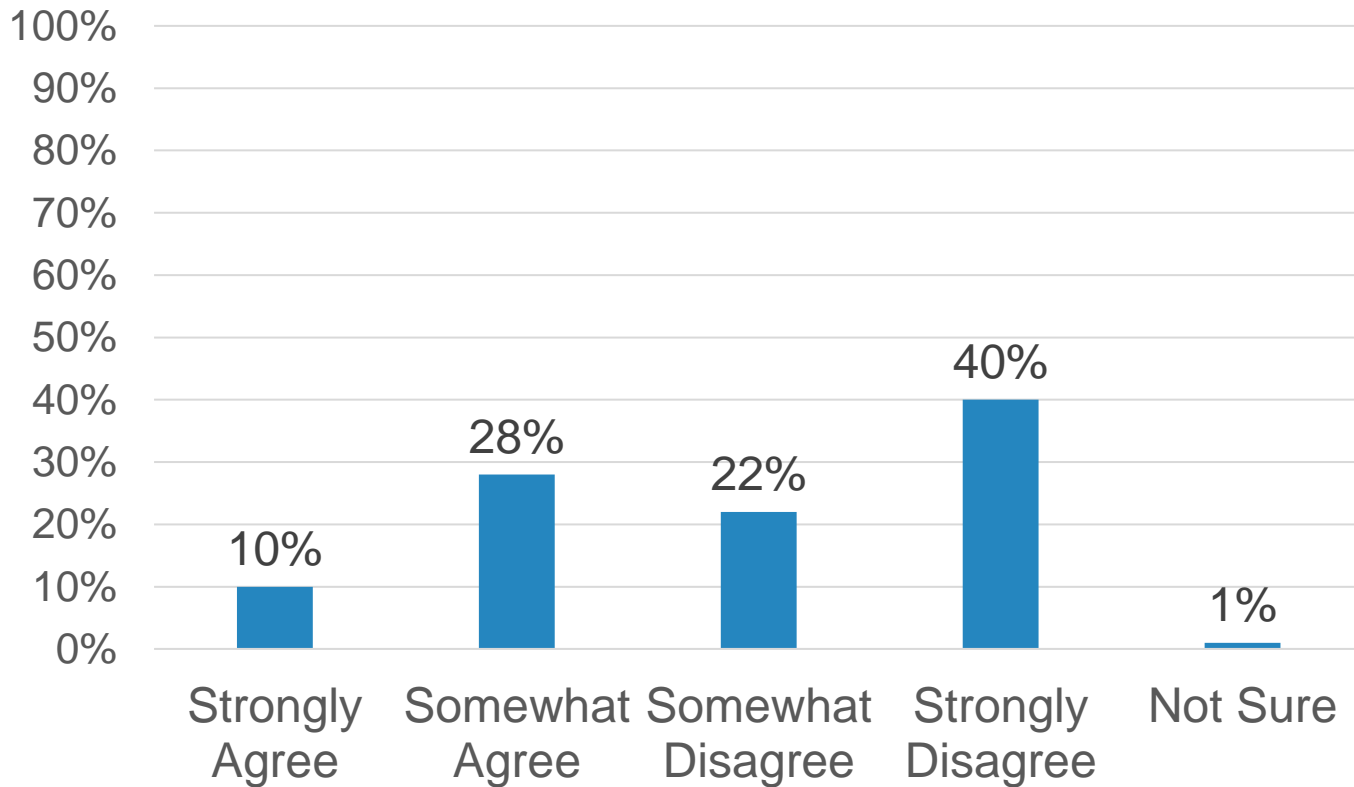


Lifewayresearch

Q32: "I frequently get irritated with people at the church." n=1,576

38% of pastors agree they feel isolated as a pastor

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

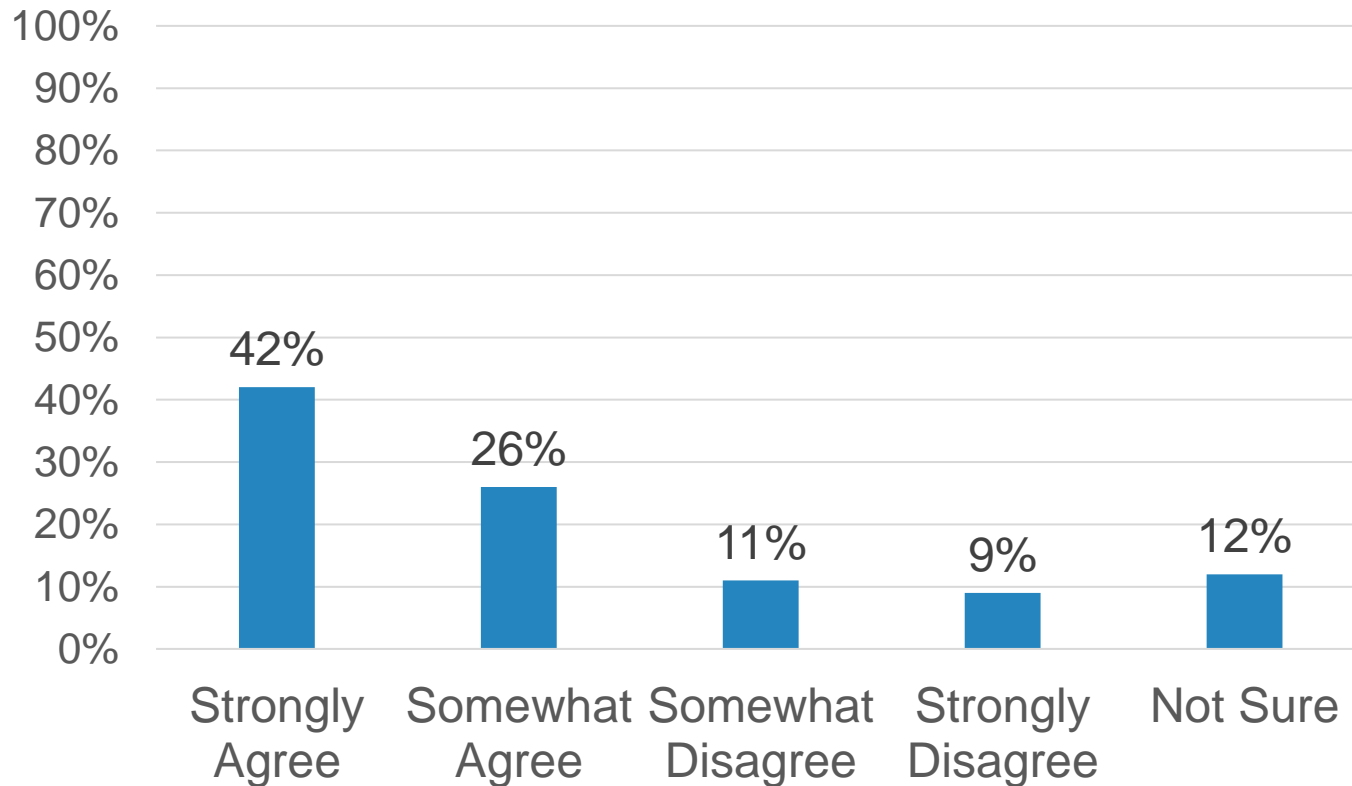


Lifewayresearch

Q33: "I feel isolated as a pastor." n=1,576

20% of pastors disagree that the church accurately described the church before they arrived

