

The Greatest Needs of Pastors

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research

Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors was conducted March 30 – April 22, 2021
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each survey was completed by the senior or sole pastor or a minister at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,000 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.1\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

Categories of Needs Explored

- Ministry difficulties
- Spiritual needs
- Mental challenges
- Personal life
- Self-care
- People dynamics
- Areas of skill development

Greatest Needs Identified

- Those the largest number of pastors need
- The ONE need that each pastor finds most challenging

Needs the largest percentage of pastors say they need to address

Among Protestant Pastors

77% Developing leaders & volunteers

76% Fostering connections with unchurched people

75% People's apathy or lack of commitment

72% Consistency in personal prayer

69% Friendship and fellowship with others

68% Consistency of Bible reading not related to sermon or teaching preparation

68% Training current leaders & volunteers

66% Trusting God

64% Relationships with other pastors

64% Consistency taking a Sabbath

Needs the largest percentage of pastors say they need to address *(continued)*

Among Protestant Pastors

63% Stress

63% Disciple making

61% Confessing and
repenting from personal
sin

59% Consistency exercising

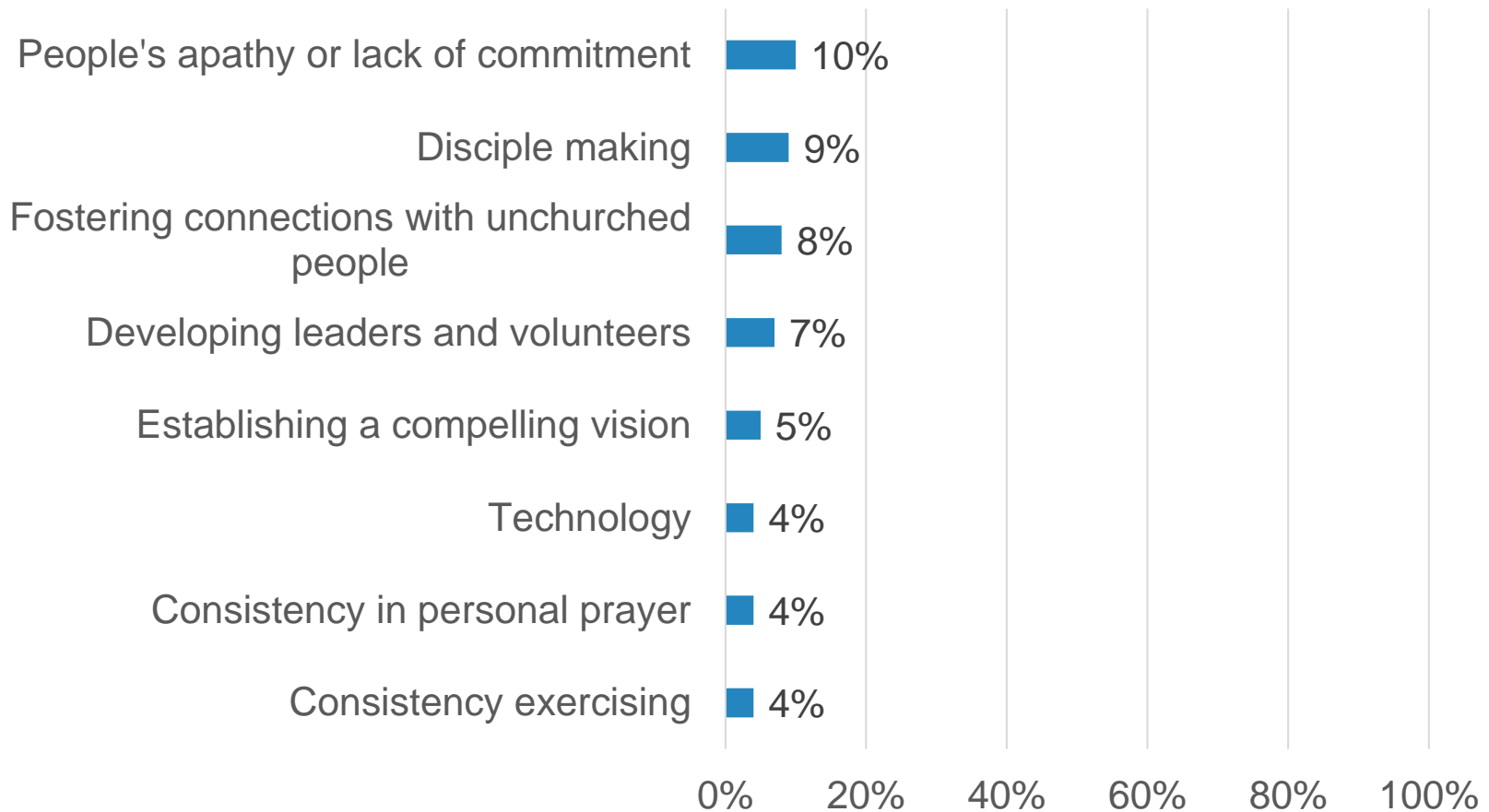
55% Avoiding
overcommitment and
over-work

