



Pastor Health Survey

CHURCH HEALTH INITIATIVE

GREY MATTER RESEARCH AND CONSULTING



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FULL REPORT
FEBRUARY 2020

Introduction

This report provides a complete analysis of the findings from a quantitative study conducted by Grey Matter Research & Consulting for Texas Baptists. The study was completed in February 2020, with survey responses gathered in January.

The study was conducted online among pastors for whom the organization had an e-mail address. A total of 560 interviews were completed among Texas Baptist pastors. Respondents were informed that the study was being conducted for Texas Baptists, although they were assured that their responses would be entirely anonymous and confidential. The questionnaire was available to all respondents in both English and Spanish.

A census was attempted among Texas Baptist pastors, meaning there is no potential sampling error. (Had this been a sample of 560 of the 4,921 pastors on the list, the total sample size would have had a potential sampling error of ± 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level with a 50% response distribution. In simple English, this means if the same study were conducted 100 times using the same sampling, and the distribution of responses to a particular question had half of all respondents giving one response and the other half giving another response, 95 out of 100 times the proportion would be within plus or minus 4.1 percentage points from the 50% response given in this study – so the effective range would be 46% to 54% if the answer in question was selected by 50% of respondents in this study.)

This report is divided into sections. First is the Executive Summary, highlighting key findings from the study. Next is the full Analysis, followed by a section of Final Thoughts (more subjective commentary on the results). Crosstabulated data, the questionnaire used, and verbatim respondent comments are available separately.

A note on ethnicity: racially, Latinos are Caucasian. However, it becomes cumbersome to repeat “non-Latino Caucasians” throughout the report. So for the purposes of this document, “Caucasian” refers to non-Latino Caucasians, while Latinos will be grouped with pastors from other races as “non-Caucasian.”

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Executive Summary

LIFE SATISFACTION

- On a scale of 1 to 7, just 43% of pastors reported being highly satisfied with their overall quality of life, although 90% were on the positive side of the scale.
- On 11 different areas tested, satisfaction was highest for their overall work situation with their church, the quality of the relationships they have with people in the congregation, the quality of the relationships they have with other church staff (when there are other staff), and especially the quality of the relationship they have with their spouse.
- Dissatisfaction was most common with their overall shape and physical conditioning, along with how much care and concern their lay leaders and their congregation show regarding their needs as a person.
- In total, 9% were highly dissatisfied (rating of 1) with at least one area covered by this question, and 41% were dissatisfied (rating of 1 – 3) with at least one area. Dissatisfaction was particularly common among pastors under age 45.

PHYSICAL/MENTAL HEALTH

- Forty-six percent of pastors do not get at least seven hours of sleep in a typical night. Thirteen percent typically get fewer than six hours.
- Twenty-six percent of pastors generally don't get at least 20 minutes of exercise at any point during a week. The average was 2.5 days per week.
- The average pastor was 5'10½" and weighed 214 pounds. Only 14% qualified as having a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI), while 46% were considered obese, including 6% who qualified as extremely obese.
- Diagnosed medical problems included high blood pressure (40%), high cholesterol (31%), diabetes (16%), depression/anxiety (12%), heart disease (10%), and stress disorder (2%). Just 38% had been diagnosed with none of these. Ten percent have had a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiac episode.
- In the past six months, problems pastors have experienced include a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (39%), physical exhaustion (38%), emotional exhaustion (37%), significant self-doubts (26%), pessimism about their future (23%), and panic attacks (7%). Two-thirds had experienced one or more of these maladies in the last six months, and this was especially common among young pastors.
- One-third experienced personal stress due to their church or congregation at least once a week, including 9% who said this is a daily occurrence. Just 12% rarely or never experience this.
- Eighty-nine percent were experiencing at least one critical issue in the physical/mental health category, defined as:
 - Being highly dissatisfied with their overall physical conditioning and the shape they're in
 - Getting fewer than five hours of sleep per night

- Having no days on which they get at least 20 minutes of exercise
- Having a BMI of 40 or higher (categorized as extremely obese)
- Have had a heart attack or stroke
- Have been diagnosed with one or more of the seven health issues listed above
- Have experienced one or more of the six mental health issues listed above

RELATIONSHIPS

- Pastors were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with five different statements about relationships:
 1. My relationships with my congregants are generally loving, trusting, and honest (64% agreed strongly, 34% somewhat)
 2. I have people in my life outside of my family that I can turn to when I'm troubled or in need of support (53% agreed strongly, 29% somewhat)
 3. As far as I know, the relationships in my life are free of unresolved brokenness (45% agreed strongly, 38% somewhat)
 4. If I am unaware of a character or spiritual flaw in my own life, I have people in my life who would point it out to me in an appropriate way (40% agreed strongly, 45% somewhat)
 5. When I get hurt in a relationship, I am good at resolving that pain through conversations of reconciliation and forgiveness (32% agreed strongly, 51% somewhat)
- Thirteen percent disagreed strongly with at least one of these five statements; 44% disagreed either strongly or somewhat with at least one.
- The average pastor reported 4.7 close friends in his life (excluding any family). Seven percent had no close friends at all. Most had two to five.
- Eighteen percent were experiencing at least one critical issue in the relationships category, defined as:
 - Being highly dissatisfied with how much care/concern their congregation shows toward their needs as a person and/or with the quality of their relationships with members of their congregation
 - Having no close personal friends
 - Disagreeing strongly with any of the five statements about relationships listed above

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

- The average pastor estimated spending 4.1 hours per week (or 35 minutes per day) in personal prayer. Nearly three out of ten pray fewer than two hours per week.
- The average amount of time spent in personal Bible reading or study (excluding sermon preparation) was 4.4 hours per week, or 38 minutes per day. Nineteen percent spend fewer than two hours per week in the Word.
- Seventeen percent reported experiencing the presence and power of God a tremendous amount in their daily lives, while 30% said they experience this a

considerable amount and 30% quite a bit. Nineteen percent experienced this only some, while 4% said not much or none at all.

- Six percent were experiencing at least one critical issue in the spiritual health category, defined as:
 - Being highly dissatisfied with their personal spiritual development and/or with the amount of time they're able to devote to this
 - Feeling God's presence little or none in their daily life
 - Spending no time in either personal prayer or Bible study/reading in a typical week

FINANCIAL HEALTH

- Only 17% of all pastors said they really don't experience any stress, worry, or concern resulting from their household's financial situation. Six percent experienced a tremendous amount, 11% considerable stress, and 15% quite a bit.
- Three out of ten pastors said their church-related income is insufficient for their household's needs, including 14% who called it very insufficient. Another 5% receive no church-related income.
- Eighty-seven percent of pastors carried some debt in their household, but most said it was a reasonable amount compared to their income. Twenty-three percent felt they have an unreasonable debt load, including 7% who considered it very unreasonable.
- While only 34% of pastors had any health insurance through their church, most did have some type of coverage. Seven percent said their household is entirely uninsured.
- Twenty-seven percent of pastors were experiencing at least one critical issue in the financial health category, defined as:
 - Experiencing a tremendous amount of financial stress
 - Having church-related income that is very insufficient for their household's needs
 - Having a debt load they considered to be very unreasonable compared to their income and financial situation
 - Having no health insurance at all

WORK LIFE

- Two-thirds of pastors said their job is a full-time, 40 hours per week position. Others said it's supposed to be closer to 30 hours (7%), 20 hours (13%), or ten hours per week (9%), while 4% were in some other type of situation.
- The average pastor reported working 41 hours per week at his church job – and that includes people who didn't have a full-time position. Among those with a full-time job, the average was 49.3 hours per week. Thirty-two percent work between 40 and 49 hours, while 39% said their typical work week is 50 to 59 hours, and 21% work 60 or more hours per week at church.

- One-third of all pastors reported having some type of employment outside of their church position. This included 22% who worked $\frac{1}{4}$ time for their church, 42% of those who worked $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ time for their church, and 18% of those with a full-time church position. The average pastor was working 50.6 hours weekly between church employment and any outside work.
- Just 38% of those working 30 or more hours at church were getting two days off in a typical week; 33% got just one. Ten percent do get days off, but less than once a week, while 11% get no full days off but do take one or more half-days off. Five percent typically get no time off at all – not even half days.
- Only 13% rarely or never end up doing church work on days off, while 66% said at least half the time this happens. This included 22% who usually give up time off because of work, and 12% who said it almost always happens.
- Twenty percent were experiencing at least one critical issue in the work life category, defined as:
 - Being highly dissatisfied with their overall work situation with their church, the quality of their relationships with other church staff, the quality of their relationships with lay leaders, and/or how much care/concern their lay leaders show toward their needs as a person
 - Feeling not at all well trained for their ministry position
 - Working 80 or more hours per week in any combination of jobs
 - Having no days off from church work in a typical week
 - Almost always working on days off from their church

FAMILY HEALTH

- Eighty-four percent of pastors agreed strongly that the relationships in their home were generally loving, trusting, and honest; only 3% disagreed with the statement.
- Sixty-six percent were generally satisfied with how much time they have available for family and loved ones, including 31% who were satisfied at the highest level.
- Seventy-two percent who were married were satisfied with the quality of their relationship with their spouse, including 57% who were highly satisfied with this. This was higher than any other area about which pastors were questioned.
- Two percent were experiencing at least one critical issue in the family category, defined as:
 - Being highly dissatisfied with the quality of their relationship with their spouse or with the time they have available for family and loved ones
 - Disagreeing strongly that the relationships in their home are generally loving, trusting, and honest Pastor (Lack of) Wellness
- When all of these measures are combined, there are 45 individual wellness measures in this study. Ninety-three percent of all pastors were experiencing at least one critical issue in their lives (meaning the most negative possible rating on at least one of these 45 measures).

- Eighty-one percent of pastors were experiencing multiple critical issues, including 64% who were experiencing three or more, 52% four or more, and 43% five or more. Nearly one out of every five Texas Baptist pastors (19%) was experiencing 10 or more critical issues in his life.

JOB FULFILLMENT

- Pastors were asked to rate how fulfilling they find ten areas of their jobs, using a sevenpoint scale. Only preaching/teaching was highly fulfilling (top rating) to a majority of pastors.
- Eight out of the ten areas were at least moderately fulfilling (rating of 5 – 7) to a majority of pastors. The job duties least likely to be considered fulfilling (rating of 1 – 4) were promoting stewardship and giving (51%), administrative tasks (50%), interpersonal relationships and conflict management (40%), organizational leadership (34%), and evangelism (28%).
- Seventy-five percent of all pastors found at least one aspect of their job to be unfulfilling (4 or lower on the scale), and in fact 35% found at least one aspect to be quite unfulfilling (2 or lower).
- Forty-two percent of pastors have looked into leaving their current job in the past couple of years. This includes 18% who have actually applied for a job at a different church, 34% who have seriously considered applying for a job at a different church, and 23% who have seriously considered leaving the ministry for a secular job.
- The most common reasons for considering a move to a different church included seeking a better situation for spouse/family (46%), burnout (44%), and seeking a better financial situation (36%). Just 18% cited God’s leading as a motivation for looking at other church positions.
- The most common motivations for considering leaving the ministry entirely were seeking a better situation for spouse/family (56%), wanting a new challenge (43%), God’s leading (43%), and seeking a better financial situation (41%).

BEING EQUIPPED FOR THE JOB

- Thirty-six percent of pastors felt very well trained or equipped to meet the demands of their ministry position. A slim majority (52%) felt pretty well equipped, while 9% felt only somewhat equipped, and 2% said they are not very or not at all well trained or equipped.
- The areas pastors felt most in need of additional training or equipping were growing the church (82%), discipleship or disciple-making (76%), evangelism (70%), promoting stewardship or giving (68%), and organizational leadership (67%).

Analysis

A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

Any time a population is surveyed, one of the key questions is whether the survey respondents are representative of the total population. While this is never possible to prove beyond any doubt, two factors provide evidence one way or the other: response rates and comparisons to known data.

RESPONSE RATES

The higher the response rate, the lower the chances of response bias and non-representative data.

The response rate for this study was 13%. (A total of 4,921 pastors were invited, but 619 proved to be undeliverable e-mail addresses, leaving 560 responses out of 4,302 potential respondents.)

There is no industry standard for response rates among clergy, but we can say that this is not among the higher response rates Grey Matter Research has observed for a clergy study. Grey Matter has worked with a variety of denominations: Assemblies of God, The Christian and Missionary Alliance, United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Southern Baptist Convention, etc. Response rates on various methodologies for other denominational groups have ranged from a low of about 11% to a high of over 30%; typically, they have been in the 18 – 25% range. However, note that the response rate for this study was significantly higher than previous research conducted for Texas Baptists.

COMPARISONS TO KNOWN DATA

A second step in collecting evidence about representativeness is to compare survey responses with known data about the larger population being (hopefully) represented. For example, if we know 40% of the list is under age 45, then the proportion of survey respondents of that age should be close to 40%. If the survey data compares favorably to known factors, this is not proof of representativeness, but it is evidence in favor of it. If the comparison is off, it is a strong suggestion that the survey is not representative.

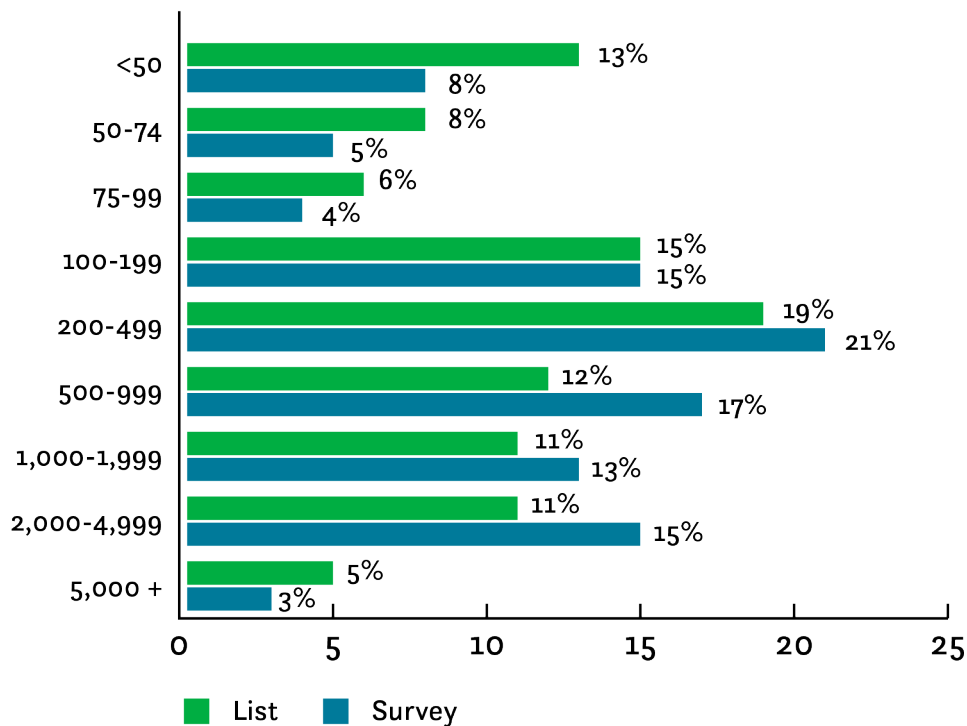
Unfortunately, the Texas Baptist lists do not have consistent data points for everyone on the list. We were able to compare the survey responses to the list in five areas:

1. Weekly worship attendance (available for 66% of the list) Texas Baptists Pastor Health Study – Grey Matter Research 11
2. Total membership (for 63% of the list)
3. Year organized (for 65% of the list)
4. Current staff members (for 82% of the list)
5. Preferred language (for 82% of the list)

The good news is that the survey responses are relatively close to the list data in these areas.

The survey received a lower response rate among very small churches (under 100) and the very largest churches (5,000 or more), and a higher response among those with 100 to 4,999 in attendance. This slight skew in response rates is easily correctable through weighting the data (which was done for this study).

Weekly Attendance, Database vs. Survey Respondents



Total membership figures showed a similar skew (not surprising, as attendance and membership tend to be correlated). The year the church was founded was similar between the respondents and the list. The number of staff members was also not much different, although responses from churches with just one staff member were somewhat underrepresented. This makes sense, given the lower response rate among the smallest churches.

This, too, was corrected through weighting. Preferred language was very similar between survey respondents and the original list.

While the comparisons above do not prove representativeness, they do provide evidence that survey respondents are representative of the overall Texas Baptists clergy lists. The difference on church size was adjusted through weighting the data.

PASTOR (LACK OF) WELLNESS

The primary intent of this study was to measure the physical, spiritual, relational, financial, and work health of pastors.

This was done in a variety of ways. Pastors were asked about life satisfaction, work hours, diagnosed illnesses, financial stress, exercise habits, and a variety of other factors. Each of these measures will be reported separately in this study.

But that's not the full picture. Knowing that six out of ten pastors work 50 hours or more per week, or that four out of ten have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, doesn't provide the whole story.

We created 45 individual measurements to help gauge pastor wellness. Each measurement covered a different aspect of life. Then we evaluated pastors on a spectrum of the worst possible situation to the best on each measure. Sometimes this was a simple binary measure— you either have been diagnosed with diabetes or you haven't — while other times a scale was used (e.g. pastors rated their stress related to household finances from “a tremendous amount” down through five other points to “really none at all”). The questionnaire provides full details on each measure.

To assess overall pastor wellness, we chose the most negative possible outcome on each measure:

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Have experienced at least one health disorder in the last six months:
 - Physical exhaustion
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
 - Significant self-doubts
 - Pessimism about your future
 - Panic attacks
- Have been diagnosed with at least one disorder:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - High blood pressure
 - High cholesterol
 - Stress disorder
 - Depression or anxiety
 - Depersonalization disorder
- Have experienced a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiac episode
- Have a BMI that qualifies as extremely obese
- Typically have zero days on which they get even 20 minutes of exercise
- Experience personal stress due to church work almost daily
- Get under five hours of sleep per night
- Are highly dissatisfied with their life in the following area:
 - Their overall physical conditioning and the shape they're in

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

- Have experienced the power/presence of God in the past six months “really not at all”
- Spend no time at all in a typical week in personal Bible reading or prayer
- Are highly dissatisfied with their life in either of the following areas:
 - Their personal spiritual development
 - The amount of time they’re able to devote to their own spiritual health and development

FINANCIAL HEALTH

- Have a tremendous amount of financial stress
- Have no health insurance
- Income that is very insufficient for their household’s needs
- Have a very unreasonable debt load

WORK HEALTH

- Work 80 or more hours per week (between their church job and any outside job they may hold)
- Typically have no days off, or almost always have to work on what are supposed to be days off
- Consider themselves not at all prepared for their job at church
- Are highly dissatisfied with their life in any of the following areas:
 - Their overall work situation with their church
 - How much care/concern their lay leaders show towards their needs as a person
 - The quality of their relationships with their lay leaders
 - The quality of their relationships with other church staff (if applicable)

FAMILY HEALTH

- Strongly disagree that:
 - The relationships within my home are generally loving, trusting, and honest
- Are highly dissatisfied with their life in either of the following areas:
 - The amount of time they’re able to devote to their family and loved ones
 - The quality of their relationship with their spouse (if applicable)

RELATIONAL HEALTH

- Have no close friends outside of family
- Strongly disagree with any of the following:
 - As far as I know, the relationships in my life are free of unresolved brokenness
 - When I get hurt in a relationship, I am good at resolving that pain through conversations of reconciliation and forgiveness
 - If I am unaware of a character or spiritual flaw in my own life, I have people in my life who would point it out to me in an appropriate way
 - I have people in my life outside of my family that I can turn to when I’m troubled or in need of support
 - My relationships with my congregants are generally loving, trusting, and honest

- Are highly dissatisfied with their life in either of the following areas:
 - How much care/concern their congregation shows towards their needs as a person
 - The quality of their relationships with members of their congregation

Out of all Texas Baptist pastors in this study, 93% were experiencing at least one critical problem in their lives. Again, it's important to note these were not just minor complaints, such as being somewhat overweight, wishing they had more than five close friends, or working 50-hour weeks. These were critical situations, such as being extremely obese, having no close friends, or working 80 hours or more in a typical week.