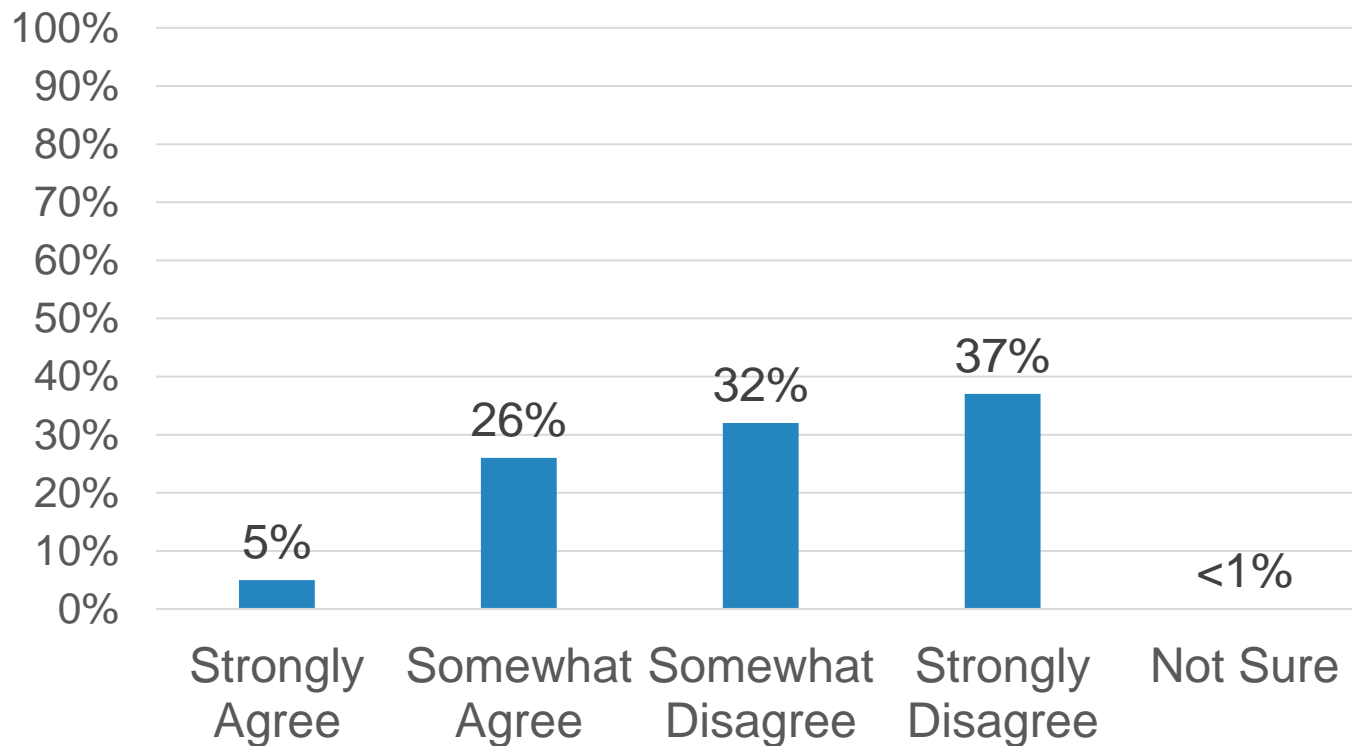
Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

31% of pastors agree the demands of ministry keep them from spending time with their family

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

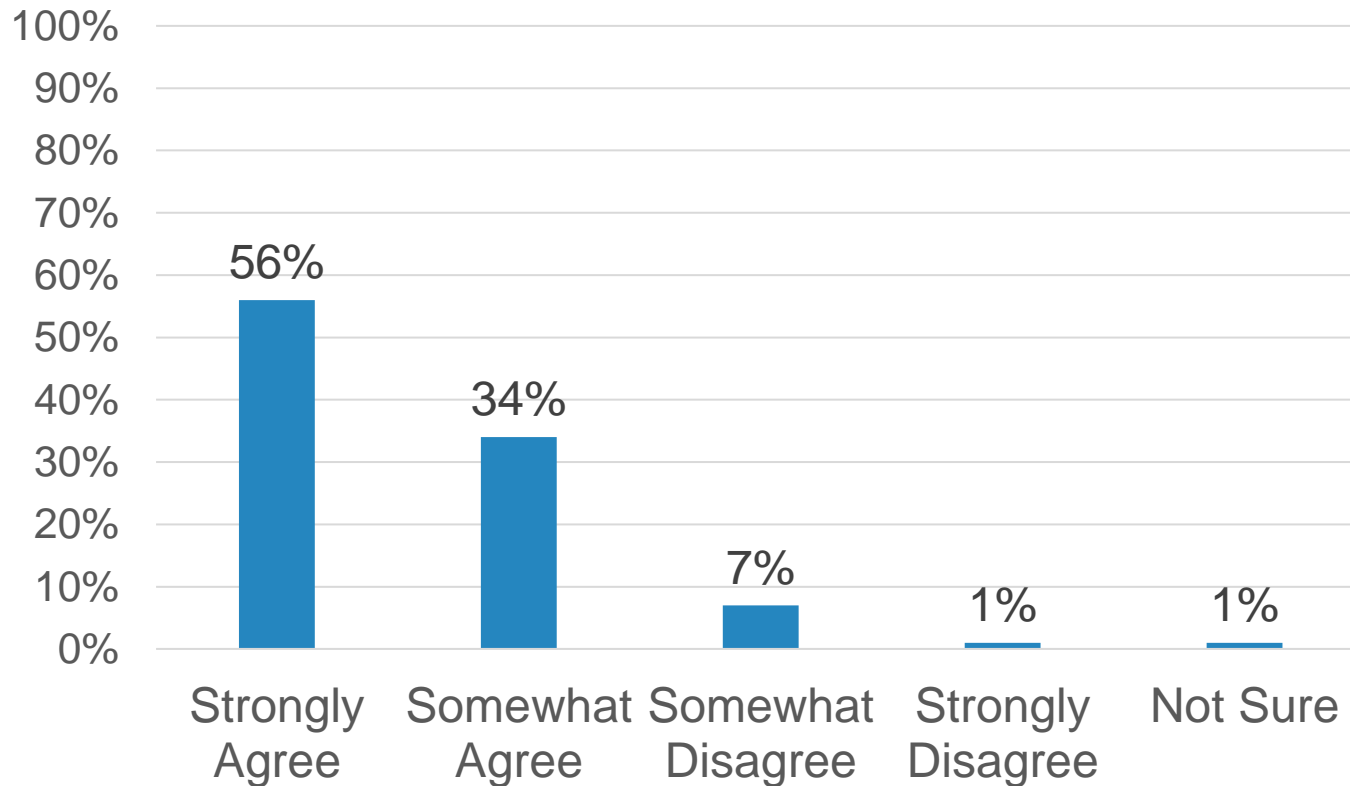


Lifewayresearch

Q35: "The demands of ministry keep me from spending time with my family." *n*=1,567

91% of married pastors agree their spouse is enthusiastic about life in ministry together

