



Pastor Health Survey

CHURCH HEALTH INITIATIVE

GREY MATTER RESEARCH AND CONSULTING



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SUMMARY REPORT
FEBRUARY 2020

Introduction

This is the Summary Report.
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analysis, research, and data.

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 ¼ time for their church, 42% of those who worked ½ or ¾ 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%).

Thank You

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