In evaluating each individual measure, one might quibble over whether each one is truly a critical problem. Are more than nine out of ten Texas Baptist pastors really experiencing critical life problems?

Certainly some of these issues are more problematic than others. But also consider that very few pastors are experiencing only one critical issue. In fact, while 7% were experiencing no critical issues, just 12% were experiencing only one. So 81% of pastors were experiencing multiple critical issues:

- 64% were experiencing three or more
- 52% were experiencing four or more
- 43% were experiencing five or more
- 34% were experiencing six or more
- 28% were experiencing seven or more
- 19% were experiencing ten or more critical issues in their lives

Nearly one out of every five Texas Baptist pastors had ten or more critical problems influencing their lives. Consider a couple of pastors:

“Lance,” from a small town, is a part-time children’s pastor at a church of fewer than 200 people. In his fifties, he is highly dissatisfied with his overall work situation at his church, possibly because he sees himself as not at all well trained for the position he has. He finds relatively little in his job to be personally fulfilling and experiences church-related stress multiple times a week. He’s also highly dissatisfied with the amount of time he can devote to his personal spiritual growth, along with his overall physical conditioning and the shape he’s in. The latter is not surprising since he tips the scale at 230 pounds and is medically obese. In the past six months, he has felt both physical and mental exhaustion, panic attacks, significant self-doubts, pessimism about his future, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. He feels strongly he has no one outside of his family he can turn to with problems, even though he claims two close friends. In a typical week, he spends only 30 minutes in prayer and an hour in Bible study, and has not experienced the power and presence of God in his life very much recently. He has applied at different churches and has considered leaving the ministry. His church income is very insufficient for his needs, although fortunately he carries reasonable debt. His answers showed 12 critical issues impacting his life quality.

In his sixties, “Antonio” is the senior pastor at a small (about 100 people) multiethnic urban church. He is dissatisfied with nearly every area of his life, sadly including his marriage. He works nearly 90 hours per week at his church with no days off – not even half days. He averages five hours of sleep per night and gets no exercise at all. He maintains a healthy weight and has been diagnosed with no serious ailments, but reports physical and mental exhaustion as well as pessimism about his future. Like “Lance,” he feels he has no one to turn to, and in fact he reports no close friends at all. He does feel great about the amount of time he spends on personal prayer (eight hours a week) and Bible reading/study (10 hours), and indeed feels God’s power and presence a tremendous amount in his life. Still, he has considered leaving his church and the ministry entirely. Maybe it’s the extreme hours he works and the high dissatisfaction he feels, or maybe it’s the tremendous financial stress he feels, plus the fact that even though he’s putting in 12-hour days, he gets no income from this work, and his family is without health insurance. His answers show 17 different critical issues impacting his life.

These are two of the more extreme examples, but there are plenty of other concerns, including the pastor working 60 hours at church along with his 40-hour-per-week “regular” job who still experiences tremendous financial stress; multiple pastors exceeding 300 pounds (and some even past 400); or the pastor who has been diagnosed with heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, depersonalization disorder, and depression, and has already had a heart attack or stroke...at age 45.

Are all of these problems related to being a pastor? Of course not. There are many teachers, attorneys, and plumbers who are depressed, heavily in debt, obese, or looking for another career. But all of these problems have the ability to impact not just the individual pastor and his family, but all of the people under his care at his church.

On many of the individual measures, only a small proportion of pastors are experiencing a significant problem. For instance, just 7% were carrying what they considered to be a very unreasonable amount of debt compared to their income, and 3% reported that the relationships in their home are not loving, trusting, and honest. But when taken cumulatively, the picture can be a very bleak and disturbing one for Texas Baptist pastors.

LIFE SATISFACTION

Before delving into specific areas, pastors were asked to rate their satisfaction with 12 different aspects of their life, using a scale of 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 7 (highly satisfied).

Pastors rarely expressed extreme levels of dissatisfaction with any of these elements (meaning the lowest possible rating of 1). The individual area with the highest level of extreme dissatisfaction was their shape/physical conditioning, and that was only 5% who were highly dissatisfied. But going up the scale slightly revealed higher levels of dissatisfaction, and most were not highly satisfied with various elements of their life.

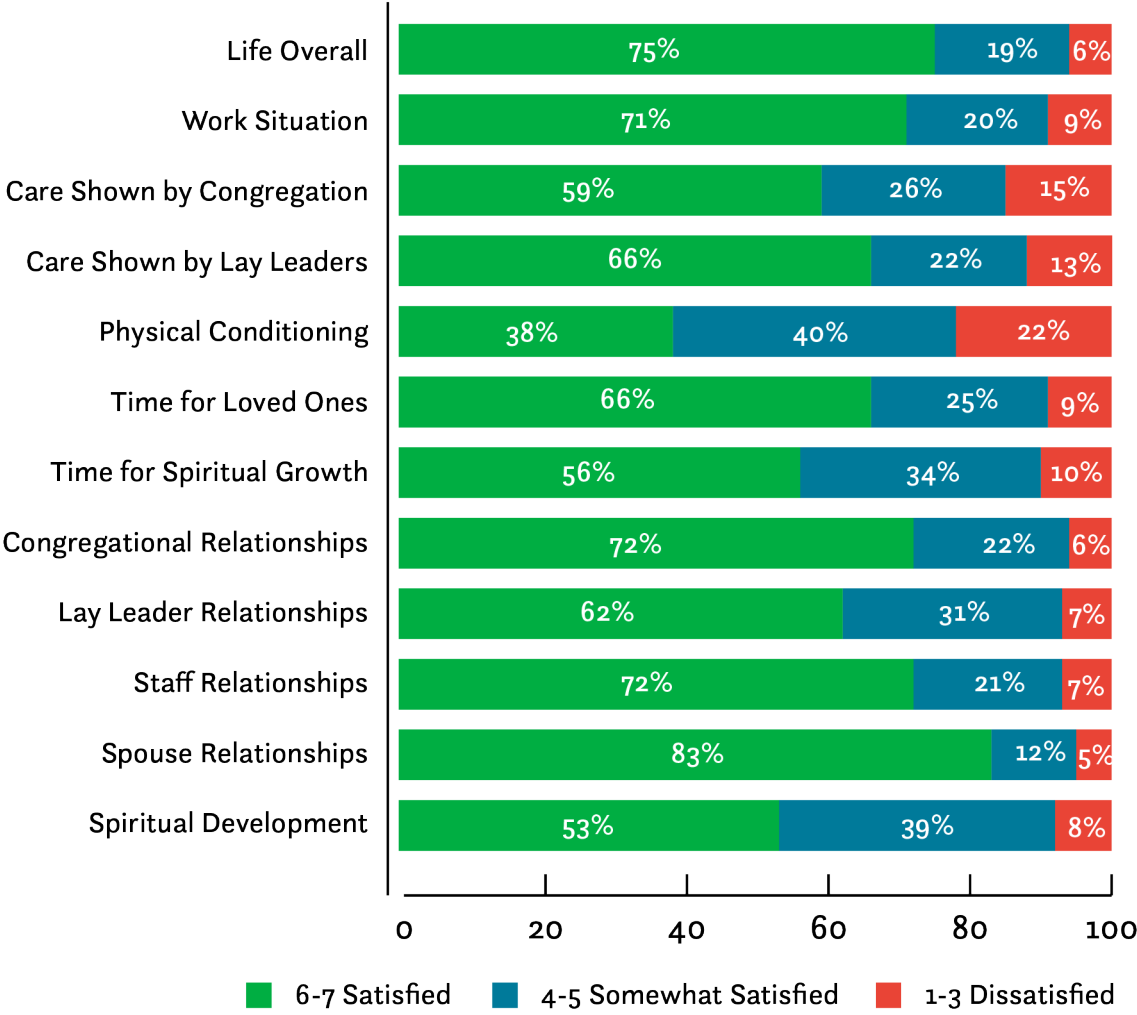
“Your overall quality of life” was something for which only 43% reported being highly satisfied, although 90% were on the positive side of the scale. Older pastors were substantially more likely to report high levels of satisfaction (54%, compared to 38% age 45 to 59, and just 30% of younger respondents). High satisfaction was also more common in larger churches (51%) than in mid-size (34%) or very small (41%) congregations. Interestingly, the presence of diagnosed health problems was not correlated with lower life satisfaction.

On the 11 different tested areas, satisfaction was highest for their overall work situation with their church, the quality of the relationships they have with people in the congregation, the quality of the relationships they have with other church staff (when there are other staff), and the quality of the relationship they have with their spouse.

Dissatisfaction was most common with their overall shape and physical conditioning, and how much care and concern their lay leaders and their congregation show with their needs as a person.

In total, 9% were highly dissatisfied with at least one area covered by this question, and 41% were dissatisfied (a rating of 1 – 3) with at least one area. Dissatisfaction was particularly common among pastors under age 45 (49%), those with children in the household (52%), those working in churches with fewer than 200 people (45%), and those lacking a full-time paid position (49%).

SATISFACTION WITH AREAS OF LIFE



PHYSICAL/MENTAL HEALTH

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults need at least seven hours of sleep nightly. Forty-six percent of pastors do not get that in a typical night.

Just 18% of pastors reported regularly getting eight hours or more of sleep nightly, while 13% typically got under six hours. The average for pastors was only 6.6 hours per night, and there were a number of respondents who reported averaging four hours per night.

The problem was particularly acute among non-Caucasian pastors: 62% of this group reported less than seven hours of nightly sleep on average, compared to 40% of Caucasian pastors. It's also more of an issue in smaller congregations. Half of the pastors in churches with fewer than 200 people were getting under seven hours of sleep, versus 37% in larger congregations.

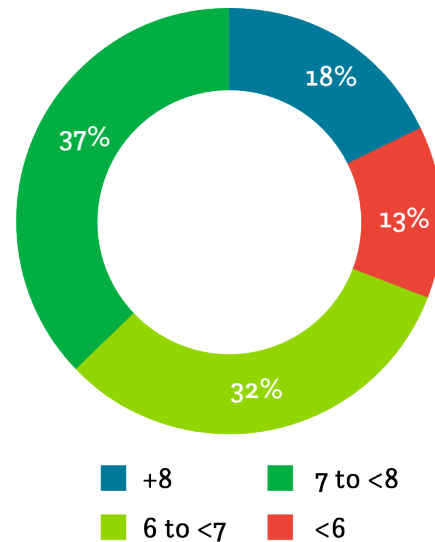
Exercise – or lack of it – was also a substantial problem for pastors. The Mayo Clinic recommends, “As a general goal, aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.” This study lowered that goal substantially, to 20 minutes daily, and still only 3% of pastors reported getting at least that amount of exercise every day. In fact, 26% said they don't typically get this even once a week. The average was 2.5 days each week.

Interestingly, the oldest pastors were the ones most likely to be exercising. The average pastor 60 and older was getting exercise 2.9 days per week, compared to 2.3 for younger pastors (even those under 45). Again, non-Caucasian pastors were doing more poorly in this area than were Caucasians (2.1 days a week compared to 2.7 for Caucasians).

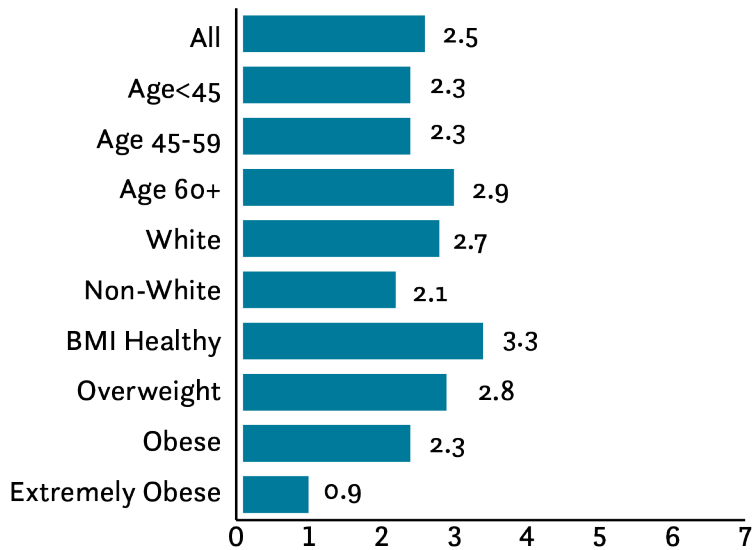
As might be expected, there was a strong correlation between exercise and weight. Using pastors' self-reported height and weight, we calculated their BMI, or Body Mass Index. While BMI is not a perfect formula (for instance, it fails to distinguish between overweightness due to fat and “overweightness” due to bodybuilding muscle), it is a commonly used, simple indicator.

Pastors categorized as having a “healthy” BMI averaged 3.3 days per week of exercise, and only 14% reported getting none at all. Those who were “overweight” averaged 2.8 Hours Slept per Night days, with 22% getting no exercise. The “obese” category averaged 2.3 days per week, with 28% getting no exercise, and the “extremely obese” category averaged 0.9 days per week, with 69% reporting no exercise in a typical week.

HOURS SLEPT PER NIGHT



AVERAGE DAYS GETTING 20+ MIN OF EXERCISE



The average Texas Baptist pastor was 5 feet, 10½ inches tall and weighed 214 pounds. The range on height went from 5'2" to 6'10", and on weight from 125 to 430 pounds.

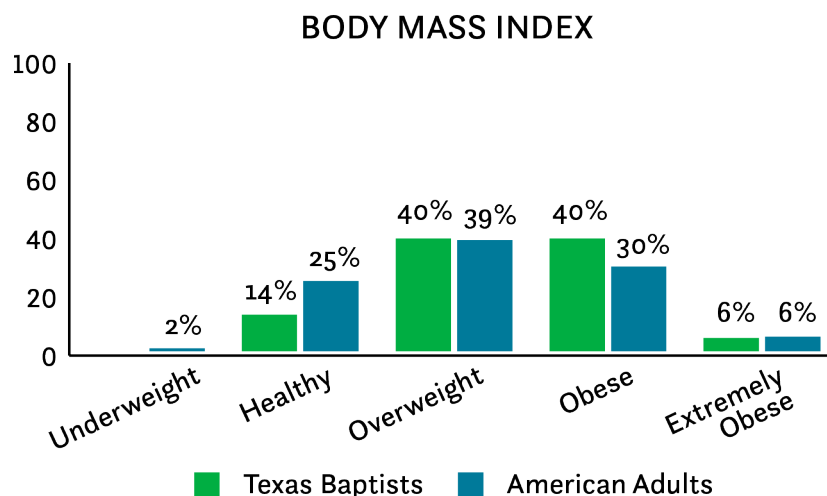
Using these figures, we calculated BMI, which ranged from 19.5 to 60. BMI figures categorize males in the following manner:

- Underweight: 18 or lower
- Healthy weight: 19 to 24
- Overweight: 25 to 29
- Obese: 30 to 39
- Extremely obese: 40 or higher

Only 14% of all respondents qualified as having a healthy weight, and no respondents were considered to be underweight. Forty-six percent were considered obese, including 6% who qualified as extremely obese.

Obesity was more common in small towns and rural areas than in suburban and urban churches (52% to 40%). It was also more common the smaller the church was, from 38% in the largest congregations to 50% in those with fewer than 200 attending.

Obesity is a serious problem in the U.S. as a whole. According to the National Institutes for Health, 74% of American men are overweight, including 30% who are obese and just under 6% who are extremely obese. Still, the statistics from this survey show a population that is in even worse shape than the typical American male. While about three out of four American men are carrying too much weight, the same was true for 86% of Texas Baptist pastors. And while 35% of American men are obese (including extremely obese), the same was true for 46% of pastors.



The high levels of weight and the low levels of exercise are probably factors that contribute to the higher prevalence of high cholesterol and diabetes among pastors. Another likely significant factor is that the average age of respondents was substantially higher than the average age of American adults.

Thirty-one percent of pastors reported being diagnosed with high cholesterol, while this diagnosis is present among just 12% of American adults according to the CDC. And while 16% of pastors had diabetes, this disease currently affects 9% of American adults according to the American Diabetes Association. Forty percent suffered from high blood pressure, which was actually similar to the overall U.S. population (according to the American Heart Association).

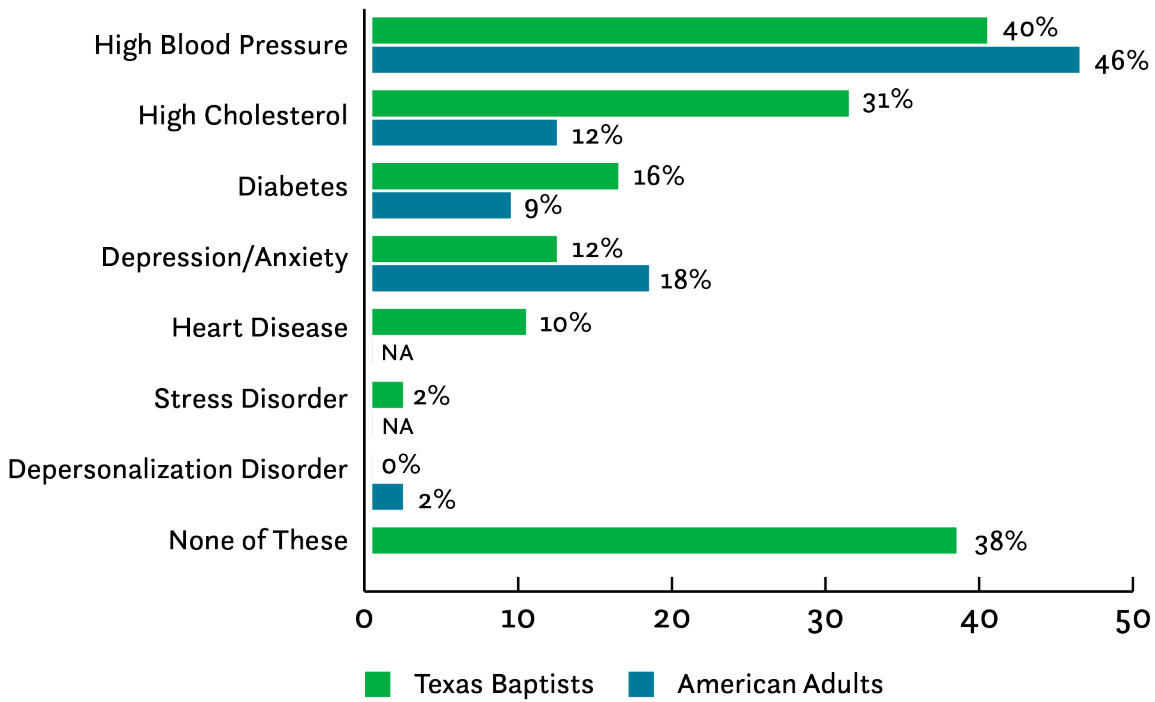
Diagnosed mental illnesses were thankfully not as common. Only one respondent in the entire study reported being diagnosed with depersonalization disorder, while 12% reported a diagnosis of depression or anxiety. This appears to be lower than for the American adult population as a whole, but definitions of exactly what constitutes “depression” or “anxiety” are somewhat fluid (e.g. is PTSD a form of depression anxiety, or a separate condition?).

Even though the list of illnesses only included seven maladies, and two of them were very uncommon, just 38% of all pastors said they had not been diagnosed with any of these problems.