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

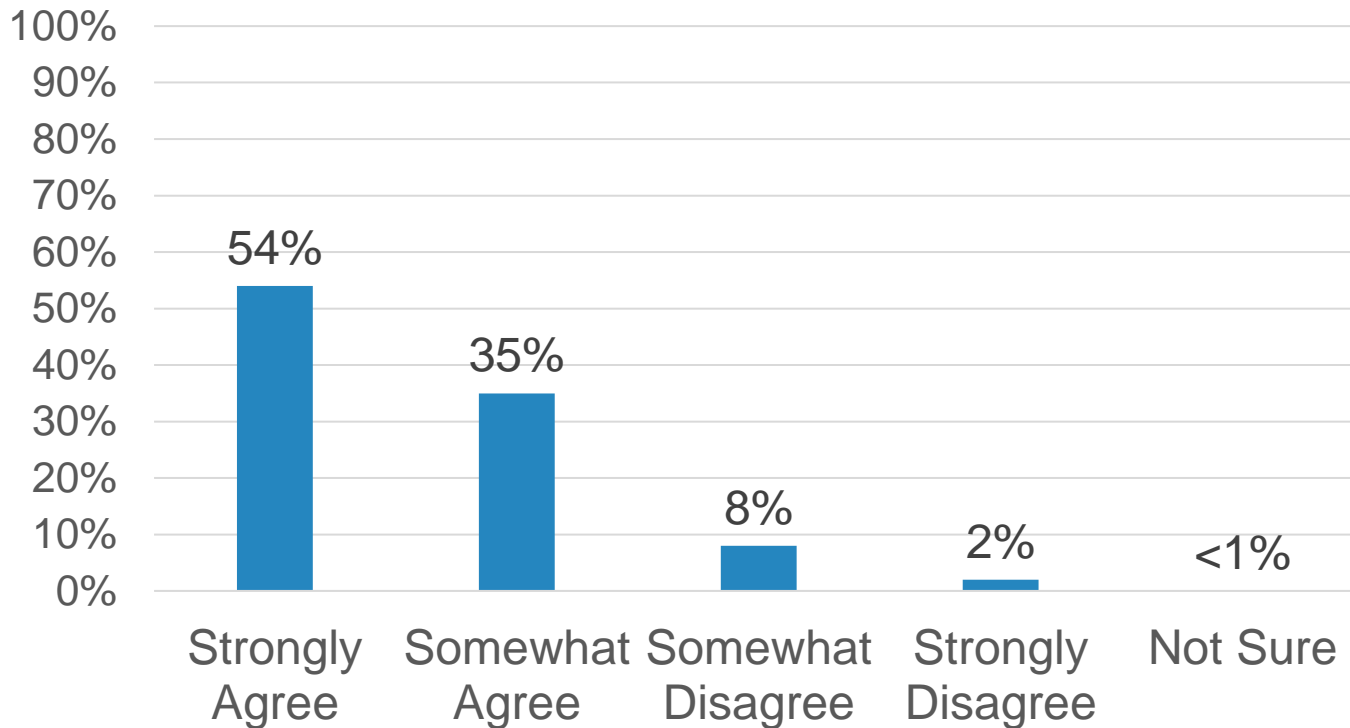


Lifewayresearch

Q36: "My spouse is enthusiastic about our life in ministry together." *n*=1,502

90% of pastors agree their family regularly receives genuine encouragement from the church

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

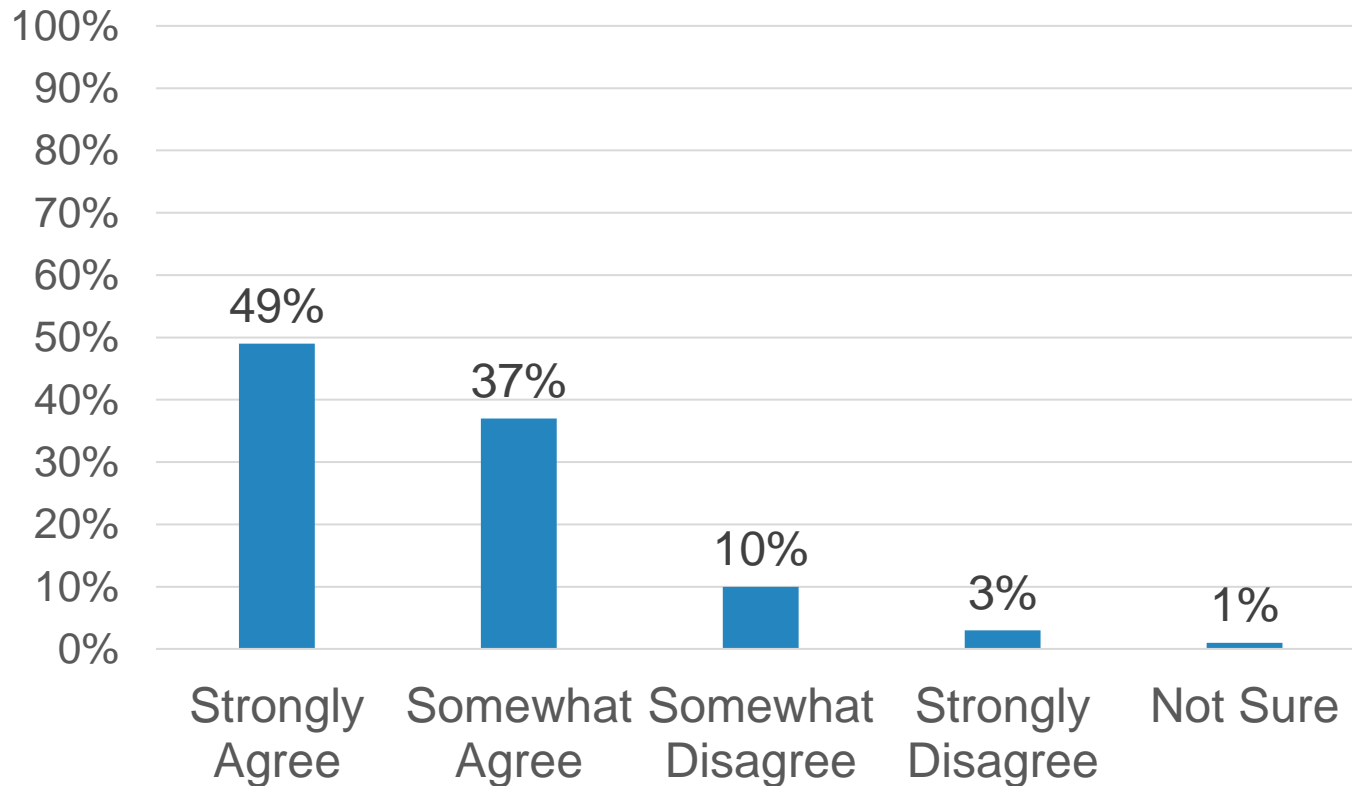


Lifewayresearch

Q37: "My congregation regularly provides my family with genuine encouragement." *n*=1,569

86% of pastors agree they feel free to say “no” when expectations are unrealistic

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

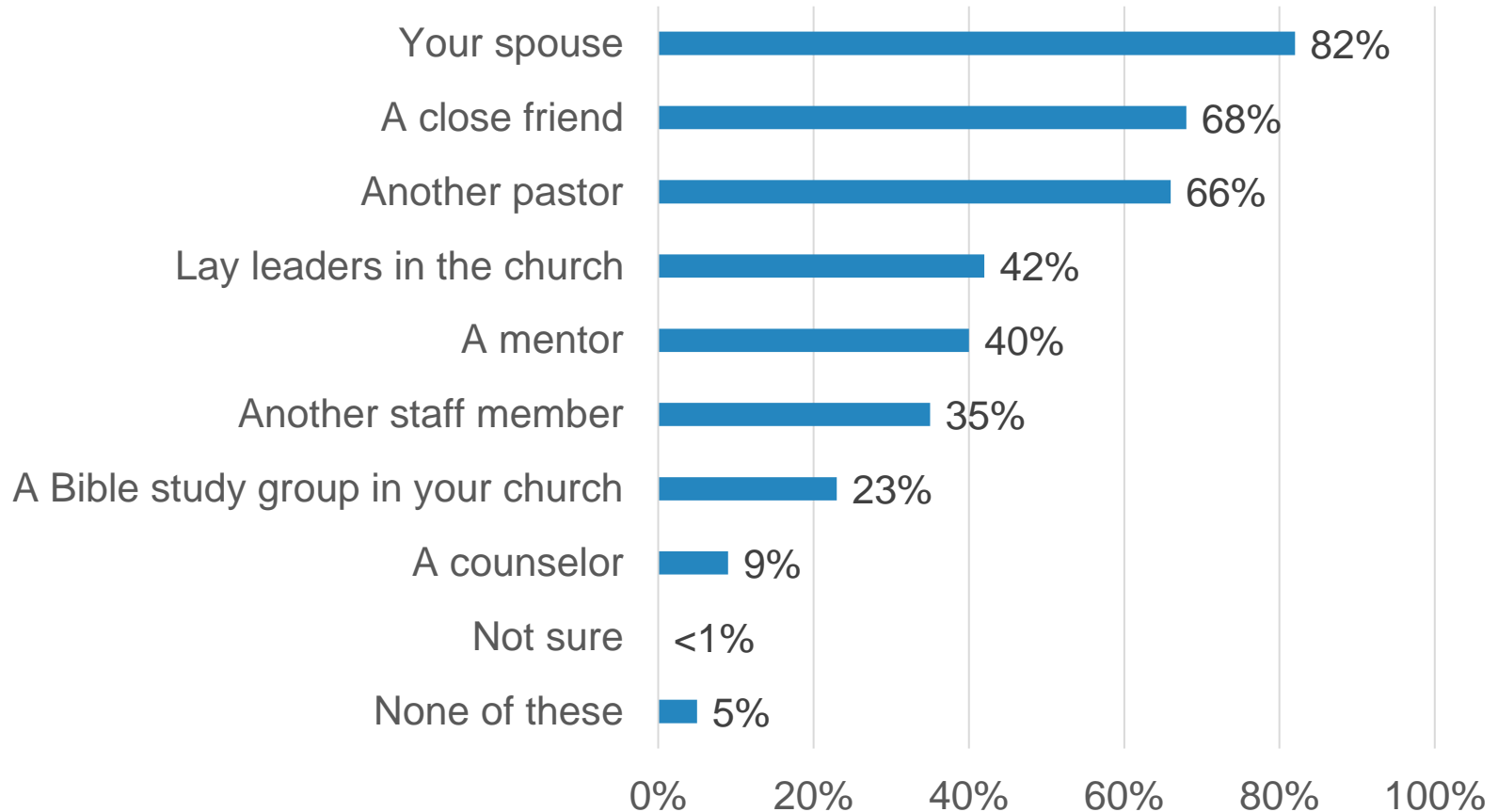


Lifeway research

Q38: “I feel free to say ‘no’ when expectations of me are unrealistic.” n=1,576

At least once a month a majority of pastors meet to share struggles with their spouse, close friend, or another pastor

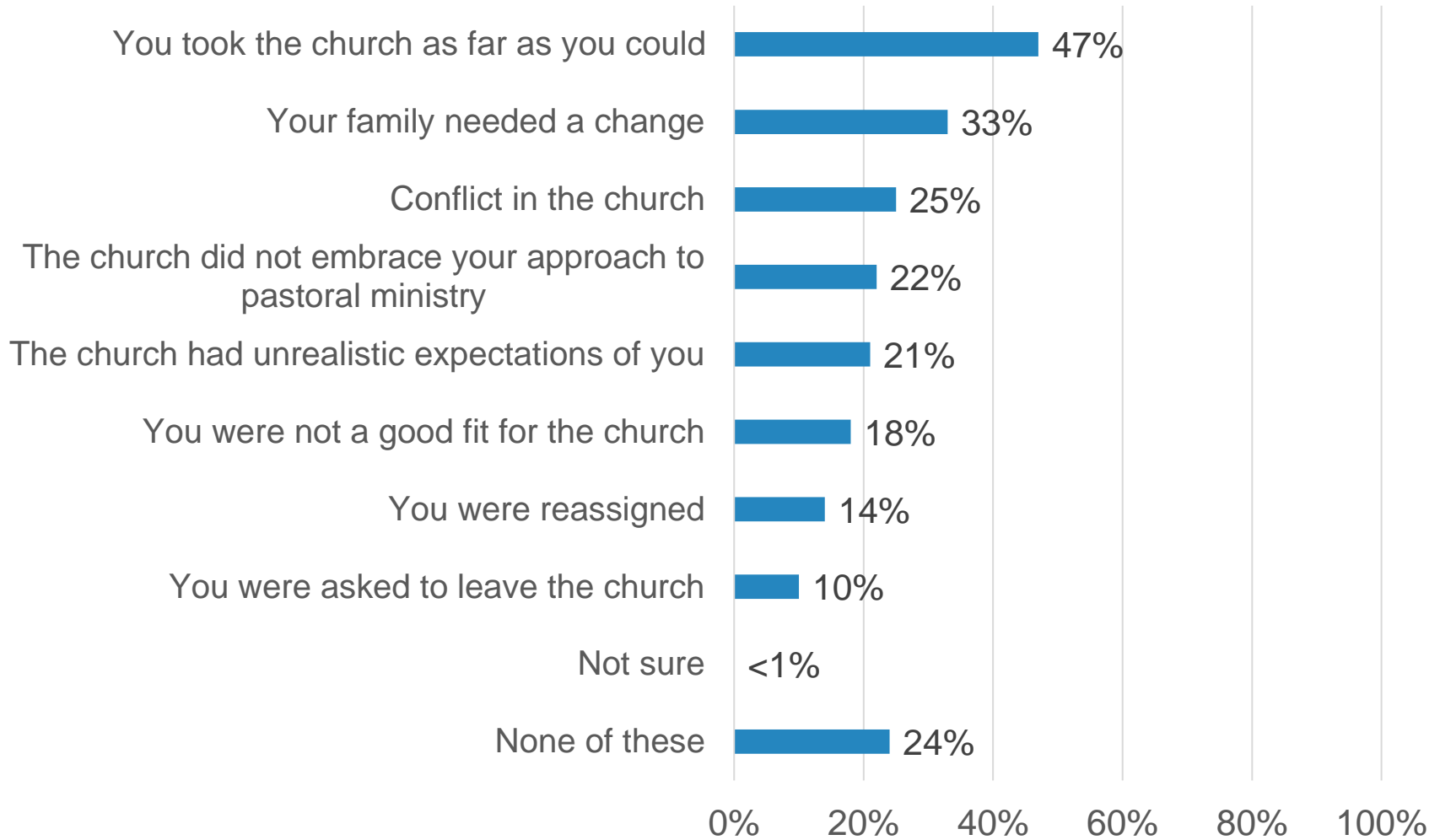
Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