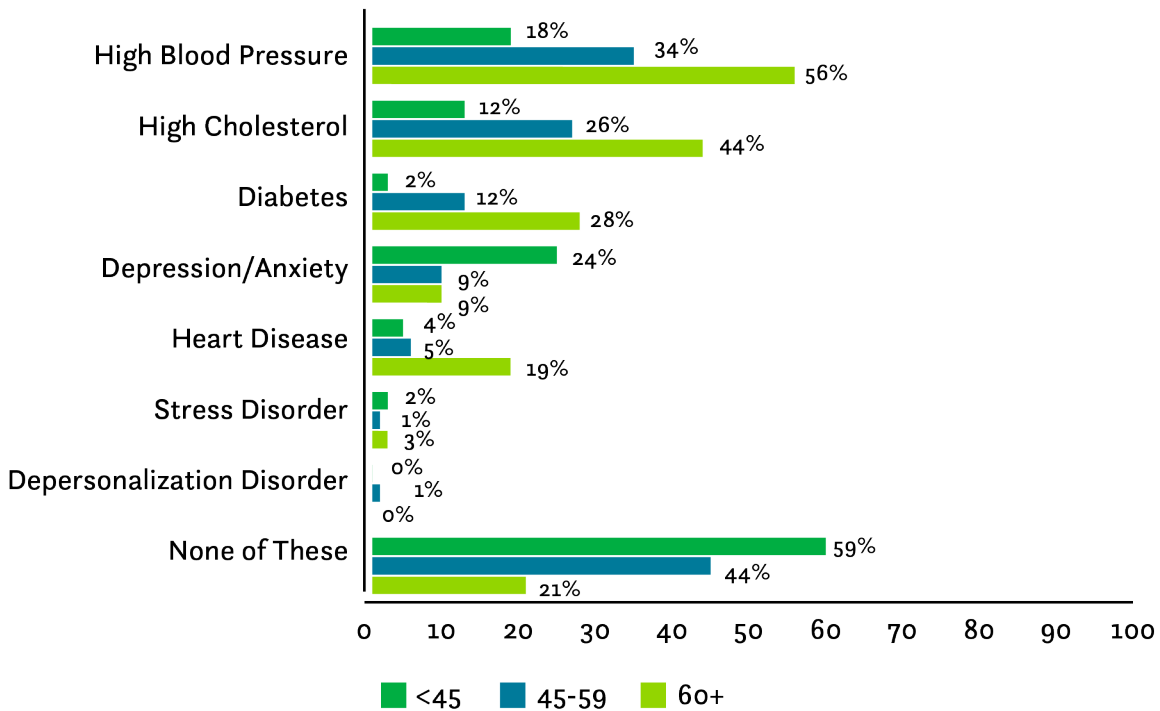
As would be expected, the older the pastor, the more likely he was to have been diagnosed with health problems. Six out of ten pastors under age 45 had none of these seven diagnoses, compared to only two out of ten pastors 60 or older. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes, particularly, were far more common among older people (which is true in the general population, as well). The one exception was depression or anxiety, which was diagnosed among less than one out of ten pastors 45 or older, but a disturbing 24% of younger pastors.

Ten percent of all pastors said they have had a heart attack or a stroke at some point in their lives. This was far more common among Caucasian pastors than others (12% to 4%). As expected, it was also far more common among older pastors (18%), although it had still occurred among those 45 to 59 (6%) and even among younger pastors (2%).

DIAGNOSED ILLNESSES



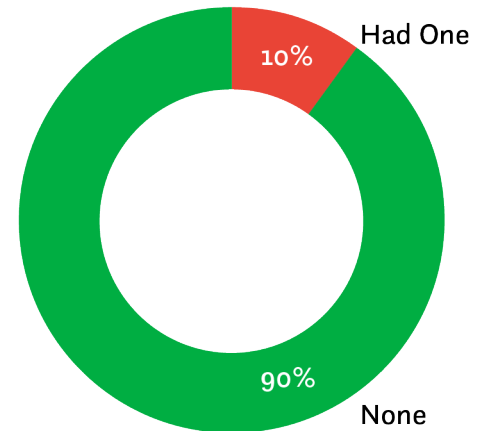
DIAGNOSED ILLNESSES, BY AGE



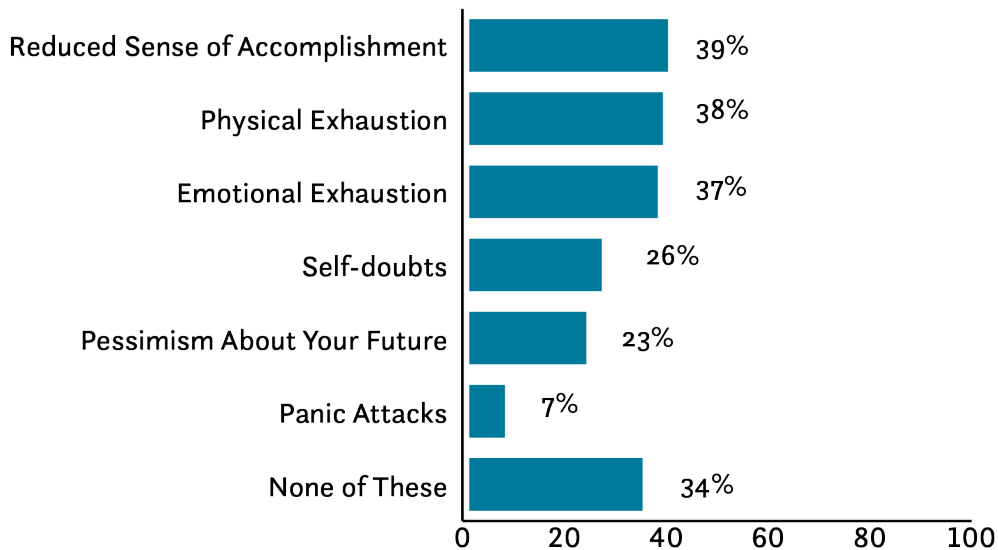
Pastors were also asked about other issues related to their mental health, although these were not actual diagnoses. In the past six months, had they experienced any of six different problems such as panic attacks, exhaustion, or significant self-doubts?

Sixty-six percent of all pastors admitted that they had experienced at least one of the listed problems recently. About equally common were a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (39%), physical exhaustion (38%), and emotional exhaustion (37%) In total, 51% of all pastors said they have experienced either physical or emotional exhaustion in the past six months.

HEART ATTACK/STROKE



ISSUES IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS



Somewhat less common but still concerningly present were significant self-doubts (26%) and pessimism about their future (23%). Seven percent had recently experienced panic attacks. While physical maladies were substantially more common among older pastors, mental and emotional struggles were far more common among younger pastors. As mental health problems were long considered a weakness or personal failing rather than a medical issue, it is possible that older pastors are less willing to divulge this, or even less willing to recognize issues and/or admit those issues to themselves.

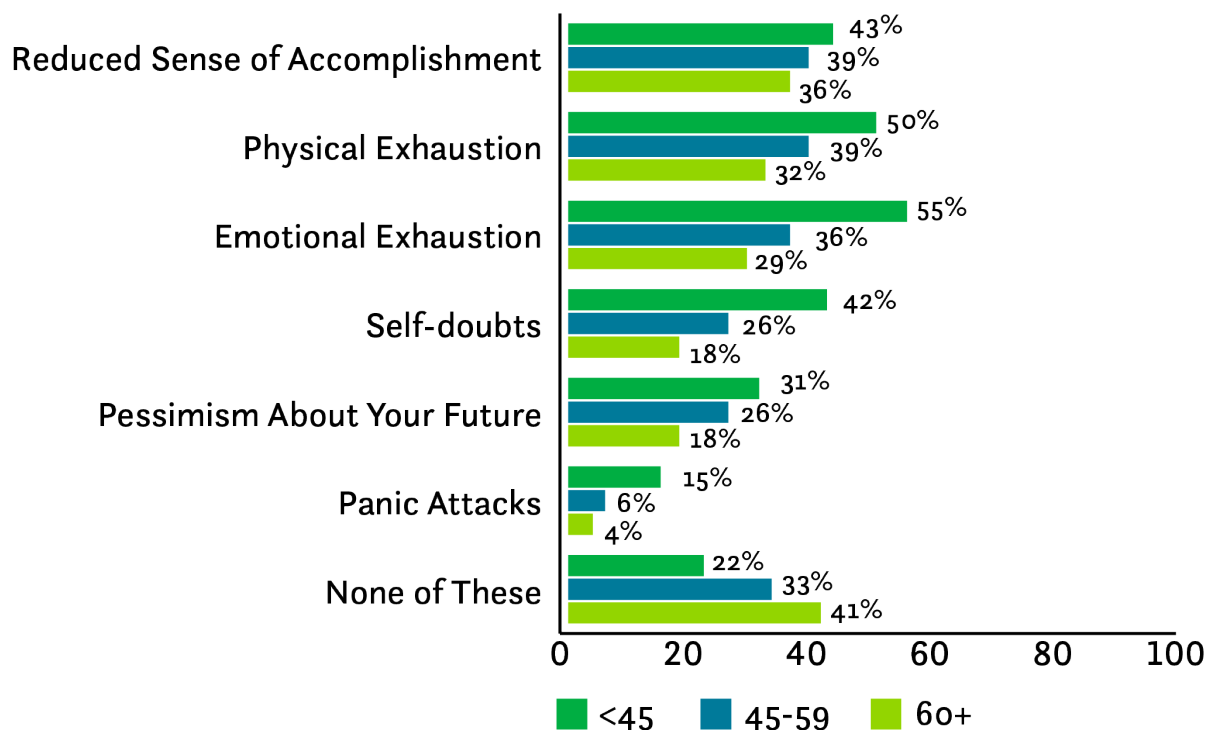
It may instead be that younger pastors are more sensitized to these problems, overinflating some difficulties. For example, younger pastors were actually working fewer hours at their jobs (church and otherwise) than were pastors 45 to 59 years old, including being significantly less likely to put in weeks of 60 or more hours. But they were more likely to report physical exhaustion than the older group. Is their exhaustion real, is it caused by other factors (such as having children to care for), or is their threshold for physical exhaustion just much lower?

It may also be that mental health struggles actually are far more common among younger pastors. In any case, the fact that nearly eight out of ten young pastors were already struggling with problems such as these does not bode well for the future.

In any case, every single complaint was more common as age dropped – usually far more common. And while 41% of the oldest pastors said they had experienced none of these issues, that number fell to 33% among those 45 to 59 years old, and just 22% among the youngest pastors.

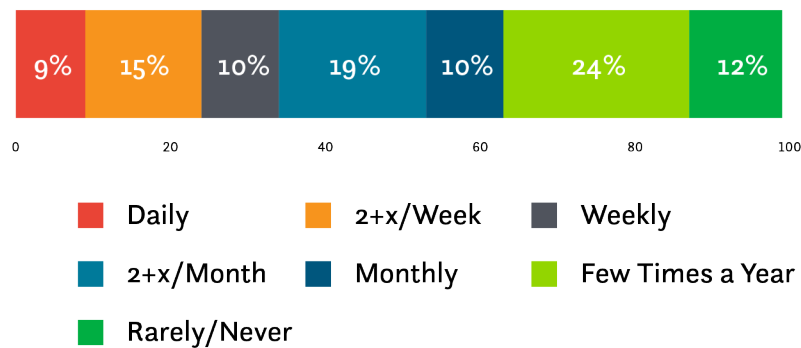
These maladies were also more common among Caucasian pastors than among others. Complaints of physical exhaustion were similar, but white pastors were more likely to complain about emotional exhaustion (40% to 27%), reduced sense of personal accomplishment (42% to 29%), pessimism about their future (26% to 14%), panic attacks (9% to 2%), and especially significant self-doubts (30% to 12%).

ISSUES IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS, BY AGE



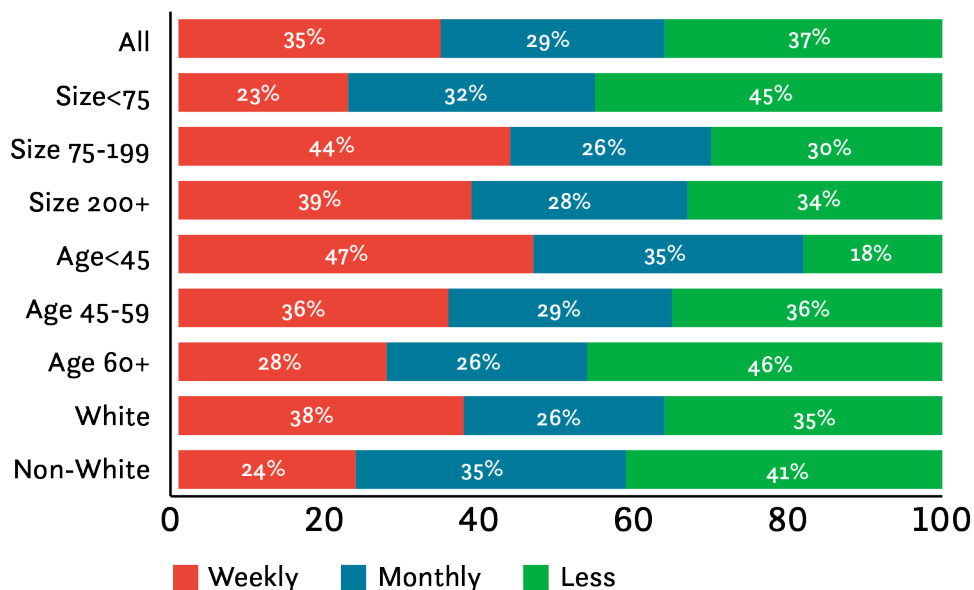
Church-related stress was a varying issue for pastors. Some said they experience personal stress due to challenges with their church or congregation on a daily basis (9%), multiple times a week (15%), or about once a week (10%), while on the other end of the spectrum 12% said this rarely or never happens, and 24% said it's only a few times a year. In total, 63% experience church-related stress at least once a month, while 35% said it's at least once a week.

PERSONAL STRESS DUE TO CHURCH/CONGREGATION



There was again a serious difference by age. While 47% of the youngest pastors were experiencing this stress at least once a week, this number dropped as age rose. Church-related stress also occurred far more frequently among Caucasian pastors than others, and it happened far less than average in the very smallest churches.

FREQUENCY OF CHURCH-RELATED PERSONAL STRESS



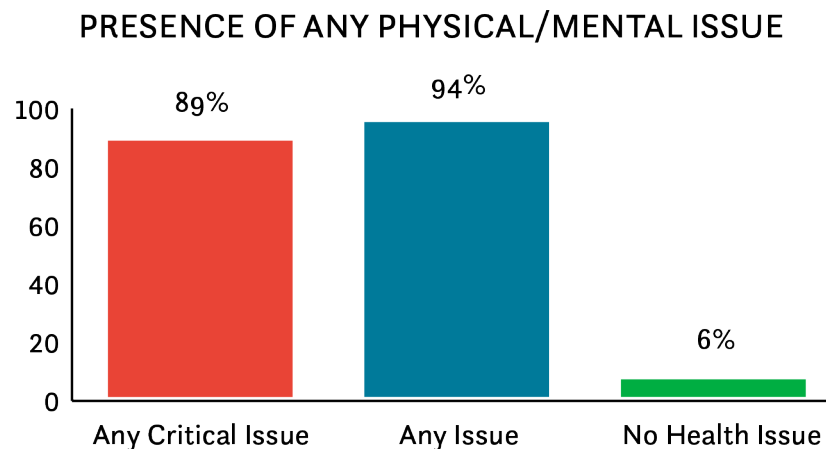
Just as we were able to measure the proportion of pastors dealing with various life issues when all the 45 individual data points are combined, we can also measure the proportion dealing with some type of significant physical or mental health issue. This was divided into pastors with critical health issues and those with health issues, as shown in the chart below.

	Critical Issues	Issues
Satisfaction with “Your overall physical conditioning and the shape you’re in” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
Hours of sleep per night	Under 5	Under 6
Days getting 20+ minutes of exercise	None	1 or None
BMI	40+ (Extremely Obese)	30+ (Obese)
Disease diagnoses (list of seven)	Any	Any
Had a heart attack or stroke	Yes	Yes
Frequency of church-related personal stress	Daily	Daily

With these definitions, 94% of all pastors had some type of a physical or mental health issue. Even more concerning is that 89% had at least one critical health issue.

Again, keep in mind that these were not just minor issues. A “critical” health issue was being extremely obese (not just overweight), experiencing daily church-related stress (not just occasional), being highly dissatisfied with their physical conditioning (not just somewhat dissatisfied), etc. Also note that some of these issues were truly physical, some mental or emotional, and some lifestyle-related (sleep deprivation or total lack of exercise).

Health issues were so common that there really were not differences in the types of pastors who dealt with critical issues – not by age, race, or most other factors. The one small Difference was that pastors from mid-size churches (75 to 199 in attendance) were somewhat more likely than others to have some type of critical health issue (94%, compared to 89% from larger churches and 86% from smaller ones).

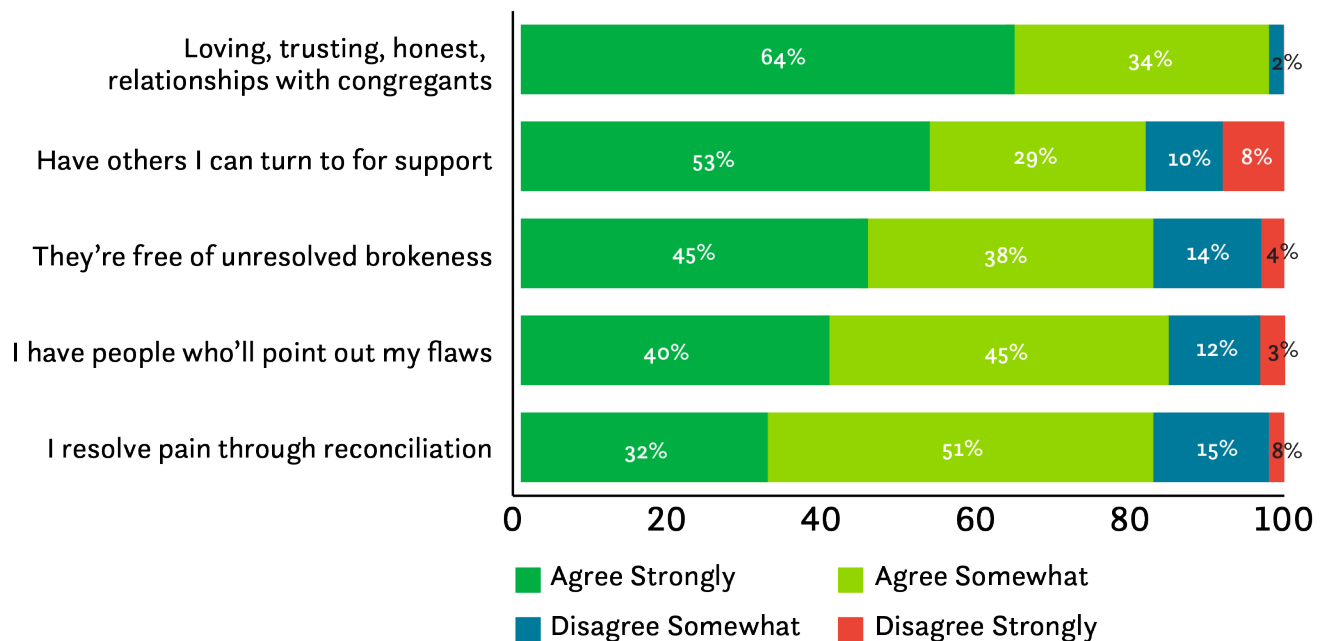


RELATIONSHIPS

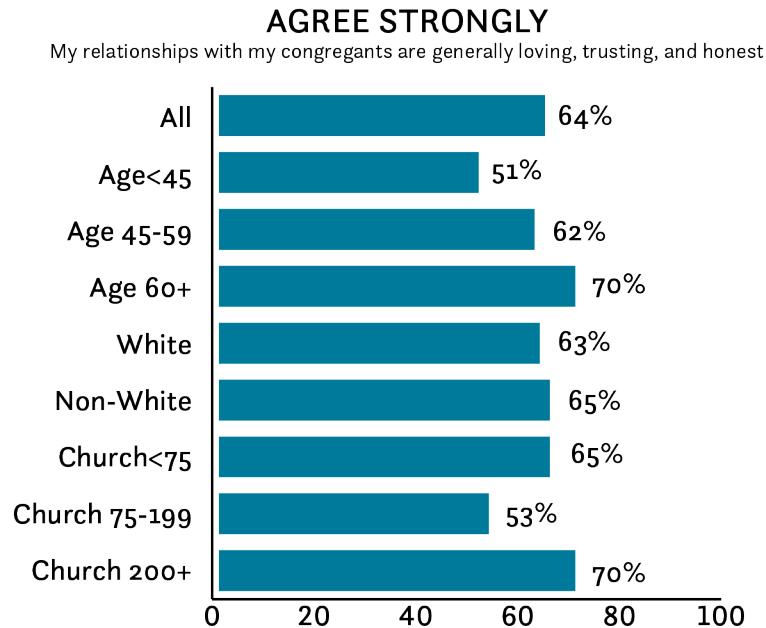
Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with six different statements about relationships. One was specific to their in-home relationships, which will be covered in the section about family health. The other five were more general statements about relationships:

- As far as I know, the relationships in my life are free of unresolved brokenness
- When I get hurt in a relationship, I am good at resolving that pain through conversations of reconciliation and forgiveness
- If I am unaware of a character or spiritual flaw in my own life, I have people in my life who would point it out to me in an appropriate way
- I have people in my life outside of my family that I can turn to when I'm troubled or in need of support
- My relationships with my congregants are generally loving, trusting, and honest

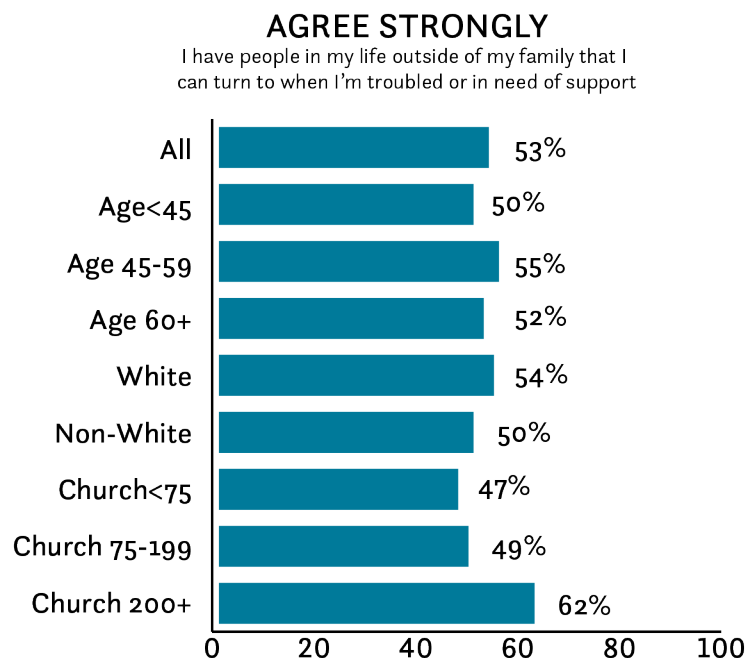
STATEMENTS ABOUT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS



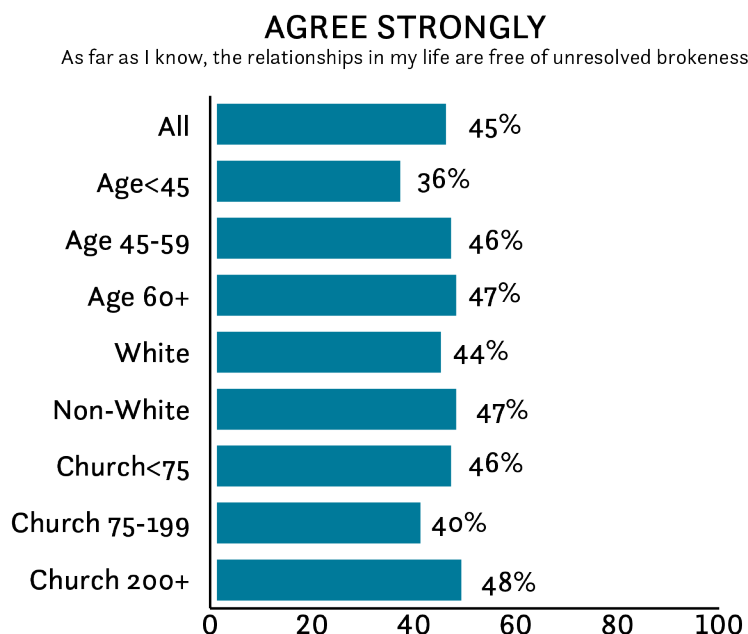
Ninety-eight percent of pastors agreed that “My relationships with my congregants are generally loving, trusting, and honest,” including 64% who agreed strongly with this statement. The older the pastor, the more likely he was to agree strongly with this. Pastors in mid-size churches struggled a bit more with this than did others.



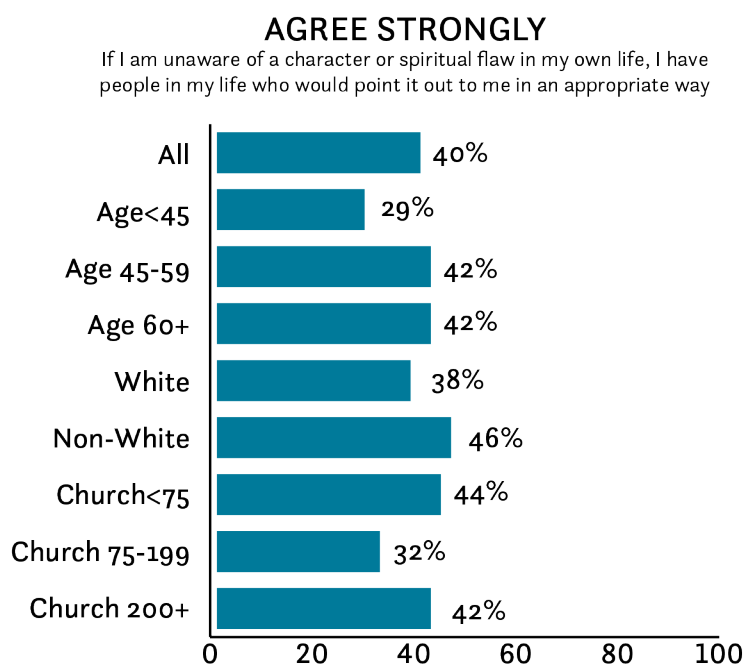
Eighty-two percent of pastors said “I have people in my life outside of my family that I can turn to when I’m troubled or in need of support,” with 53% agreeing strongly with this statement. Unfortunately, 18% disagreed with this (8% strongly). There weren’t many differences among different types of pastors; the one that stood out was that pastors in the larger churches were more likely than others to have people in their lives they can turn to.



Under half of all pastors were able to agree strongly that “As far as I know, the relationships in my life are free of unresolved brokenness,” although a total of 83% did agree either strongly or somewhat. Eighteen percent disagreed with the statement. Younger pastors struggled more with this than did those who were 45 or older.



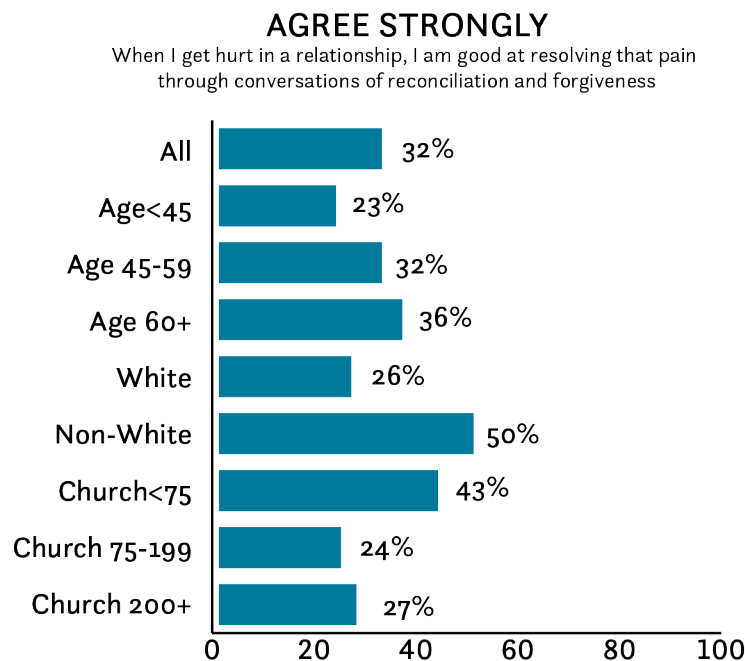
Even fewer agreed strongly that “If I am unaware of a character or spiritual flaw in my own life, I have people in my life who would point it out to me in an appropriate way.” A total of 85% did agree either strongly or somewhat, with 15% disagreeing with the statement. Once again, younger pastors were less likely to agree strongly with the statement, as were pastors in mid-size churches.



Finally, the statement with which the lowest proportion of respondents were able to agree strongly was “When I get hurt in a relationship, I am good at resolving that pain through conversations of reconciliation and forgiveness.” Just 32% agreed strongly with this, although a total of 83% were able to agree overall.

The younger the pastor, the less likely he was to agree strongly with this statement. Caucasian pastors were substantially less likely than others to agree strongly with this, and in fact white pastors were about twice as likely as non-Caucasians to disagree with the statement (19% to 10%). Pastors in small congregations were far more likely to agree strongly than were those in churches with 75 or more in attendance (but note that many of the smallest churches had non-Caucasian pastors in charge).

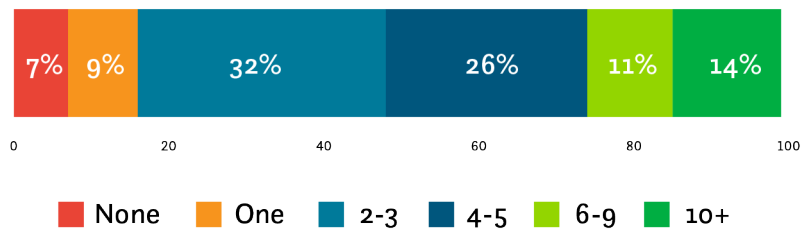
In total, 44% of all pastors disagreed with one or more of these five statements about relationships, including 13% who disagreed strongly with at least one of them.



The average pastor had 4.7 people in his life (outside of family) that he considered to be close friends. The number ranged from none at all to 25.

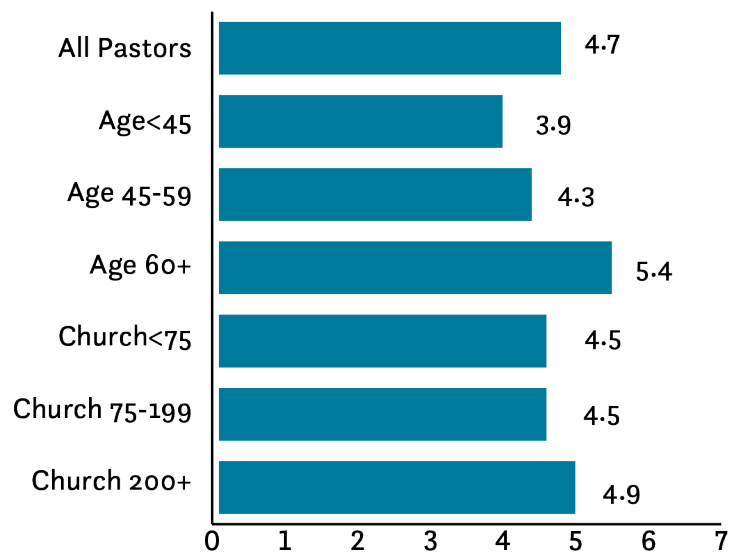
Seven percent of all pastors said they did not have one person outside of family whom they considered to be a close friend. Another 9% had just one person as a close friend, while most either had two or three close friends (32%) or four or five (26%). One out of four pastors reported six or more close friendships, including 14% who claimed ten or more.

NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS (OUTSIDE OF FAMILY)



The older the pastor, the more close friends he had. Pastors in the largest churches had a somewhat higher average, mostly because they rarely reported no close friends at all (3%, versus 10% in churches with fewer than 200 people).

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS



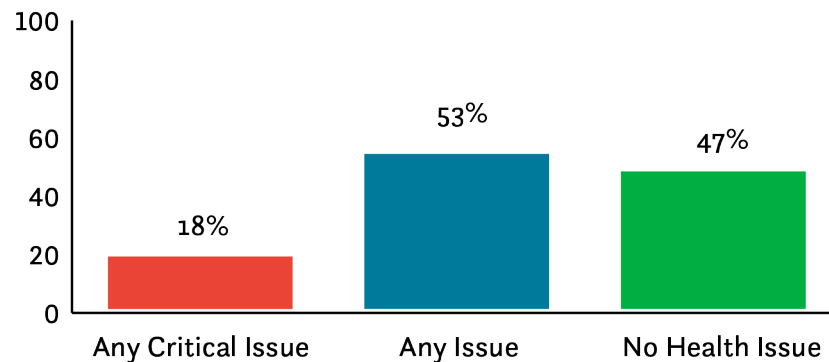
As was done for physical/mental health, we built a model with the various relationship-oriented questions. The model includes the five statements detailed in this section, plus the number of close friends they had, and two questions about their satisfaction with the nature of their relationships with people in their congregation.

The good news is that pastors were far less likely to express any critical relationship issues than they were to be suffering from health problems. The bad news is that 18% of pastors had at least one critical relationship issue, and 53% had a negative relationship issue of some type impacting their lives.

While younger pastors were less likely than others to express highly positive attitudes about relationships, they weren't actually more likely to have critical or significant relationship issues in their lives. The only difference among the various subgroups of pastors was that those in the larger churches were far less likely than others to have some type of critical relationship issue (11%, compared to 21% in mid-size churches and 24% in small churches).

	Critical Issues	Issues
Satisfaction with “How much care/concern your congregation shows towards your needs as a person” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
Satisfaction with “The quality of your relationships with members of your congregation” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
“As far as I know, the relationships in my life are free of unresolved brokenness”	Disagreed Strongly	Disagreed
“When I get hurt in a relationship, I am good at resolving that pain through conversations of reconciliation and forgiveness”	Disagreed Strongly	Disagreed
“I am unaware of a character or spiritual flaw in my own life, I have people in my life who would point it out to me in an appropriate way”	Disagreed Strongly	Disagreed
“I have people in my life outside of my family that I can turn to when I’m troubled or in need of support”	Disagreed Strongly	Disagreed
“My relationships with my congregants are generally loving, trusting, and honest”	Disagreed Strongly	Disagreed
Number of close friends (outside of family)	None	None

PRESENCE OF ANY RELATIONAL ISSUE

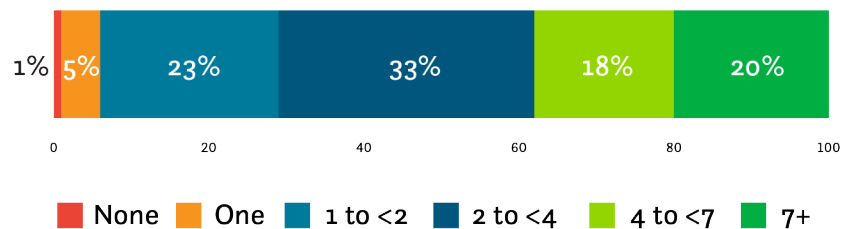


SPIRITUAL HEALTH

The average pastor estimated spending 4.1 hours per week in personal prayer that is not specifically church-related. This works out to 35 minutes per day.

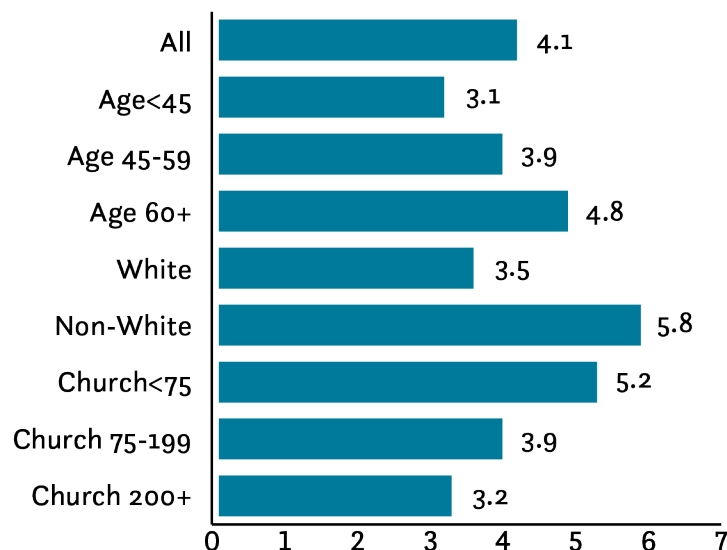
However, there was quite a bit of variation in how much pastors are praying. One percent said they typically don't do any personal prayer, and another 5% average under an hour a week (meaning under nine minutes per day on average). Twenty-three percent spend an hour to fewer than two hours (or about nine to 17 minutes per day), while one-third spend two to fewer than four hours (or about 17 to 34 minutes per day). Eighteen percent spend four to fewer than seven hours per week (about 34 to 59 minutes daily), while 20% average an hour a day in personal prayer.

HOURS SPENT IN PERSONAL PRAYER, PER WEEK



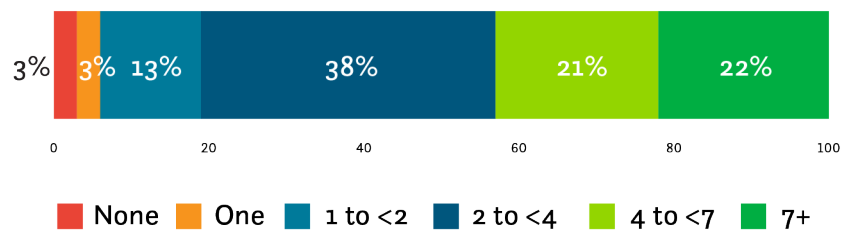
The amount of time spent praying also varied considerably among different types of pastors. The younger the pastor, the less time he spends in prayer each week. The larger the church, the less time spent in prayer. But the biggest difference was by race/ethnicity: non-Caucasian pastors spent an average of 5.8 hours per week in personal prayer, which was 66% more than white pastors spent.

AVERAGE HOURS SPENT IN PERSONAL PRAYER, PER WEEK



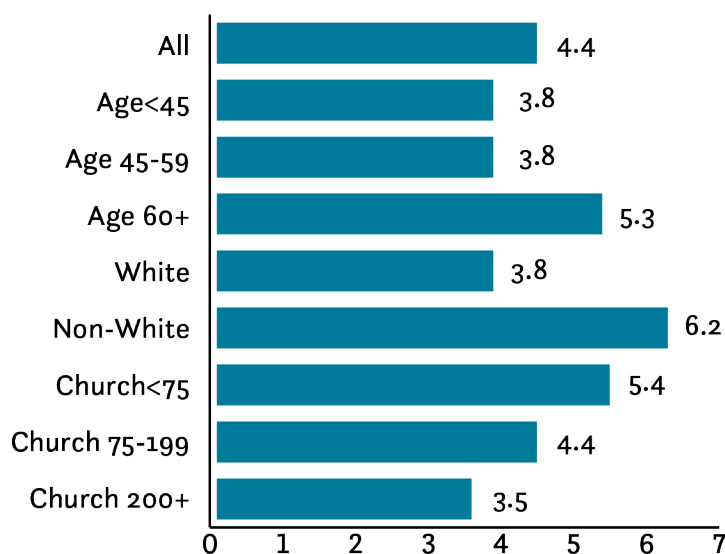
The average pastor spends slightly more time in personal Bible reading or study (not related to sermon preparation) than he spends in prayer: 4.4 hours per week, or about 38 minutes per day. Three percent spend no time at all reading or studying the Bible in a typical week; another 3% spend less than an hour doing so. Thirteen percent spend one to fewer than two hours (or about 9 – 17 minutes daily), while the most common answer was to spend two to fewer than four hours weekly (about 17 to 34 minutes per day). Only 22% spend an hour or more per day reading or studying the Bible.