Reasons pastors left their last church

Among Evangelical and Black Protestant Pastors

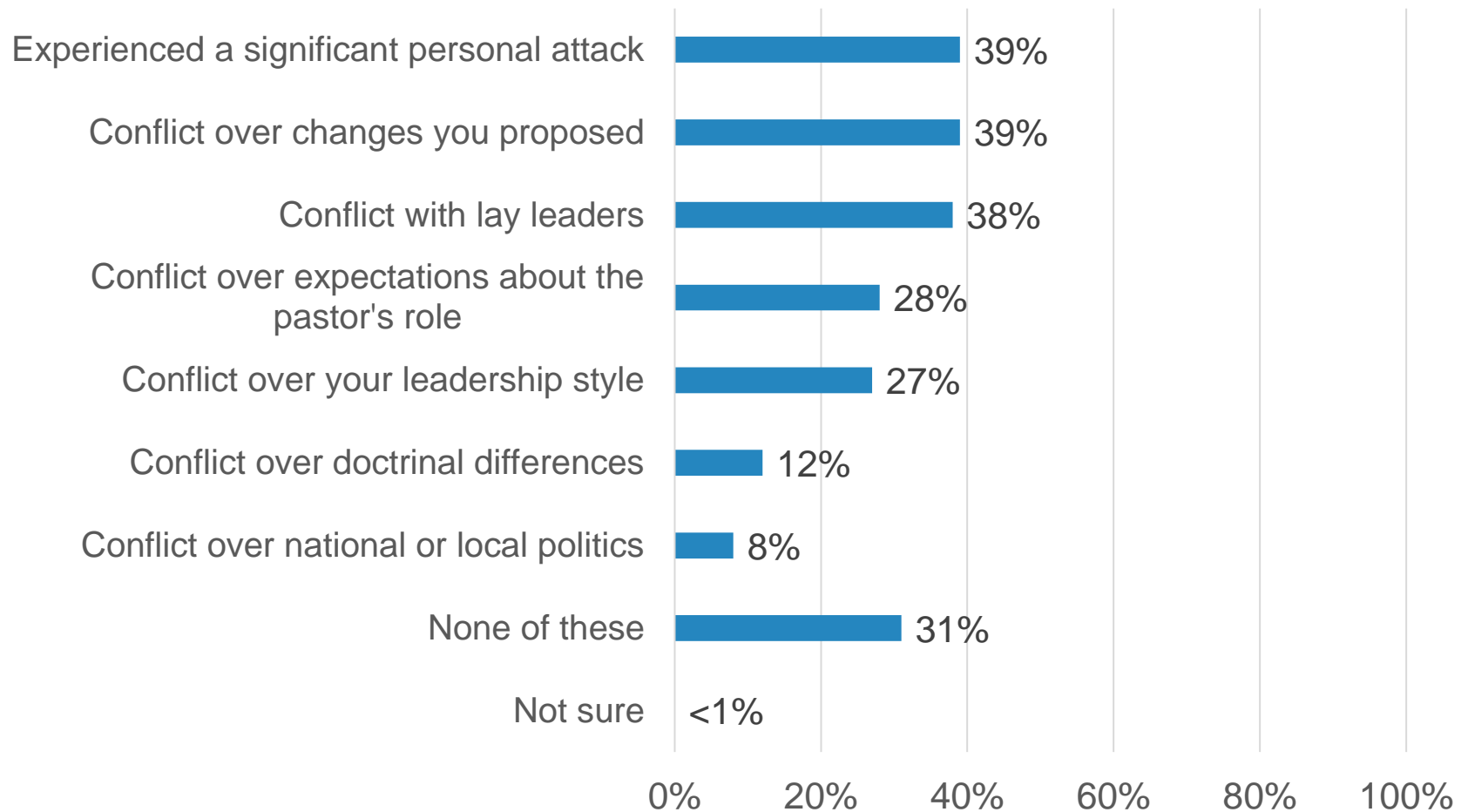


Lifewayresearch

Q40: "Which of the following reasons describe why you left your last church? (Select all that apply)" n=780

69% of pastors experienced conflict in their last church

Among Pastors who Served in a Previous Church



Lifeway research

Significant Differences

Pastor

Age

Gender

Ethnicity

Education Level

Church

Region

Denomination Group

Average Attendance

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the pastor's ethnicity, age, gender, education, self-identified Evangelical or Mainline.

AGE	GENDER	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION
18-44	Male	White	No College Degree
45-54	Female	African American	Bachelor's Degree
55-64		Other Ethnicities	Master's Degree
65+			Doctoral Degree

Significant Statistical Differences

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

REGION	DENOMINATION GROUP	ATTENDANCE
Northeast	Baptist	0-49
South	Christian/Church of Christ	50-99
Midwest	Holiness	100-249
West	Lutheran	250+
	Non-denominational	
	Pentecostal	
	Other Denomination	

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

“Is this the first church you have served as senior pastor?”

- White pastors are the most likely to select “No” (53%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select “Yes” (66%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select “Yes” than males (70% v. 49%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to select “Yes” (68%)
- Pastors in the South are the most likely to select “No” (56%)
- Non-Denominational (63%) and Pentecostals (63%) are more likely to select “Yes” than Baptists (49%), Christian/Church of Christ (39%), Holiness (42%), and Lutherans (43%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (57%) are more likely to select “Yes” than those with attendance of 0-49 (45%) and 100-249 (49%)

“Do you know the name of the person who was pastor of your current church in August 2011?”

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities are the most likely to select “No” (34%)
- Pentecostals (78%) are more likely to select “Yes” than Christian/Church of Christ (66%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (79%) and 250+ (84%) are more likely to select “Yes” than those with attendance of 0-49 (66%) and 50-99 (70%)

“As far as you know, which of the following best describes where (August 2011 pastor) is today?”

- Pastors age 55-64 (17%) or 65+ (21%) are more likely to select “Deceased” than pastors age 18-44 (5%) or 45-54 (7%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “Retired” than females (32% v. 17%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (31%) or Doctoral degree (40%) are more likely to select “Pastoring another church” than those with no college degree (16%) or a Bachelor’s degree (25%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (36%) are more likely to select “Retired” than those with no college degree (24%) or a Bachelor’s degree (26%)
- Lutherans (39%) are more likely to select “Pastoring another church” than Pentecostals (13%) and Other Denominations (23%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 (33%) are more likely to select “Pastoring another church” than those with attendance of 100-249 (23%)

“My seminary or ministry training prepared me to handle the people side of ministry.”