HOURS SPENT IN PERSONAL BIBLE READING, PER WEEK



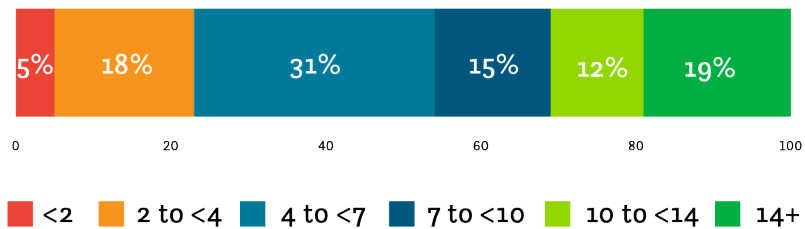
The same groups that tended to spend more time in prayer also tended to spend more time in the Word: older pastors, those in smaller congregations, and particularly non-Caucasian pastors.

AVERAGE HOURS SPENT IN PERSONAL BIBLE READING, PER WEEK



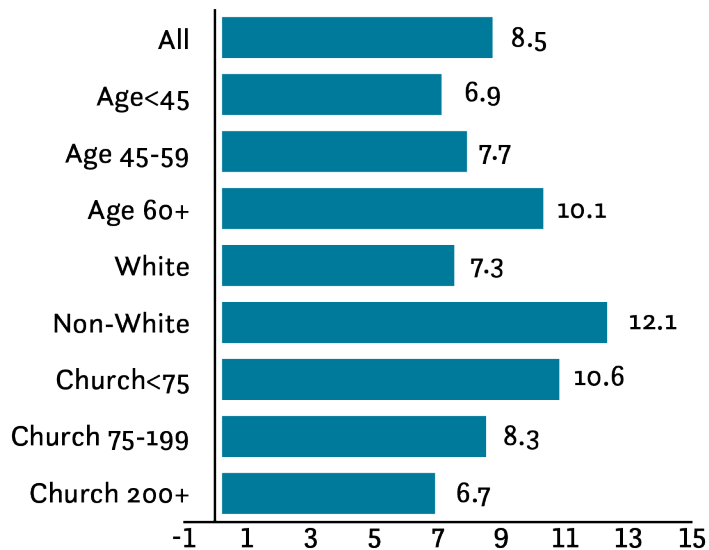
The average pastor spends one hour and thirteen minutes per day on personal spiritual preparation (prayer, Bible study, Bible reading). But 23% spend 34 minutes or less on this in an average day.

HOURS SPENT IN PRAYER OR BIBLE READING, PER WEEK



The disparity by age group, race/ethnicity, and church size really pops out when prayer and Bible study/reading are combined. Pastors 60 and older averaged 46% more time in spiritual disciplines than did those under age 45. Pastors in small churches averaged 58% more time spent in this than did pastors in larger churches. And non-Caucasian pastors averaged a whopping 66% more time in this than did Caucasian pastors.

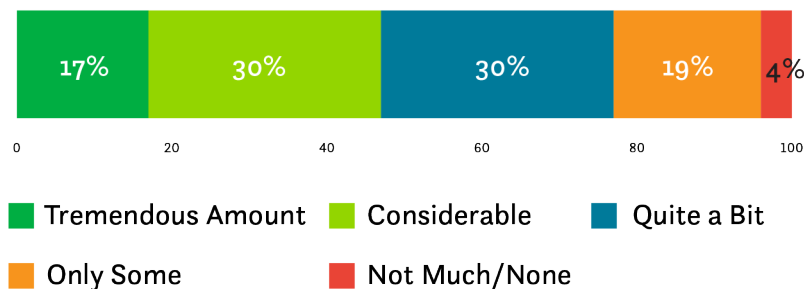
AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS SPENT IN PRAYER/BIBLE STUDY



Over the past six months, 17% of all Texas Baptist pastors reported experiencing the presence and power of God a tremendous amount in their daily lives. Most experienced this either a considerable amount or quite a bit, while 19% said this was present for them only some, and 4% said not very much or really not at all.

Maybe it is just a coincidence, but the same groups that spent a lot more time in prayer and Bible reading were the ones more likely to have experienced God’s power and presence a tremendous amount: older pastors (22%, compared to 15% in the mid-age group and just 9% of the youngest ones), those in smaller churches (23%, versus 18% in mid-size churches and 11% in the largest churches), and non-Caucasian pastors (29%, compared to 13% of white pastors).

EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE/POWER



Again, we built a model of pastors’ spiritual issues, using the criteria listed below:

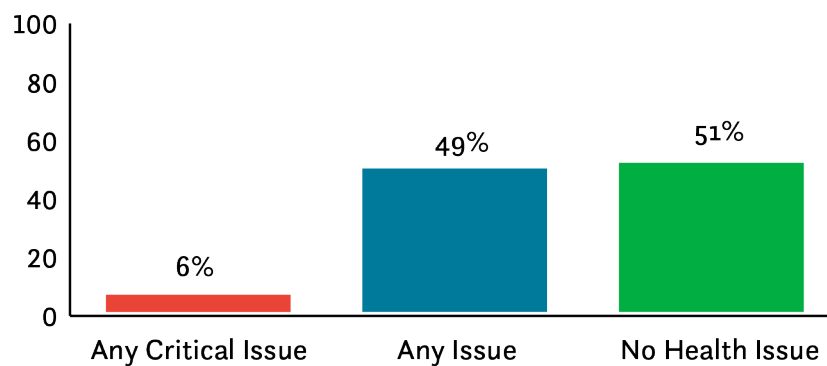
	Critical Issues	Issues
Time spent weekly in personal prayer	None	<2 Hours
Time spent weekly in personal Bible study/reading	None	<2 Hours
Satisfaction with “The amount of time you’re able to devote to your own spiritual health and development” (1-7)	1	1-3
Satisfaction with “Your personal spiritual development” (1-7)	1	1-3
Feeling God’s power/presence in daily life	Little/None	Only Some

About half of all pastors were experiencing some type of spiritual issue. They’re not frequently experiencing God’s power and presence in their lives, they spend fewer than two hours on prayer and an equally small amount in the Word, and/or they were dissatisfied with their own spiritual development or the amount of time they’re able to devote to this.

Given the individual findings just detailed, it should be no surprise that having spiritual issues was far more common among pastors under age 45 (64%) than among mid-age (52%) or older (39%) pastors. It was also much more common among whites than others (54% to 34%). Surprisingly, however, it was not more of a factor in larger churches than in smaller ones.

The good news was that only 6% of Texas Baptist pastors were experiencing any critical spiritual issues, although 49% were experiencing at least moderately negative issues.

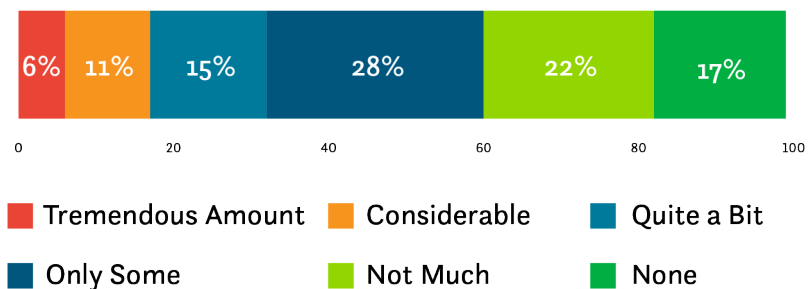
PRESENCE OF ANY SPIRITUAL ISSUE



FINANCIAL HEALTH

Only 17% of all pastors said they really don't experience any stress, worry, or concern resulting from their household's financial situation. Another 22% experience not very much, while 28% said it's only some. This left one-third of all pastors who were experiencing quite a bit, a considerable amount, or a tremendous amount of financial stress.

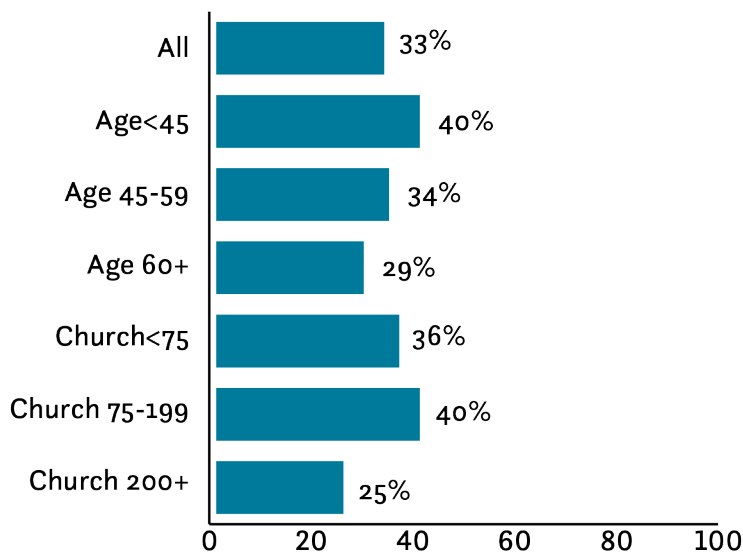
FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL FINANCIAL STRESS/WORRY



The level of financial stress being experienced did not vary dramatically among different types of pastors, but there were some differences. The younger the pastor, the more likely he was to be experiencing at least quite a bit of financial stress. Financial stress was less common in larger churches than in congregations of fewer than 200 people (very possibly because compensation tends to be better in larger churches).

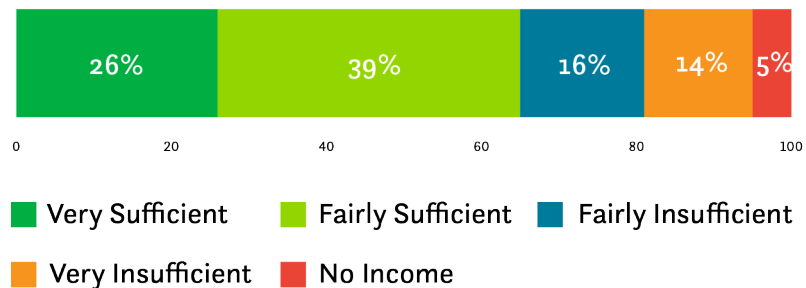
WHO'S EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL STRESS?

(A tremendous amount, considerable amount or quite a bit)



Sixty-four percent of pastors said their church-related income is sufficient for their household's needs. This included 26% who called their income very sufficient, with 39% calling it fairly sufficient. Five percent said they receive no income at all from their church work. This left 30% who said their church income is insufficient for their household's needs – almost equally divided between those who called it fairly insufficient (16%) and very insufficient (14%).

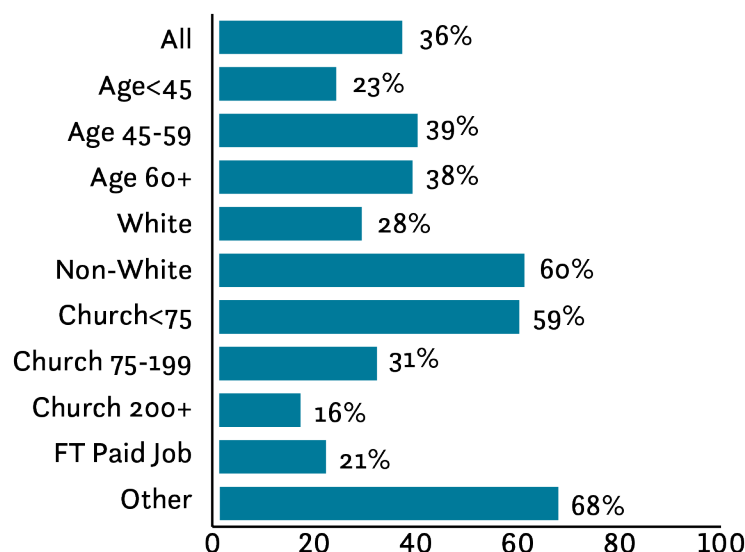
CHURCH INCOME VS. HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL NEEDS



It's no surprise that pastors in the smallest churches struggled the most, with 59% struggling with insufficient income or no income at all (compared to 31% in mid-size churches and 16% in churches with 200 or more attending). Non-Caucasian pastors (who were often in small churches) also had significant problems with this (60%, versus 28% among white pastors). Pastors 45 and older also were more likely to have insufficient or no income than were the youngest pastors (39% to 23%), although this may have more to do with household financial needs than with actual income.

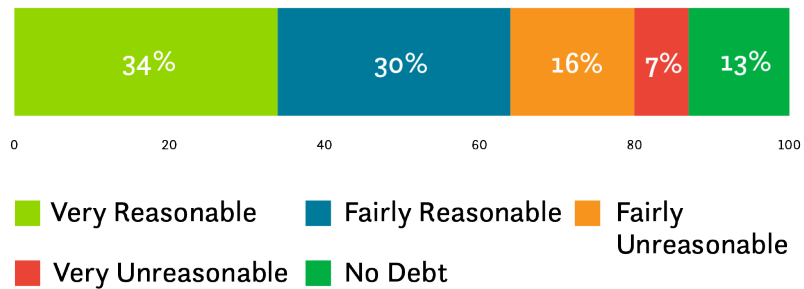
One other factor that made a big difference for pastors was whether they held a full time paid position or were in some other situation. Sixty-eight percent of those without a fulltime paid position were struggling with insufficient income, compared to 21% of those who had a full-time paid job. Still, it is concerning that one out of every five pastors with a full-time paid church job did not earn sufficient income for his household's needs.

WHO HAS NO/INSUFFICIENT CHURCH-RELATED INCOME?



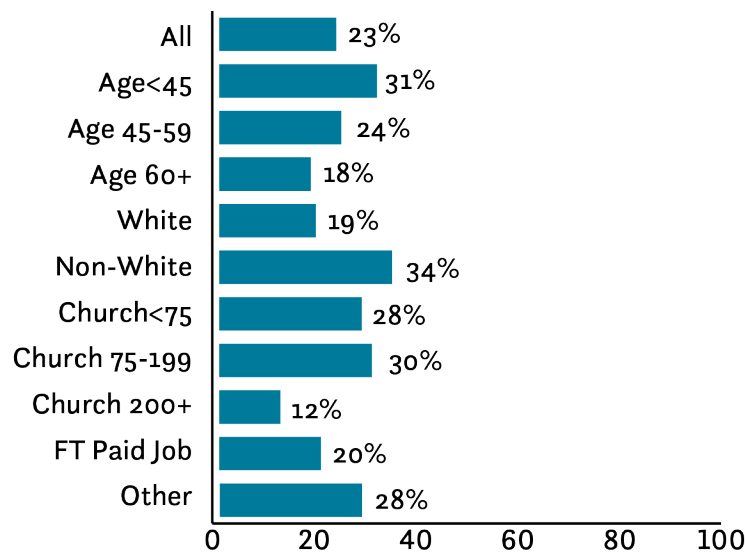
The situation was fairly similar with debt, but not quite as negative. Thirteen percent said their household carries no debt at all. Sixty-four percent carried debt, but felt it's a reasonable amount compared to their household income and financial situation (34% called it very reasonable, with 30% feeling it's somewhat reasonable). On the other hand, 23% said their debt load is not reasonable, including 7% who said it is a very unreasonable amount.

DEBT VS. INCOME/HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL SITUATION



In general, the same groups who struggled with insufficient income also struggled with unreasonable debt: younger pastors, those in smaller churches (although this time pastors in mid-size churches joined them), non-Caucasian pastors, and those without a full-time paid position.

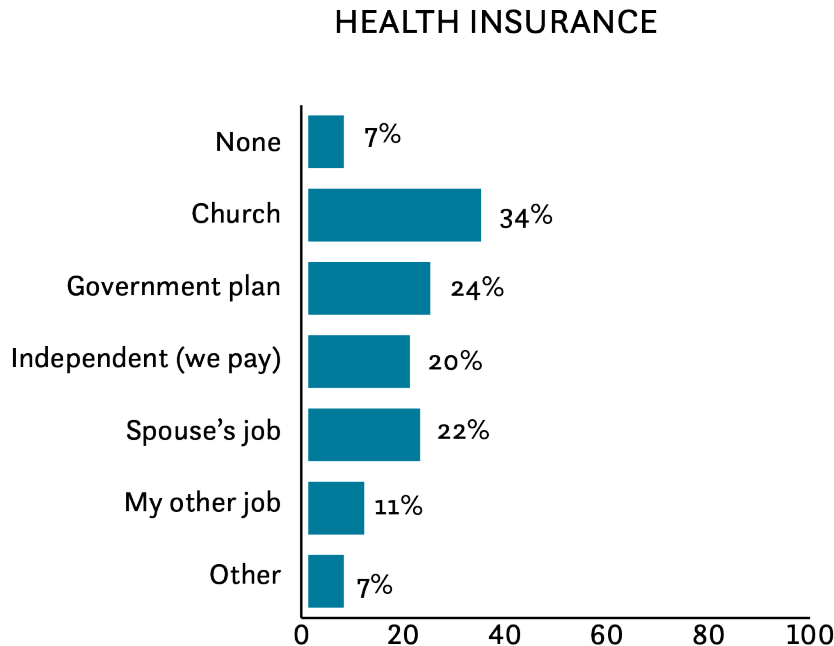
WHO HAS UNREASONABLE DEBT LOAD?



Most pastors did have some form of health insurance coverage. Seven percent said they have nothing at all.

However, only 34% had coverage through their church. The rest had a mish-mash of other types of coverage: through the government (Medicare, VA, etc.), through another job they hold, through their spouse's work, or simply paying for an independent plan themselves.

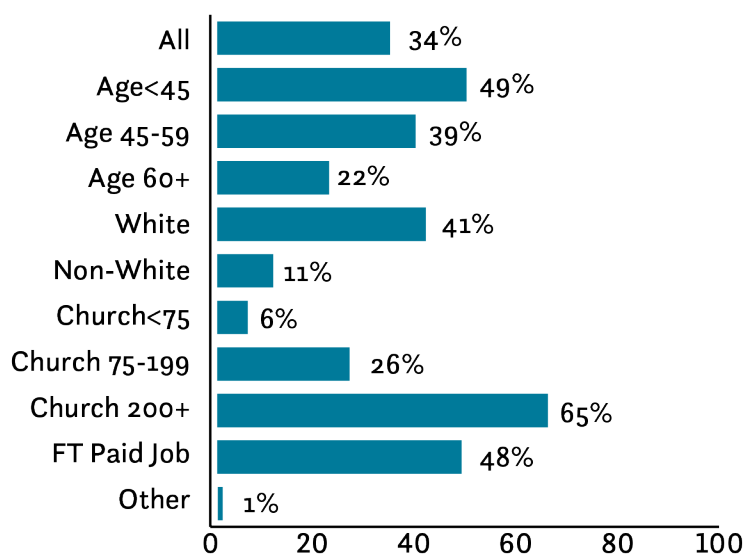
Note that some respondents had more than one type of coverage; for instance, the pastor may be insured through his church but his family gets coverage through his wife's job, or the family may pay for independent coverage for the kids but the parents are uninsured.



Almost no pastors in the smallest churches enjoyed health coverage through their church. This was also a group more likely to have no health insurance at all (13%). Older pastors often had no health coverage through their church, but at 60 or older, 51% had government health coverage. Non-Caucasian pastors also rarely had coverage through their church (11%), and again this group was particularly likely to have no health coverage at all (12%).