- African American pastors (85%) are more likely to Agree than White pastors (75%)
- Female pastors are more likely to Agree than males (84% v. 76%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (80%) are more likely to Agree than those with no college degree (71%) or a Doctoral degree (72%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (80%) and West (83%) are more likely to Agree than those in the South (73%)
- Lutherans are the most likely to Agree (91%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (82%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 100-249 (76%) and 250+ (72%)

“I expect I will need to confront conflict in this church in the future.”

- White pastors (80%) are more likely to Agree than pastors of Other Ethnicities (72%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to Disagree (32%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (82%) or a Master’s degree (81%) are more likely to Agree than those with a no college degree (74%) or a Doctoral degree (75%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (87%) are more likely to Agree than those in the South (76%) and West (80%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the most likely to Disagree (32%)

“I consistently protect my time with my family.”

- Pastors with a Doctoral degree are the most likely to Agree (98%)

“I am sure I can stay at this church as long as I want”

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities are the least likely to Agree (84%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (93%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (86%)
- Non-denominational (96%) and Pentecostals (93%) are more likely to Agree than Other Denominations (84%)

“I feel I must be ‘on-call’ 24 hours a day.”

- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to Disagree (42%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to Agree (85%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to Agree (81%)
- Pastors in the South (74%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (61%) and West (67%)
- Baptists (76%) are more likely to Agree than Non-denominational (66%) and Other Denominations (61%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to Disagree (41%)

“I work hard to protect my image as a pastor.”

- African American pastors are the most likely to Agree (96%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (17%) are more likely to Disagree than pastors age 55-64 (12%)
- Pastors with no college degree (89%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Master’s degree (82%)
- Pastors in the South (86%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (76%) and West (81%)
- Baptists (86%), Lutherans (87%), and Other Denominations (75%) are more likely to Agree than Non-Denominational (78%) and Other Denominations (75%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 (89%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 0-49 (82%) and 250+ (79%)

“My family resents the demands of pastoral ministry.”

- African American pastors (30%) are more likely to Agree than White pastors (17%)
- Pastors age 65+ (26%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 18-44 (15%) and 55-64 (17%)
- Lutherans (85%) are more likely to Disagree than Christian/Church of Christ (75%) and Non-Denominational (75%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (24%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 50-99 (16%)

“I consistently listen to people in our church for signs of conflict.”

- White pastors (91%) are more likely to Agree than African American pastors (83%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to Agree (94%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (92%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Doctoral degree (86%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (92%) are more likely to Agree than those in the South (89%)
- Lutherans (95%) and Other Denominations (95%) are more likely to Agree than Baptists (89%), Holiness (88%), Non-Denominational (85%), and Pentecostal (89%)

“I often feel the demands of ministry are greater than I can handle.”

- White pastors (52%) are more likely to Agree than African American pastors (38%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to Disagree (58%)
- Male pastors are more likely to Agree than females (52% v. 34%)
- Baptists (56%) and Other Denominations (55%) are more likely to Agree than Lutherans (44%) and Non-denominational (40%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (56%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 0-49 (44%) and 50-99 (49%)

“I have another staff member present when counseling church members of the opposite sex.”

- Male pastors are more likely to Disagree than females (15% v. 7%)
- Pastors with no college degree (87%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Master’s degree (71%) or a Doctoral degree (80%)
- Lutherans are the least likely to Agree (52%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to Agree (68%)

“I refer church members to a professional counselor when the situation requires more than two sessions.”

- Pastors age 55-64 (80%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 18-44 (75%) and 45-54 (74%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (22%) are more likely to Disagree than those with no college degree (14%)
- Holiness (89%) and Lutherans (86%) are more likely to Agree than Baptists (74%), Non-denominational (75%), and Other Denominations (68%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to Agree (88%)

“I am often concerned about the financial security of my family.”

- Pastors age 55-64 (45%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 65+ (36%)
- Female pastors are more likely to Disagree than males (67% v. 57%)
- Baptists are the most likely to Agree (51%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (63%) are more likely to Disagree than those with attendance of 50-99 (55%)

“I deserve the respect of my people.”

- African American pastors are the most likely to Agree (86%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (26%) are more likely to Disagree than pastors age 65+ (20%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (30%) are more likely to Disagree than those with a Master’s degree (23%) or a Doctoral degree (22%)
- Pastors in the Midwest are the most likely to Agree (75%)
- Lutherans (78%) are more likely to Agree than Baptists (69%), Christian/Church of Christ (63%), Non-Denominational (68%), and Other Denominations (68%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 are the most likely to Agree (76%)

“Which of the following best describes your marital status?”

- White pastors (95%) are more likely to select “Married” than African American pastors (87%)
- Pastors age 45-54 (96%) and 55-64 (96%) are more likely to select “Married” than pastors age 65+ (92%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “Married” than females (96% v. 77%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select “Married” (88%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Baptists (97%) are more likely to select “Married” than Lutherans (92%), Non-Denominational (93%), and Pentecostals (91%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 (96%) and 100-249 (96%) are more likely to select “Married” than those with attendance of 0-49 (92%)

“Which if any of the following does your church have in place today?”

A plan for the pastor to periodically receive a sabbatical

- African American pastors (45%) are more likely to select than White pastors (31%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (23%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (54% v. 30%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Pastors in the West (41%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (31%) and South (30%)
- Holiness (52%) are more likely to select than Baptists (24%), Christian/Church of Christ (24%), Lutherans (20%), and Pentecostals (37%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (49%)

“Which if any of the following does your church have in place today?”

A pastor encouragement group that invests in the wellbeing of the pastor’s family

- African American pastors are the most likely to select (60%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (59% v. 34%)
- Pastors with no college degree (42%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (33%) or a Doctoral degree (33%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Pastors in the Northeast are the most likely to select (53%)
- Holiness (47%), Lutherans (48%), Non-denominational (46%), Pentecostals (45%), and Other Denominations (41%) are more likely to select than Baptists (24%) and Christian/Church of Christ (26%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (42%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (33%)

“Which if any of the following does your church have in place today?”

A list of counselors to refer people to

- African American pastors (74%) are more likely to select than White pastors (59%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (50%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (76% v. 59%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Pastors in the Northeast (70%) and Midwest (66%) are more likely to select than those in the South (56%) and West (59%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (46%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (78%) followed by 100-249 (67%), 50-99 (56%), and 0-49 (40%)

“Which if any of the following does your church have in place today?”

A document that clearly communicates the church’s expectations of the pastor

- African American pastors are the most likely to select (85%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (63%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (82% v. 68%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Pastors in the Midwest (77%) are more likely to select than those in the South (66%)
- Lutherans are the most likely to select (91%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (60%)

“Which if any of the following does your church have in place today?”

A lay counseling ministry

- African American pastors are the most likely to select (53%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (30%) and 65+ (32%) are more likely to select than pastors age 18-44 (22%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (55% v. 25%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to select (40%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Non-Denominational are the most likely to select (54%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (46%)

“Which if any of the following does your church have in place today?”

A process for church discipline

- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (86% v. 76%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (69%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (62%)

“Which of the following training, if any, have you received?”

Taken graduate school courses in counseling

- White pastors are the least likely to select (46%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (49% v. 37%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree are the most likely to select (71%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Baptists (47%), Christian/Church of Christ (55%), Lutherans (59%), and Other Denominations (58%) are more likely to select than Non-denominational (38%) and Pentecostals (36%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (51%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (44%)

“Which of the following training, if any, have you received?”

Obtained a graduate degree in counseling

- African American pastors are the most likely to select (23%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the least likely to select (4%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree are the most likely to select (21%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Pastors in the South (9%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (6%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (14%) and Pentecostals (12%) are more likely to select than Baptists (6%) and Lutherans (6%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (11%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 50-99 (7%)

“Which of the following training, if any, have you received?”

Read several books or articles on counseling

- Pastors with a Master’s degree (91%) or a Doctoral degree (91%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (78%) or a Bachelor’s degree (84%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Christians/Church of Christ (91%), Lutherans (92%), Non-Denominational (91%), Pentecostals (88%), and Other Denominations (92%) are more likely to select than Baptists (81%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (90%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (82%) and 50-99 (86%)

“Which of the following training, if any, have you received?”

Attended conferences on counseling

- White pastors are the least likely to select (55%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the least likely to select (44%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Christian/Church of Christ (66%) and Lutherans (72%) are more likely to select than Baptists (52%), Holiness (54%), and Non-Denominational (52%)

“Which of the following training, if any, have you received?”

Taken courses on interpersonal skills

- African American pastors (78%) are more likely to select than White pastors (66%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (71%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (62%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select (59%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Holiness (79%), Lutherans (78%), and Pentecostals (75%) are more likely to select than Baptists (57%) and Other Denominations (64%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (69%) and 250+ (72%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (62%)

“Which of the following training, if any, have you received?”

Taken courses on dealing with conflict

- African American pastors (84%) are more likely to select than White pastors (72%)
- Pastors age 55-64 are the most likely to select (80%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (86% v. 73%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree (80%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (70%) or a Bachelor's degree (72%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (% v. %)
- Pastors in the West (79%) are more likely to select than those in the South (72%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (63%)

“Which of the following activities have you done this past year?”

Planned a date night alone with your spouse at least once a month

- Pastors age 55-64 (70%) and 65+ (70%) are more likely to select than pastors age 18-44 (60%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (77% v. 65%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree (74%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor’s degree (69%) or a Master’s degree (62%)
- Holiness (75%) and Pentecostals (74%) are more likely to select than Baptists (61%) and Other Denominations (64%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (70%) and 250+ (72%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (58%) and 50-99 (62%)

“Which of the following activities have you done this past year?”

Attended a marriage retreat or conference with your spouse

- White pastors are the least likely to select (16%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (27% v. 18%)
- Pastors with no college degree (24%) or a Bachelor’s degree (21%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (16%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (22%) and Non-Denominational (25%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (7%) and Other Denominations (10%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (24%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 100-249 (17%)

“Which of the following activities have you done this past year?”

Attended marriage counseling with your spouse

- White pastors are the least likely to select (7%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (17% v. 8%)
- Pastors in the West (13%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (5%) and South (8%)
- Pentecostals (14%) are more likely to select than Baptists (6%) and Holiness (7%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (15%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 50-99 (6%) and 100-249 (8%)

“Which of the following activities have you done this past year?”

Took a vacation with your family for at least a week away from church work

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (75%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (86%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (78%) or a Doctoral degree (79%)
- Holiness (89%) and Lutheran (91%) are more likely to select than Baptists (81%), Christian/Church of Christ (79%), Pentecostal (81%), and Other Denominations (80%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (70%)

“Which of the following activities have you done this past year?”

Prayed regularly with your spouse for each other

- Pastors age 18-44 are the least likely to select (76%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (92% v. 83%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (89%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (81%) or a Doctoral degree (83%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (89%) and West (87%) are more likely to select than those in the South (80%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (74%)

“In the last 7 days, how many times have you had personal time alone with the Lord involving Bible study and prayer, other than sermon or lesson preparation?”

- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely (64%) and pastors age 18-44 the least likely (40%) to select “7 or more”
- Female pastors are more likely to select “7 or more” than males (63% v. 49%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to select “7 or more” (66%)
- Holiness (57%), Non-Denominational (59%), and Pentecostals (65%) are more likely to select “7 or more” than Baptists (46%), Christian/Church of Christ (44%), and Lutherans (38%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (54%) are more likely to select “7 or more” than those with attendance of 100-249 (47%)

“My spouse is very satisfied with my marriage today.”

- Pastors age 55-64 (97%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 65+ (94%)
- Non-Denominational (99%) and Pentecostals (98%) are more likely to Agree than Lutherans (94%)

“The role of being a pastor is frequently overwhelming.”

- Pastors age 18-44 (66%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 65+ (58%)
- Male pastors are more likely to Agree than females (64% v. 51%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (65%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Doctoral degree (57%)
- Baptists (69%), Holiness (64%), and Pentecostals (63%) are more likely to Agree than Lutherans (52%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (67%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 50-99 (60%)

“I invest in processes and behaviors to prevent conflict.”

- Non-Denominational (93%) are more likely to Agree than Other Denominations (85%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (93%) and 250+ (92%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 0-49 (84%)

“This church would not have achieved the progress it has without me.”

- Pastors age 65+ (44%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 55-64 (34%)
- Female pastors are more likely to Agree than males (49% v. 37%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree (45%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Master’s degree (37%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (46%) are more likely to Agree than those in the South (37%) and West (35%)
- Lutherans are the most likely to Disagree (71%)

“My church has unrealistic expectations of me.”

- African American (32%) and Other ethnicity pastors (30%) are the most likely to Agree White pastors (22%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree (26%) are more likely to Agree than those with no college degree (18%)
- Baptist (23%), Christian/Church of Christ (27%), and Other denominations (27%) are more likely to Agree than Non-Denominational (16%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (25%) and 50-99 (25%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 250+ (17%)

“At least one day a week I ‘unplug’ from ministerial work and have a day of rest.”

- Female pastors are more likely to Agree than males (94% v. 85%)
- Baptists are the least likely to Agree (79%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (91%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 0-49 (83%) and 50-99 (83%)

“Our church has experienced significant conflict this last year.”

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities are the most likely to Agree (43%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to Agree (37%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (31%) and West (33%) are more likely to Agree than those in the South (25%)
- Non-Denominational (37%) are more likely to Agree than Baptists (25%), Lutherans (25%), and Pentecostals (27%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (38%) are the most likely and those with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely (19%) to Agree

“I frequently get irritated with people at the church.”

- Pastors age 18-44 (26%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 55-64 (17%) and 65+ (20%)
- Male pastors are more likely to Agree than females (22% v. 13%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (23%) are more likely to Agree than those with no college degree (16%)
- Baptists (24%) and Other Denominations (24%) are more likely to Agree than Holiness (13%)

“I feel isolated as a pastor.”

- African American pastors are the least likely to Agree (21%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (44%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 55-64 (35%) and 65+ (30%)
- Male pastors are more likely to Agree than females (39% v. 22%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree are the most likely to Agree (44%)
- Pastors in the South (39%) and West (41%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (30%)
- Baptists (45%) are more likely to Agree than Holiness (33%), Lutherans (35%), Non-Denominational (26%), Pentecostals (33%), and Other Denominations (34%)

“The search team or leaders who invited me to my church accurately described the church before I arrived.”