Finally, pastors with a full-time paid position were far more likely than those in other job situations to have health coverage through their church. In fact, just one person in the entire survey had a church job that was not a full-time paid position but still received healthcare through his church. But even among pastors with a full-time paid position, over half did not receive health coverage through their church. In some cases, this may be a conscious decision or just a lack of need (if their spouse has coverage that is better or less expensive, or if they have government coverage). In other cases, the church may not offer health coverage or it may be a poor or expensive plan.

WHO HAS HEALTH INSURANCE THROUGH THEIR CHURCH?



As with all of the other sections in this study, we created a model that shows what proportion of Texas Baptist pastors had at least one critical financial problem in their lives, as well as what proportion had a significant issue that may or may not be at the critical level:

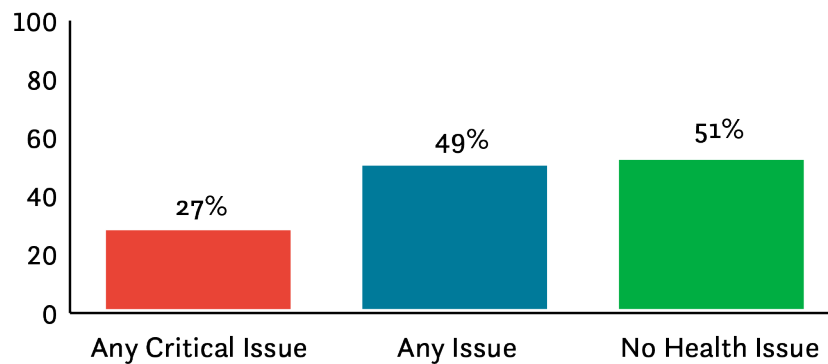
	Critical Issues	Issues
Household financial stress	Tremendous	Considerable
Church income compared to their household's financial needs	Very Insufficient	Insufficient
Debt load compared to their income and household financial situation	Very Unreasonable	Unreasonable
Health coverage/insurance	None	None

In total, just out of these four simple measures, 27% of all pastors were experiencing what could be termed as a critical financial issue: no health coverage, very unreasonable debt, very insufficient church-related income, and/or a tremendous amount of stress, worry, or concern due to their household finances. A total of 49% were experiencing a financial issue of some type, including critical and less critical issues as shown above.

As the individual measures that comprised this model were more acutely problematic for non-Caucasian pastors, those in small churches, and those without a full-time paid position, it's no shock that these were the groups most likely to be experiencing critical financial issues. Thirty-seven percent of all non-Caucasian pastors had a critical financial issue; 63% had a financial issue. This was much higher than the 24% and 45%, respectively, appearing among white pastors.

Similarly, critical financial issues were present for just 13% of pastors in larger churches, compared to 24% in mid-size congregations and 44% in small churches. In fact, the proportion of pastors in larger bodies with any level of financial issue – critical or otherwise – was lower than the proportion of small church pastors who were dealing with a critical financial issue (28% to 44%). And while 18% of pastors who had a full-time paid position still were handling a critical financial problem, the same was true for 46% of pastors in some other type of job situation.

PRESENCE OF ANY FINANCIAL ISSUE



JOB FULFILLMENT

Pastors were asked to rate how fulfilling they find ten areas of their jobs, using a scale of 1 (not at all fulfilling) to 7 (highly fulfilling).

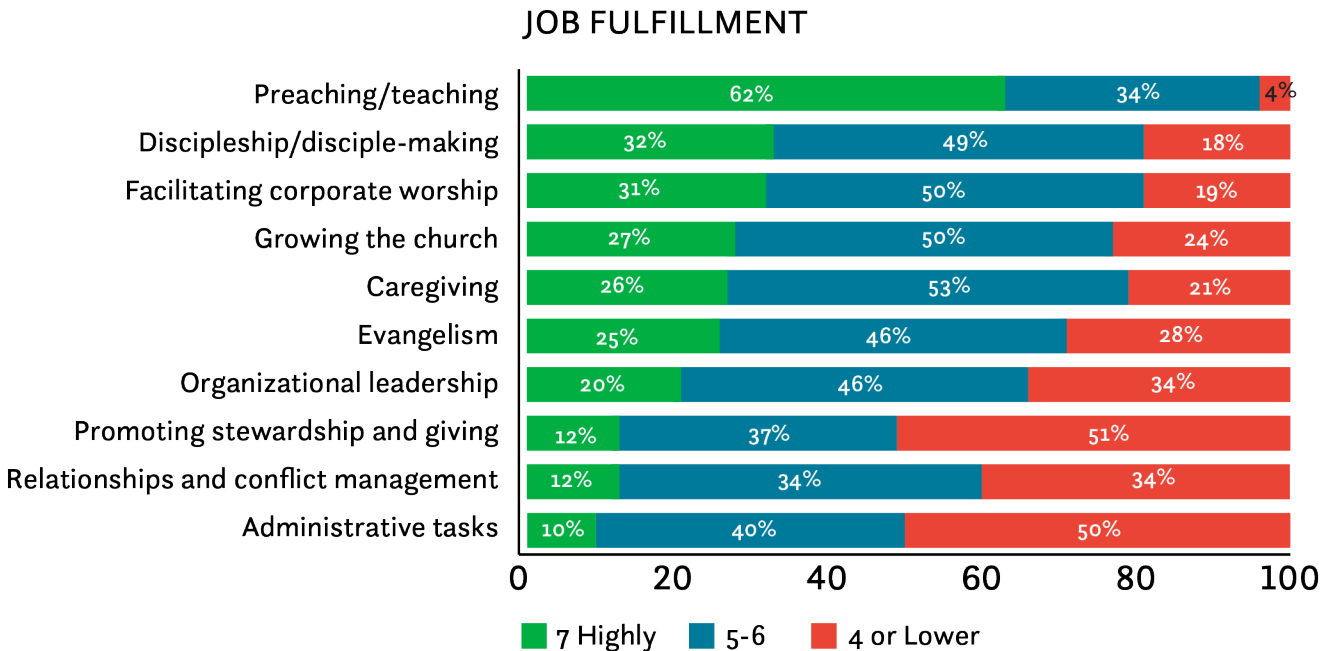
Only preaching/teaching was highly fulfilling to a majority of pastors. In fact, twice as many pastors felt preaching/teaching is highly fulfilling as any other two job areas combined.

That's not to say pastors were completely unfulfilled by all other areas of their job. If we consider any rating of 5 or higher to be an acceptable level of job fulfillment, eight of the ten areas held a relatively high level of fulfillment for a majority of pastors (and the other two were right at half of all pastors finding them at least moderately fulfilling).

While preaching/teaching was clearly the most fulfilling job area to pastors, three were plainly the least likely to provide fulfillment: promoting stewardship and giving, interpersonal relationships and conflict management, and administrative tasks and duties.

Possibly of the most concern in this list was where evangelism placed. While 62% found preaching/teaching to be highly fulfilling, just 25% said the same thing about evangelism, with 28% calling it unfulfilling.

Looking at the disparity between preaching/teaching and every other job responsibility, one is left to wonder whether potential pastors truly understand how they'll be spending their time when they go into the ministry. The stereotypical view of pastors is them giving a rousing sermon from the pulpit (and indeed this is by far the most visible role of a pastor to the typical churchgoer), whereas tasks such as visitation, administration, stewardship, and leadership usually have far less visibility. Yet with the average full-time pastor working 49 hours per week, delivering a sermon represents less than 1/49th of the typical pastor's week. It's really the other areas of responsibility that determine the effectiveness of most pastors, but 48/49th of the week were less fulfilling to most pastors than the 30 – 40 minutes spent preaching or teaching each Sunday.

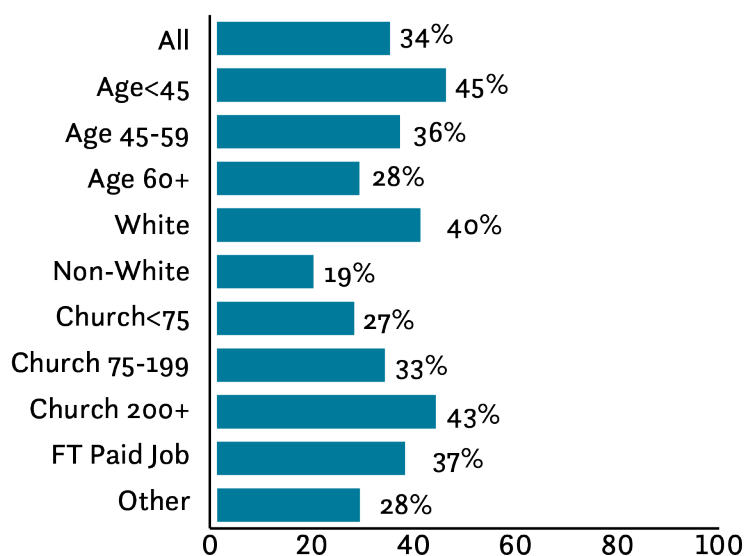


The typical pastor found a high level of fulfillment (6 or higher on the scale) in at least one aspect of his job (94%), but only 9% found every aspect of their job to be this fulfilling.

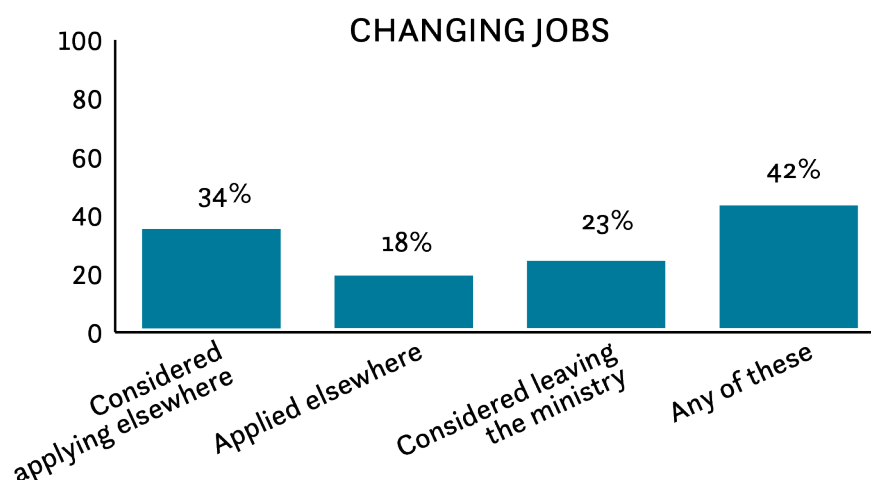
At the same time, 75% of all pastors found at least one aspect of their job to be unfulfilling (4 or lower on the scale), and in fact 35% found at least one aspect to be very unfulfilling (2 or lower). Thankfully, just 1% found every aspect of their job to be unfulfilling.

The youngest pastors were the ones most likely to find at least one element of their job to be very unfulfilling (45%, compared to 36% in the 45 – 59 age group and 28% of older pastors). White pastors were twice as likely to have at least one very unfulfilling part of their job as were non-Caucasian pastors (40% to 19%). And the larger the church, the more likely the respondent was to complain about an unfulfilling part of his job (43%, versus 33% in mid-size churches and 27% in the smallest churches).

WHO FINDS AT LEAST ONE JOB AREA VERY FULFILLING?



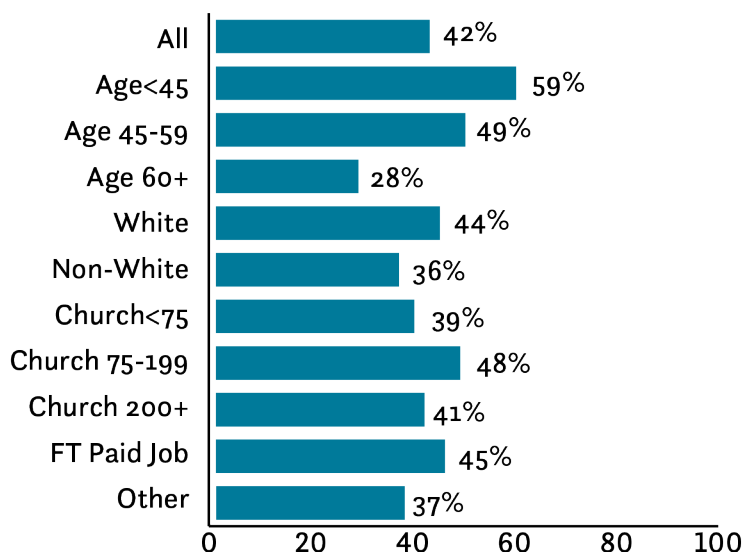
One of the things that makes this study so relevant is that over four out of ten pastors (42%) have looked into leaving their current job in the past couple of years. This included 18% who have actually applied for a job at a different church, 34% who have seriously considered applying for a job at a different church, and 23% who have seriously considered leaving the ministry for a secular job.



Younger pastors were more likely than others to have considered each one of these three actions. White pastors were significantly more likely than others to have considered leaving their current church (or actually applied for another job), but not leaving the ministry overall. The same was true for pastors who had a full-time paid position over those in other situations.

Overall, the pastors most likely to have considered or taken any of these steps were usually younger, and more often Caucasian and with a full-time paid position.

WHO HAS CONSIDERED A JOB CHANGE?

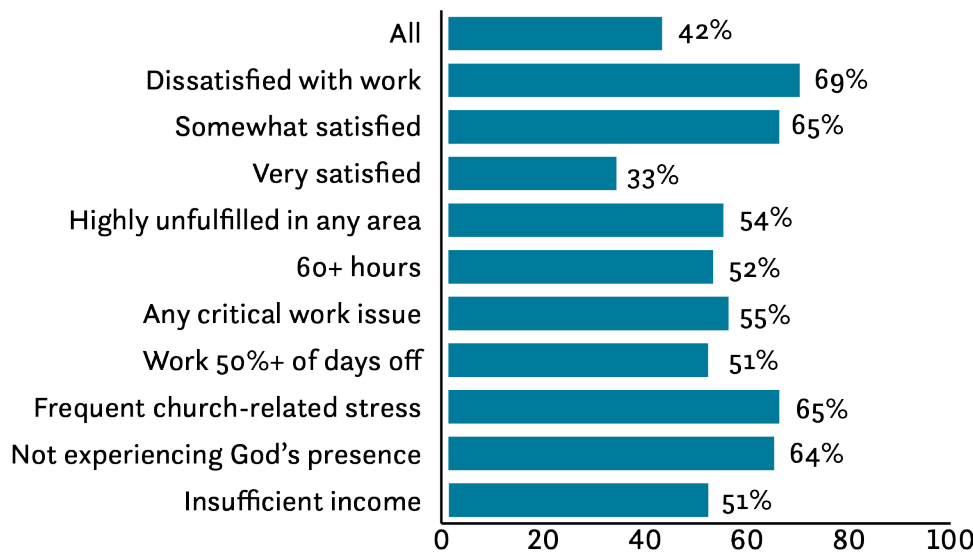


However, what's really revealing is when various other survey questions are correlated with serious consideration of a job change. While 42% of all pastors had considered leaving their church and/or the ministry, the same was true for 51% who felt their income is very insufficient for their needs, 54% who were very unfulfilled in any area of their job, 51% who end up working on at least half their days off, and 52% who were working 60 or more hours per week at church.

Most tellingly, 64% who were not frequently experiencing God's presence and power in their lives and 65% of those who were experiencing stress related to their church or congregation multiple times per week were considering leaving. And when overall job satisfaction is reviewed, the proportion who were thinking about a change was twice as high when pastors were less than very satisfied with their overall work situation at their church.

This is a good reminder that while being a pastor is a calling, it is also a daily job. Job stress, small paychecks, lack of job satisfaction, heavy workloads, and other things that negatively impact bank tellers, social workers, and landscapers also negatively impact pastors. Congregations that don't provide positive experiences in these areas are at risk of losing their pastors – and sadly, that currently makes up more than four out of every ten Texas Baptist congregations.

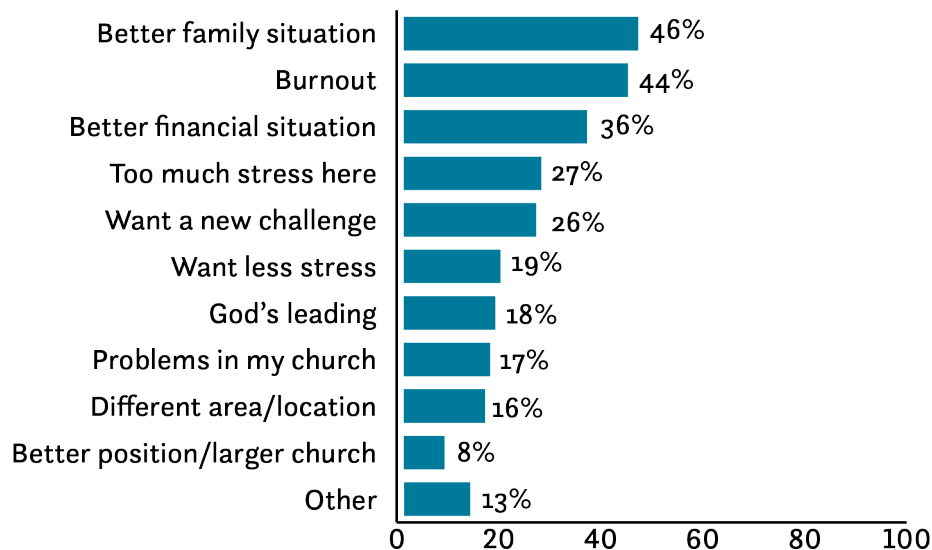
WHO HAS CONSIDERED A JOB CHANGE?



Pastors who had applied or seriously considered applying at another church were directly asked what motivated them to do/consider this. Again emphasizing that being a pastor is a job as much as it is a calling, only 18% said their consideration of leaving was motivated by God leading them to consider a change. In fact, that number raises the question of whether being a pastor has become a job more than a calling, since eight out of ten pastors considering leaving their current church did not report that God's leading was one of their motivations to do so.

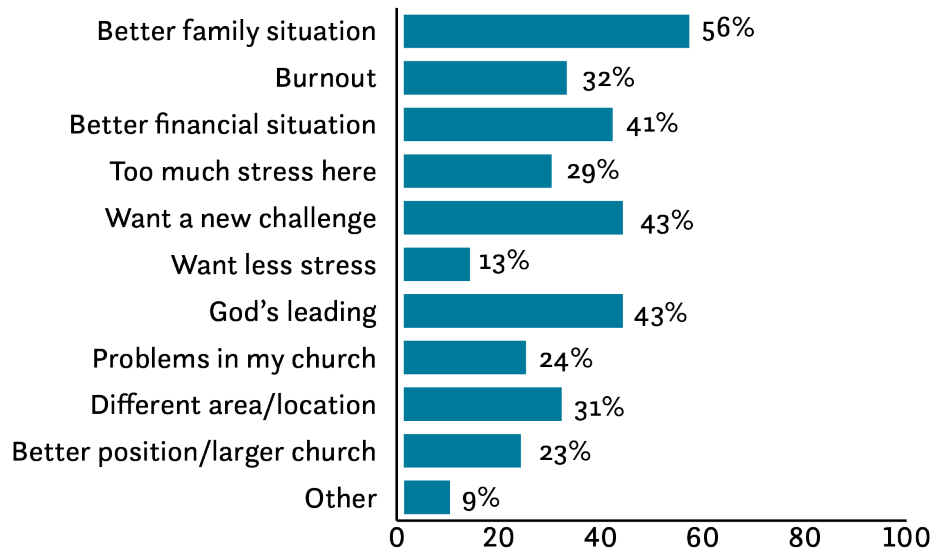
The two most common reasons were seeking a better situation for their spouse and/or family and burnout at their current position. Seeking a better financial situation was up there as well.

MOTIVATIONS FOR CONSIDERING A DIFFERENT CHURCH



Pastors who were considering leaving the ministry entirely were asked the same question. Again, it's of concern that only 43% were considering this step at least in part because they felt God was leading them to consider it. In fact, seeking a better financial situation and simply desiring a new challenge were equally important to God's leading in this process, and seeking a better situation for spouse/family was impacting a greater number of pastors.

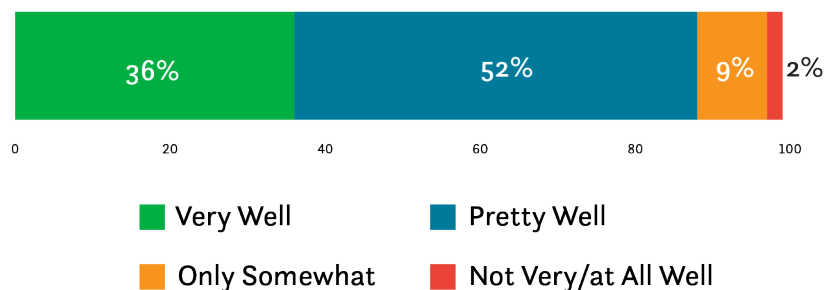
MOTIVATIONS FOR CONSIDERING LEAVING THE MINISTRY



BEING EQUIPPED FOR THE JOB

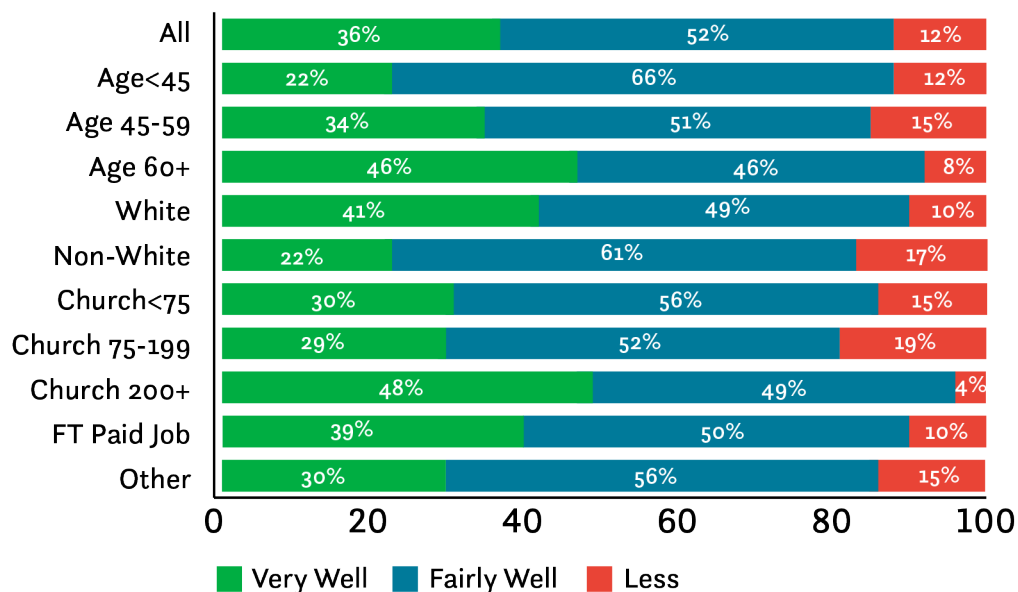
Few pastors felt poorly trained or equipped to meet the demands of their ministry position. Only 36% felt very well trained for this, but another 52% felt pretty well trained or equipped for their role. But there were 12% who did not feel sufficiently equipped to do what they were doing.

HOW WELL TRAINED/EQUIPPED THEY FEEL FOR THEIR JOB



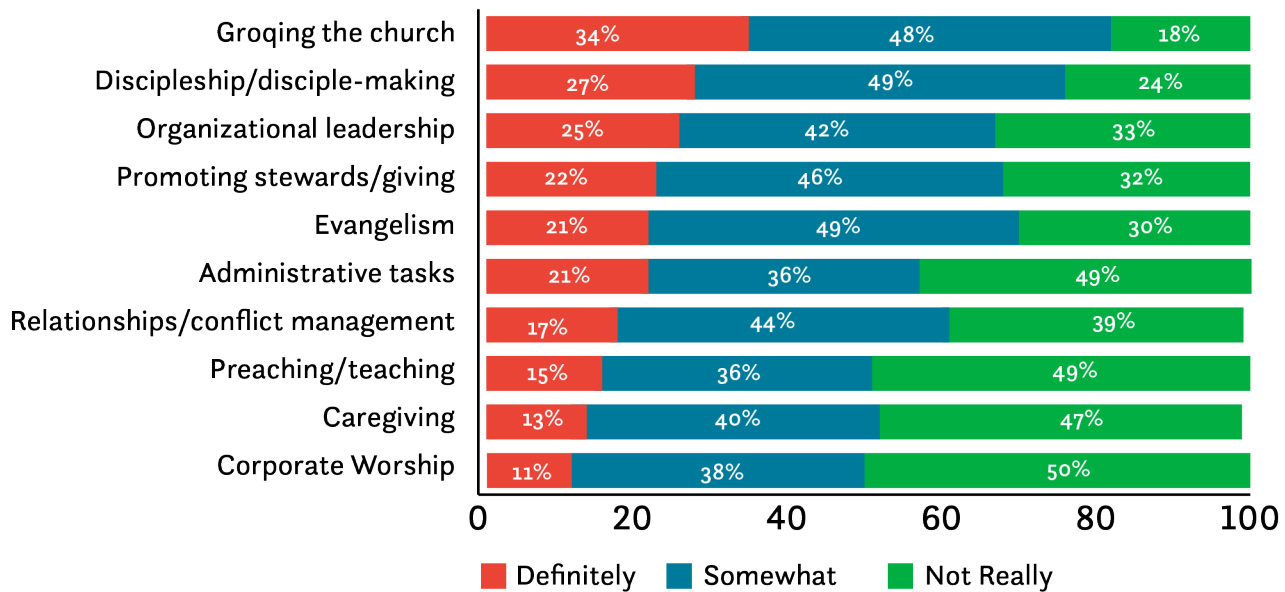
Younger pastors were substantially less likely to feel fully equipped for their position, as were non-Caucasian pastors and those in smaller churches.

WHO FEELS EQUIPPED FOR THEIR JOB?



Respondents were asked in which areas they saw the need for more training or equipping. Eighty-two percent felt they need help in growing the church, including 34% who said they definitely need this help. Other areas in which pastors perceived more need for training were discipleship or disciple-making, organizational leadership, promoting stewardship and giving, and evangelism.

WHERE MORE TRAINING/EQUIPPING IS NEEDED

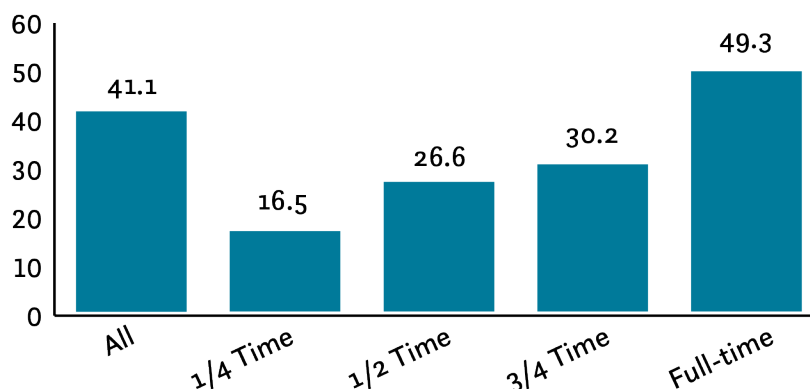


Two-thirds of pastors said their job is a full-time, 40 hours per week position. Others said it's supposed to be closer to 30 hours (7%), 20 hours (13%), or ten hours per week (9%), while 4% were in some other type of situation.

These arrangements varied considerably by a number of factors. In small churches, just 35% of pastors were supposed to work 40 hours per week, compared to 78% in churches with 75 to 199 in the congregation and 91% in larger churches.

Now, how much they actually work is a different story. The average pastor reported working 41 hours per week at his church job – but that includes people who didn't have a full-time position. Among those with a full-time job, the average was 49.3 hours per week, or 23% more than the standard work week. Eight percent said they actually work fewer than 40 hours in a typical week, even though they hold a full-time position. Thirty two percent work between 40 and 49 hours, while 39% said their typical work week is 50 to 59 hours, and 21% work 60 or more hours per week at church.

AVERAGE HOURS WORKED AT CHURCH PER WEEK

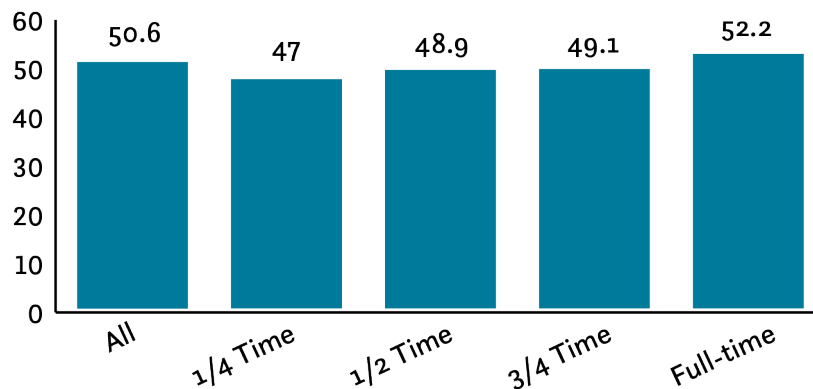


One-third of all pastors reported having some type of employment outside of their church position. This included 22% of those who worked 1/4 time for their church, 42% who worked 1/2 or 3/4 time for their church, and 18% with a full-time church position.

Having outside employment was particularly common among pastors age 45 to 59 (43%, compared to 26% of younger respondents and 27% of older ones). It was also far more common among non-Caucasian pastors than others (48% to 28%), and much more common in the smallest churches (50%, versus 28% in mid-size churches and 21% in churches with 200 or more attending).

The average pastor was working 50.6 hours weekly between church employment and anyoutside work. Once church work and other work are combined, it didn't matter whether pastors were hired for part-time or full-time work – they were all averaging 47 – 52 hours per week working.

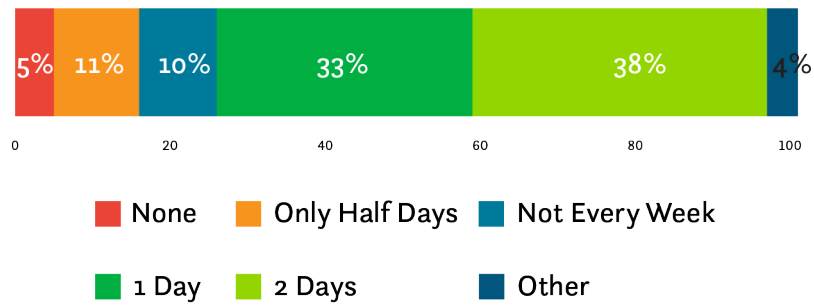
AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK (COMBINED)



There wasn't tremendous variation in how many hours different types of pastors worked per week. The one difference was that pastors 60 and older worked an average of 45.9 hours weekly, compared to 54.7 among pastors age 45 to 59, and 51.8 among the youngest pastors.

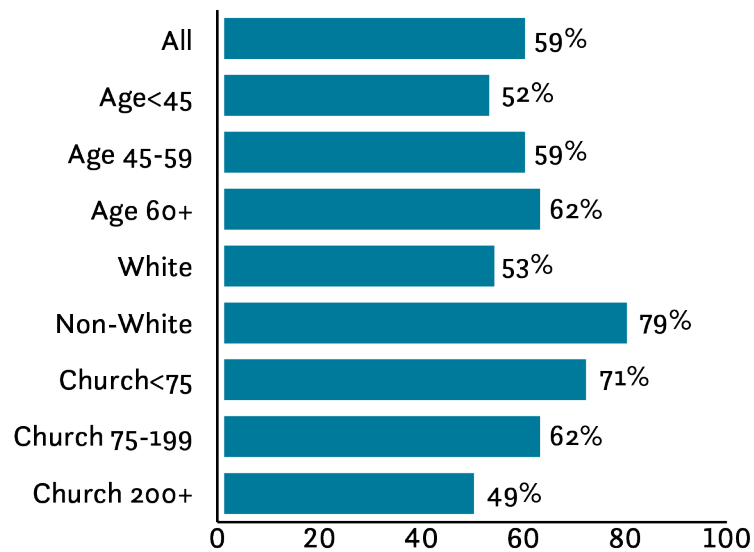
Not only is the typical full-time pastor working more than 40 hours per week, but he's not getting a lot of time off each week. Just 38% of those working 30 or more hours at church were getting two days off in a typical week; 33% got just one. Ten percent said they do get days off, but less than once a week, while 11% get no full days off but do take one or more half-days off. Five percent said they typically get no time off at all – not even half days. Four percent were in some other type of situation.

DAYS OFF IN A TYPICAL WEEK



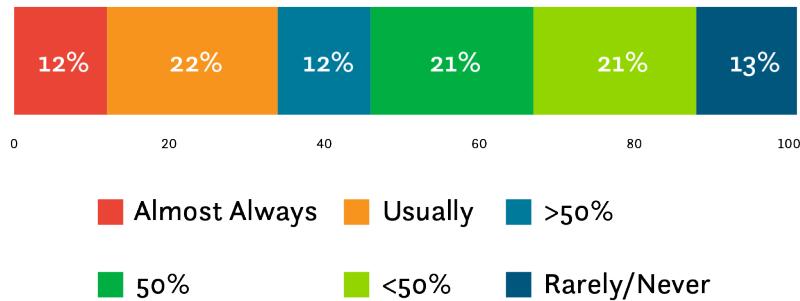
When it comes to days off, younger pastors tended to do slightly better than older pastors. White pastors were far more likely than non-white respondents to get two days off per week, and those in larger churches did far better than their colleagues in small congregations.

WHO GETS FEWER THAN TWO DAYS OF PER WEEK



Just because pastors “get” days off doesn’t mean they actually are able to use them. Those who worked 30 or more hours per week and got any full days off were asked how often they end up doing church-related work anyway on those “days off.” Only 13% said they rarely or never end up doing church work on days off, while 66% said at least half the time this happens. This included 22% who usually give up time off because of work, and 12% who said it almost always happens.

HOW OFTEN THEY WORK ON “DAYS OFF”



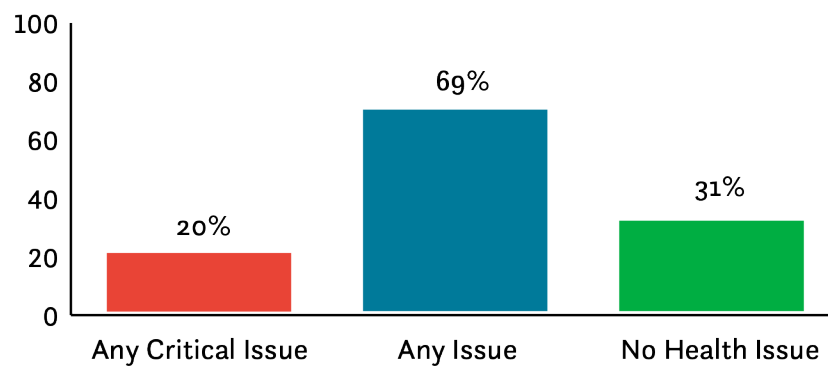
The model we created that shows what proportion of Texas Baptist pastors have at least one critical work-related problem in their lives, as well as what proportion have a significant work issue that may or may not be at the critical level, was built out of the following criteria:

	Critical Issues	Issues
Satisfaction with “Your overall work situation with your church” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
Satisfaction with “How much care/concern your lay leaders show towards your needs as a person” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
Satisfaction with “The quality of your relationships with your lay leaders” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
Satisfaction with “The quality of your relationships with other church staff” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
How well trained/equipped they are for ministry	Not at All Well	Not Very/Not at All Well
Hours worked per week (all jobs)	80+	60+
Days off per week from church job	None	Only 1/2 Days
Working on days off from church job	Almost Always	>50%

Two out of every ten pastors had at least one critical work-related issue impacting their lives – very poor relationships with lay leaders, feeling completely unequipped for their job, having no days off, etc. About seven out of ten had a significant issue, such as getting no full days off from work, working on days off more than half the time, working 60 or more hours per week, etc.

The presence of work-related issues didn't vary much by age or church size, but both critical issues (27% to 17%) and significant issues (80% to 65%) were more common for non-Caucasian pastors than for Caucasian pastors.

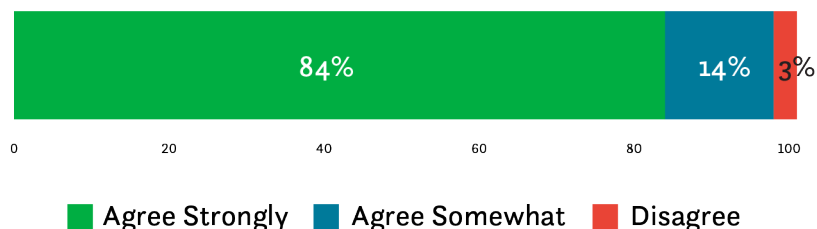
PRESENCE OF ANY WORK ISSUE



While many pastors struggled with physical problems, financial problems, stress, or other issues, it was positive to know that relatively few struggle with serious problems with their families (at least not in the three questions which comprised this area of investigation).

Eighty-four percent agreed strongly that “The relationships within my home are generally loving, trusting, and honest,” and most of the rest (14%) agreed somewhat with this. Three percent disagreed, although all but one pastor disagreed somewhat rather than strongly. There were no significant subgroup differences; every subgroup saw at least eight out of ten respondents agree strongly with this statement.

HOME RELATIONSHIPS ARE LOVING/TRUSTING/HONEST

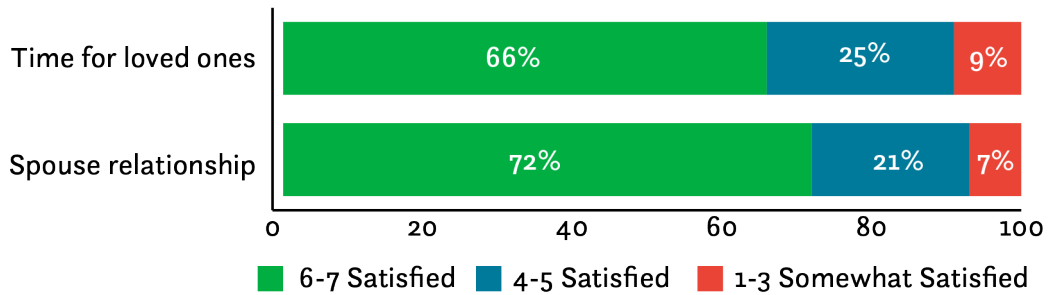


Thirty-one percent were highly satisfied with “The amount of time you’re able to devote to your family and loved ones,” but another 35% rated this at a 6 on a 1 – 7 scale. Overall, the average rating of satisfaction was 5.7. Twenty-five percent were not entirely satisfied with this, rating it a 4 or a 5, and 9% were below a 4.

Satisfaction with time for loved ones did not vary a lot by age, but it did vary by whether pastors had children in their household. Seventy percent of pastors with no children in the household were pretty satisfied with this (6 or 7), compared to 59% of those with adolescents. Pastors with children were twice as likely as others to report being dissatisfied with this (14% to 7%).

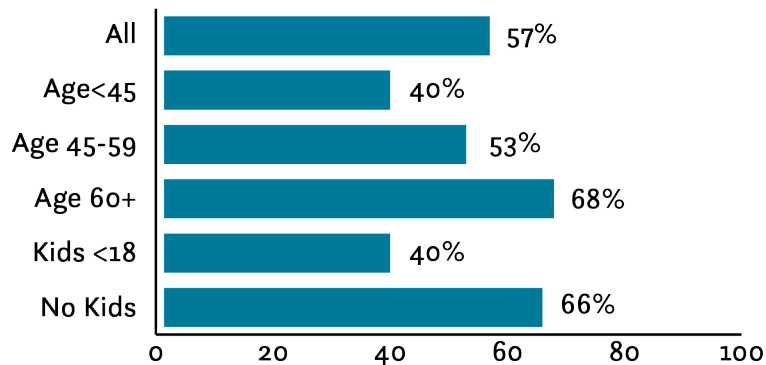
There was somewhat higher satisfaction with “The quality of your relationship with your spouse” (obviously this was asked only of married pastors, although the vast majority were married). Fifty-seven percent expressed the highest possible level of satisfaction with this, with another 26% at a rating of 6. In fact, out of 12 different areas of life and work, satisfaction with this area was by far the highest – 14 points higher than the next in line.