- White pastors are the most likely to Agree (70%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (74%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 55-64 (64%) and 65+ (64%)
- Male pastors are more likely to Disagree than females (21% v. 13%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree (25%) are more likely to Disagree than those with no college degree (16%) or a Bachelor’s degree (17%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (77%), Holiness (79%), and Other Denominations (78%) are more likely to Agree than Baptists (66%), Non-Denominational (61%), and Pentecostals (56%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (24%) and 50-99 (22%) are more likely to Disagree than those with attendance of 250+ (15%)

“The demands of ministry keep me from spending time with my family.”

- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (37%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 0-49 (28%) and 50-99 (29%)

“My spouse is enthusiastic about our life in ministry together.”

- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to Agree (94%)
- Female pastors are more likely to Agree than males (97% v. 90%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (93%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Master’s degree (88%)
- Non-Denominational (95%) and Pentecostals (94%) are more likely to Agree than Baptists (89%) and Other Denominations (87%)

“My congregation regularly provides my family with genuine encouragement.”

- Pastors with no college degree (93%) or a Bachelor’s degree (94%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Master’s degree (88%) or a Doctoral degree (86%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (92%) are more likely to Agree than those in the South (88%)
- Holiness (93%) and Non-Denominational (96%) are more likely to Agree than Baptists (87%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (91%) are more likely to Agree than those with attendance of 0-49 (86%)

“I feel free to say ‘no’ when expectations of me are unrealistic.”

- African American pastors are the most likely to Agree (93%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (88%) and 65+ (88%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 18-44 (82%)
- Holiness (90%) are more likely to Agree than Christian/Church of Christ (81%) and Non-Denominational (82%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

A mentor

- White pastors are the least likely to select (39%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (55%) and pastors age 65+ the least likely to select (26%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (58% v. 39%)
- Pastors with no college degree (46%) or a Bachelor’s degree (48%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (36%) or a Doctoral degree (34%)
- Pastors in the West (47%) are more likely to select than those in the South (38%)
- Non-Denominational (60%) are more likely to select than Baptists (30%), Lutherans (35%), Pentecostals (49%), and Other Denominations (37%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (55%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

A counselor

- White pastors are the least likely to select (8%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (15%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (19% v. 8%)
- Pastors in the West (12%) are more likely to select than those in the South (7%)
- Holiness (14%) and Pentecostals (13%) are more likely to select than Baptists (6%) and Christian/Church of Christ (6%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (19%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

A close friend

- African American pastors (79%) are more likely to select than White pastors (68%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (56%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (81% v. 67%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree are the least likely to select (58%)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (63%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (58%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (54%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

Lay leaders in the church

- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (53% v. 41%)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (35%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (31%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (33%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

Another staff member

- Pastors age 18-44 (41%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (32%) and 65+ (28%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (57% v. 33%)
- Pastors with no college degree (41%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (33%) or a Doctoral degree (27%)
- Pastors in the West (44%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (35%) and South (31%)
- Holiness (47%) and Non-Denominational (51%) are more likely to select than Baptists (29%), Christian/Church of Christ (29%), Lutherans (30%), and Other Denominations (34%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (57%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

Your spouse

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (75%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (83% v. 72%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select (74%)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (78%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (74%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 (83%) and 100-249 (85%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (75%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

Another pastor

- African American pastors (79%) are more likely to select than White pastors (65%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (56%)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (61%)
- Lutherans (78%) and Non-Denominational (76%) are more likely to select than Baptists (57%), Christian/Church of Christ (65%), and Pentecostals (65%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (55%)

“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”

A Bible study group in your church

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (31%) are more likely to select than White pastors (22%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to select (30%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (36% v. 22%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (28%) and West (30%) are more likely to select than those in the South (21%)
- Baptists are the least likely to select (15%)

“Which of the following reasons describe why you left your last church?”

You were not a good fit for the church

- Pastors age 18-44 (26%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (15%) and 65+ (17%)
- Holiness (24%) and Non-Denominational (26%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (12%)

“Which of the following reasons describe why you left your last church?”

The church had unrealistic expectations of you

- Pastors age 18-44 (29%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (18%) and 65+ (15%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (25%) are more likely to select than those with a Doctoral degree (15%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (29%) are more likely to select than Baptists (18%)

You took the church as far as you could

- Pentecostals (59%) and Other Denominations (53%) are more likely to select than Baptists (41%)

“Which of the following reasons describe why you left your last church?”

Your family needed a change

- African American pastors are the least likely to select (13%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (19%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (38%) are more likely to select than those with a Doctoral degree (27%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (40%) are more likely to select than those in the South (31%) and West (29%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (53%) and Pentecostals (47%) are more likely to select than Baptists (25%) and Other Denominations (30%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (37%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (24%)

“Which of the following reasons describe why you left your last church?”

Conflict in the church

- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (31%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (21%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (35%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (11%) and Other Denominations (19%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (29%) and 100-249 (28%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 50-99 (21%)

You were asked to leave the church

- No significant differences

“Which of the following reasons describe why you left your last church?”

The church did not embrace your approach to pastoral ministry

- White pastors (23%) are more likely to select than pastors of Other Ethnicities (6%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (23% v. 9%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (28%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (19%)
- Baptists (23%), Christian/Church of Christ (27%), Holiness (24%), and Pentecostals (31%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (11%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (27%) and 50-99 (25%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 250+ (14%)

“Which of the following reasons describe why you left your last church?”

You were reassigned

- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (46% v. 13%)
- Holiness (27%) and Pentecostals (33%) are more likely to select than Baptists (6%), Christian/Church of Christ (3%), and Lutherans (13%)

“Which of the following types of conflict did you personally experience as pastor in your last church?”

Conflict with lay leaders

- White pastors (39%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (11%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (30%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree are the most likely to select (48%)

Conflict over doctrinal differences

- Lutherans (16%) and Other Denominations (20%) are more likely to select than Holiness (6%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (18%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 100-249 (9%)

“Which of the following types of conflict did you personally experience as pastor in your last church?”

Conflict over changes you proposed

- White pastors (40%) are more likely to select than pastors of Other Ethnicities (25%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (55%)
- Pentecostals (47%) are more likely to select than Other Ethnicities (29%)

“Which of the following types of conflict did you personally experience as pastor in your last church?”

Conflict over expectations about the pastor’s role

- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (42%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (37%) or a Master’s degree (30%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (19%) or a Doctoral degree (19%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (41%) are more likely to select than Baptists (22%) and Lutherans (26%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the most likely to select (39%)

“Which of the following types of conflict did you personally experience as pastor in your last church?”

Conflict over your leadership style

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (16%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (28% v. 10%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (38%) are more likely to select than those in the South (25%) and West (23%)

“Which of the following types of conflict did you personally experience as pastor in your last church?”

Experienced a significant personal attack

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (28%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (41% v. 14%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (46%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (30%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (47%) and Pentecostals (47%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (32%)

“Which of the following types of conflict did you personally experience as pastor in your last church?”

Conflict over national or local politics

- Pastors age 18-44 (15%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (5%) and 65+ (5%)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (4%)
- Other Denominations (12%) are more likely to select than Christians/Church of Christ (1%) and Pentecostals (3%)

Pastor Attrition Study 2021

A SURVEY OF 1,576 EVANGELICAL AND BLACK PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research