SATISFACTION WITH AREAS OF FAMILY LIFE



The older the pastor, the higher the level of satisfaction with his spousal relationship. Only 5% of any age group were dissatisfied with this, but younger pastors were more likely to be moderately satisfied with their relationship with their spouse. The age difference is likely (at least in part) connected with the presence of children in the household. Among those with adolescents, 40% expressed the highest level of satisfaction; among those without, that rose to 66%.

WHO IS HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR SPOUSAL RELATIONSHIP?

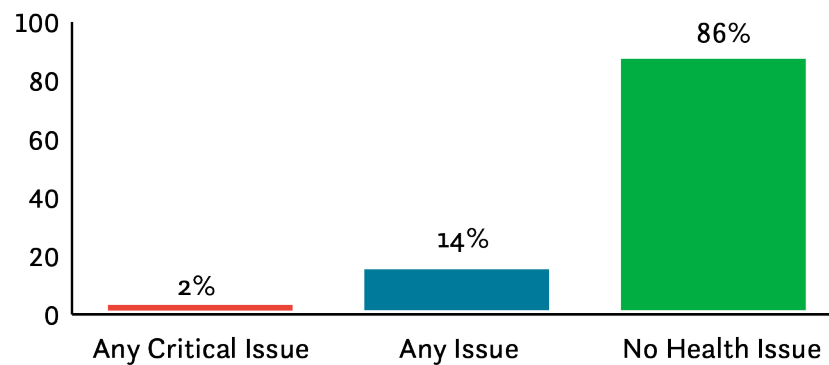


The model created for family relationships was built on only three factors, but it was built in this manner:

	Critical Issues	Issues
“The relationships within my home are generally loving, trusting, and honest”	Disagreed Strongly	Disagreed
Satisfaction with “The amount of time you’re able to devote to your family and loved ones” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3
Satisfaction with “The quality of your relationship with your spouse” (1-7 scale)	1	1-3

Thankfully, only 2% of Texas Baptist pastors were experiencing a critical family issue, although 14% were experiencing some type of issue. Those with children in the household were far more likely than others to be experiencing a family issue (21% to 11%), which also meant that older pastors were less likely than others to be struggling with this.

PRESENCE OF ANY FAMILY ISSUE

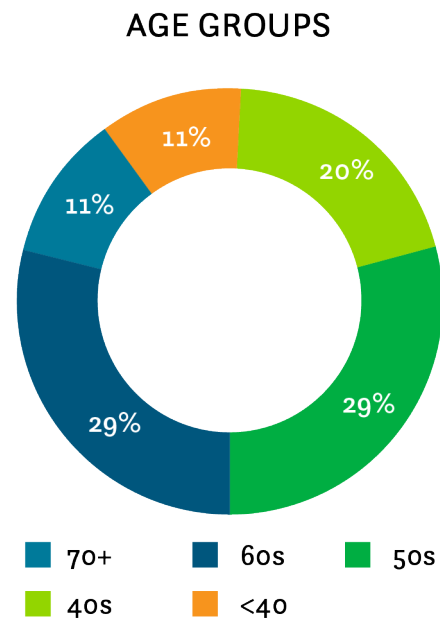


WHO ARE THESE PASTORS?

Understanding how pastors are living their lives will be aided by understanding who these pastors are. The average age of pastors was 55.6, with a median of 57. Most were either in their 50s or 60s (29% each). Pastors from 22 to 89 years old completed the questionnaire.

The average respondent had spent 25 years as a pastor or part of a church staff. Only four percent were new to the role, having spent fewer than five years in ministry. There were respondents who had spent 60 or 70 years working at churches.

This meant the average pastor had spent 44% of his entire life working in ministry. Forty-one percent had spent a majority of their lives serving in ministry, including 22% who had spent at least three-fifths of their years on Earth serving in churches.



Although e-mail invitations to the study, and the questionnaire itself, were available in Spanish, there was somewhat less diversity in this study than in the 2018 study conducted for Texas Baptists. In this study, 75% of respondents described themselves as White or Caucasian, with 10% Latino, 9% Black, and 5% Asian or Pacific Islander. The difference is likely that this study included associate pastors and other church staff, who are usually found only in larger churches, and non-Caucasian pastors usually were found in smaller congregations.

As in the last study, Caucasian and non-Caucasian pastors showed some substantial differences. Caucasians were far more likely than others to be ministering in a small town or rural area (56% to 27%). They were also much more likely to be in a full-time paid position (76% to 47%), and their churches were typically much larger (median weekly attendance of 155 to 55). Other differences have been explored individually in earlier sections.

Almost all pastors (97%) were currently married. Between 0.7% and 1.4% each were never married, divorced, or widowed.

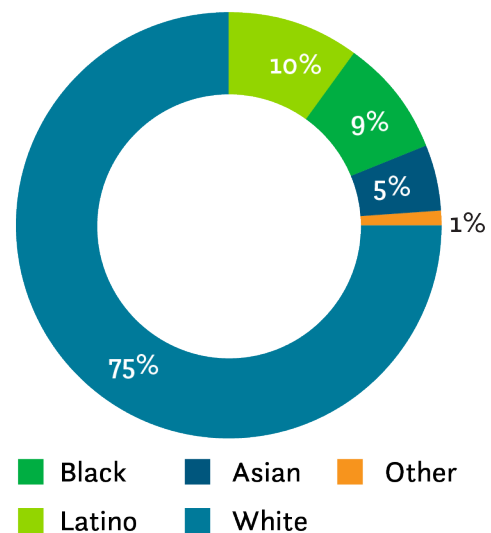
Thirty-four percent of pastors had children under age 18 in their household. Among those who did, the average number of children was 2.2. Eleven percent had just one child, 11% had two, and 12% had three or more.

Comparing these demographics with those from the 2018 study conducted for Texas Baptists by Grey Matter Research shows very similar findings. The average age in this study is 55.6; in the 2018 study it was 55.1. The age groups of pastors were the same. The statistics for marital status and presence of children in the household were nearly identical.

There was somewhat less racial/ethnic diversity in this study than in 2018 (75% were Caucasian in this study, compared to 65% in the 2018 study). This was likely impacted by the fact that the 2018 study only included senior pastors, whereas in this study, associate pastors and other church staff were included.

The fact that the numbers were so similar between the two studies is not proof that they are both representative, but it provides another piece of strong evidence that this is so.

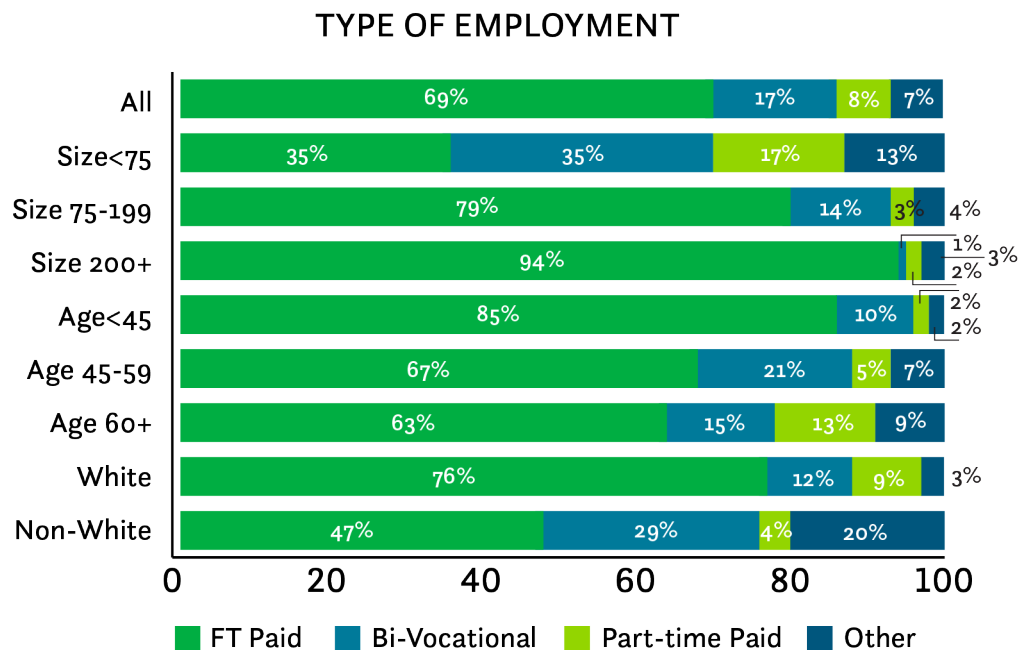
RACE/ETHNICITY



WHAT ARE THESE CHURCHES LIKE?

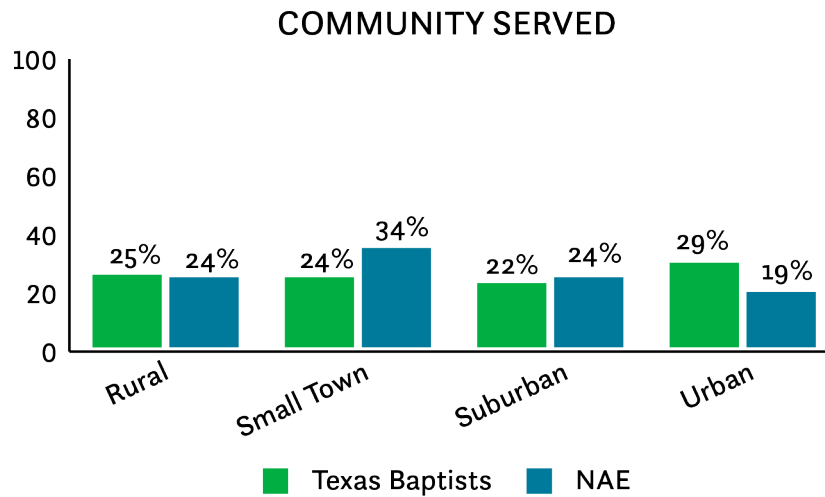
Eight out of ten respondents were senior pastors, including 45% who said there are other pastors on staff and 36% who were “sole practitioners.” Thirteen percent were assistant or associate pastors, while 6% served in some other role.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents were in a full-time paid position. Seventeen percent described themselves as bi-vocational, while 8% were paid but for a part-time position. Caucasian pastors were dramatically more likely than others to be in a full-time paid position, as were younger pastors and those in larger churches.

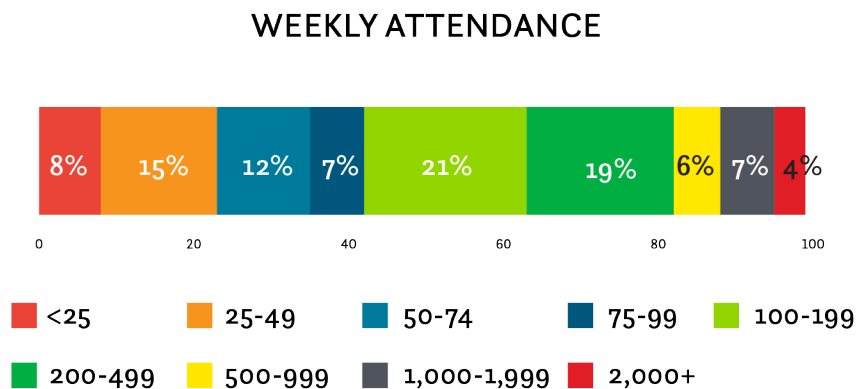


About half the churches represented in this study were in either a rural area (25%) or a small town (24%). Twenty-two percent were suburban, while the remaining 29% were urban. These figures are also very similar to what was found in the 2018 study. However, compared to a recent study conducted among evangelical churches by Grey Matter Research for the National Association of Evangelicals, Texas Baptist churches are more urban and less small town than are evangelical churches across the U.S.

It's no surprise that the small town and rural churches were more likely to be smaller congregations headed by Caucasian pastors.

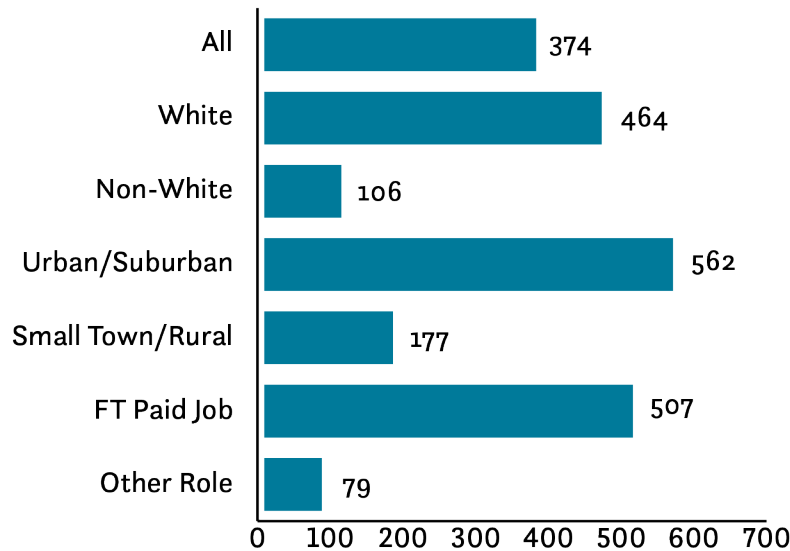


In terms of size, pastors in this study were more likely to represent large churches, because associate and assistant pastors were included in this study. They were not included in the NAE research or the 2018 Texas Baptists study. Whereas the NAE study showed an average of 162 people attending in a week, and a median of 80, the average in this study was much higher, at 374 people. The median was also much higher, at 125. If a church of 75 people has only one pastor respond to this study, that church is represented in the data once. If a church of 1,500 has four pastors respond to the study, that church is represented in the data four time. As this is a study of pastors, not churches, this is not problematic, but it likely did impact the church size and staffing figures found in this study.



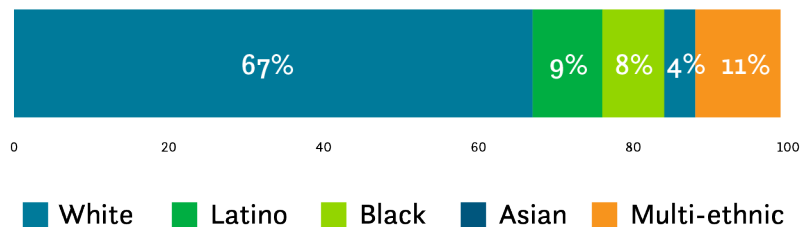
Different types of pastors served different types of churches. The average church represented by a Caucasian pastor was 337% larger than the churches represented by nonCaucasian pastors. Pastors with a full-time paid position were in churches 542% larger than pastors who did not have a full-time paid role. Urban and suburban churches on average were 218% larger than small town and rural congregations.

AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE, BY TYPE OF PASTOR/CHURCH



The ethnic or racial background of pastors compared to the churches they serve was a fascinating study. Two-thirds of pastors said their congregation is mostly white (the questionnaire defined “mostly” as 70% or more). Twenty-two percent were primarily Latino, black, or Asian, while just 11% were truly multi-ethnic bodies.

RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE CONGREGATION



What's considerably more interesting is that 84% of the pastors matched the racial/ethnic composition of their congregation:

- 96% of the primarily Caucasian congregations were represented by a white pastor
- 94% of the primarily black congregations were represented by a black pastor
- 81% of the primarily Latino congregations were represented by a Latino pastor
- 100% of the primarily Asian congregations were represented by an Asian pastor

Seventy-six percent of the truly multi-ethnic churches were represented by a white pastor, with 13% black and 8% Latino.

Final Thoughts

This study effectively demonstrated that many pastors are struggling in a variety of different areas: financial stress, poor health, long hours, lack of exercise, etc. What the study really doesn't show (nor could it) is why.

Are some pastors overweight and failing to get exercise because of the demands of their job, or because they lack the self-discipline to get into shape? Do some pastors have unreasonable debt loads because of real spending needs, or because of profligate spending compared to their income? Do some pastors work absurd hours because this is what their role really demands, or because they are micromanagers or lack the leadership skills to train and empower staff or volunteers to handle some of the work?

It's easy to see someone in trouble and make assumptions about how they got there. Two people can look at the same homeless person. One will see someone too lazy to work and too undisciplined to make wise life decisions; the other will see someone failed by the system or to whom life has dealt a bad hand. The truth is, there are homeless people out there who fit each one of those descriptions, as well as those who fit both at the same time.

There are many people besides pastors who experience significant life problems. There are plenty of accountants who work unreasonable hours, graphic designers who struggle with unreasonable debt loads, and nurses who tip the scales at 300 pounds or more.

The difference with pastors is that they are heavily involved with the spiritual wellbeing not just of their own congregations, but of their entire communities. When pastors are not well, churches are not well. When churches are not well, communities are not well.

In addressing problems, treating the symptoms effects no long-term change. Only treating the root cause will make a real difference. The Texas Baptists organization and all of the partners in this research project need to seek a real understanding of what is creating the problems these pastors are experiencing. The challenge is that the root causes very well may differ from one pastor to the next.

Designing and implementing programs won't be effective if those programs provide a blanket "solution" that isn't relevant to many of the potential participants. It may be that for many of these issues, one-on-one help or individualized approaches of some type will be far more effective than designing larger programs that address issues more generically.

One very important finding was how much difference there was by age. Older pastors were far more likely to struggle with physical ailments, but then, older people in general are more likely to struggle with physical ailments.

What was concerning was just how much younger people were struggling with other areas. Comparing pastors under age 45 with those 60 and older, the younger pastors were:

- 40% more likely to be dissatisfied with at least one area of their life
- Getting 20% less exercise
- 8% more likely to be obese or extremely obese
- 56% more likely to be suffering physical exhaustion
- 90% more likely to be suffering emotional exhaustion
- 133% more likely to be experiencing significant self-doubts
- 275% more likely to have had recent panic attacks
- 68% more likely to be experiencing church-related stress weekly or more
- 37% less likely to reporting loving, trusting, honest relationships with members of their congregation
- Spending 32% less time in personal prayer and Bible reading
- 38% more likely to be experiencing significant personal financial stress (even though they were 38% less likely to complain about church income that is insufficient for their needs)
- 72% more likely to complain about having an unreasonable debt load
- 61% more likely to find at least one area of their job to be very unfulfilling
- 52% less likely to feel they are very well equipped for the demands of their job
- 111% more likely to have considered a job change, including 65% more likely to have considered leaving the ministry entirely

Is this because older pastors have gradually accumulated the wisdom to know better how to deal with the challenge of being a pastor, or the ability to accept some of the downsides? Are younger people simply less equipped to deal with these challenges? Are younger pastors struggling because of demands of raising families or dealing with educational debt and career development?

No matter what is causing some of these issues, would a mentorship program of some type, pairing younger pastors with older ones, help address any of them? Of particular concern is the fragile emotional health of many younger pastors, with things such as pessimism about their future and emotional exhaustion disproportionately impacting them.

Because this study wasn't conducted thirty years ago, there's no way to know whether today's 65-year-old pastor struggled in the same manner when he was 35. Will younger pastors slowly "grow out of" these problems as they age and mature? There's no way to know. But even if they do, the time between what they struggle with today and when they eventually may no longer have the same struggles threatens to be an unpleasant personal experience, and a time of potentially reduced ministry effectiveness because of these struggles.

Thank You

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Pastor Health Survey



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