55% Challenging people
where they lack
obedience

51% Time management

The single greatest need pastors say they need to address: 10% say addressing people's apathy and lack of commitment

Among Protestant Pastors

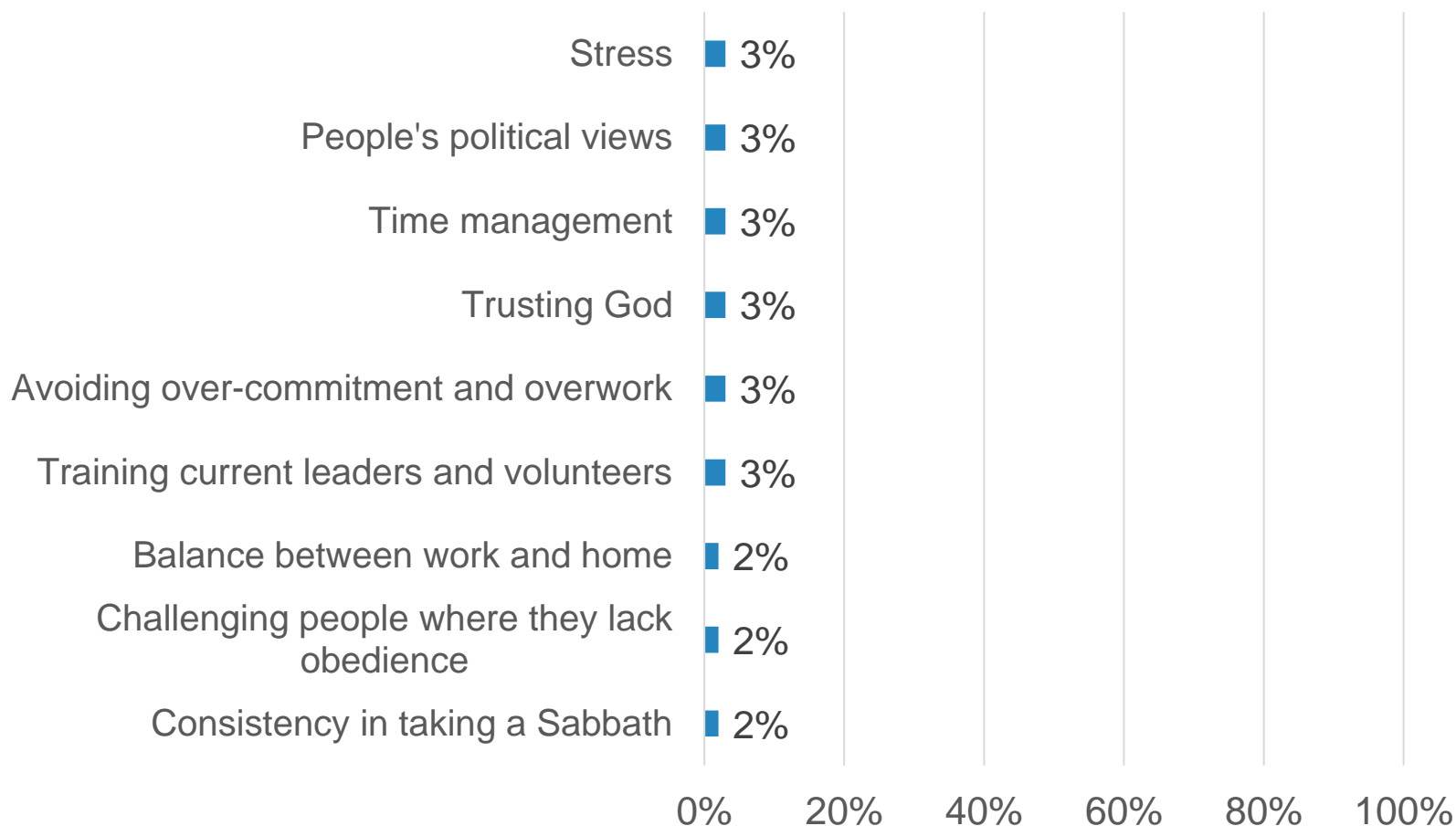


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Q17: "Among all the specific needs we have discussed which one is currently the greatest need that you most need to address?"

“Among all the specific needs we have discussed which one is currently the greatest need that you most need to address?” *(Continued)*

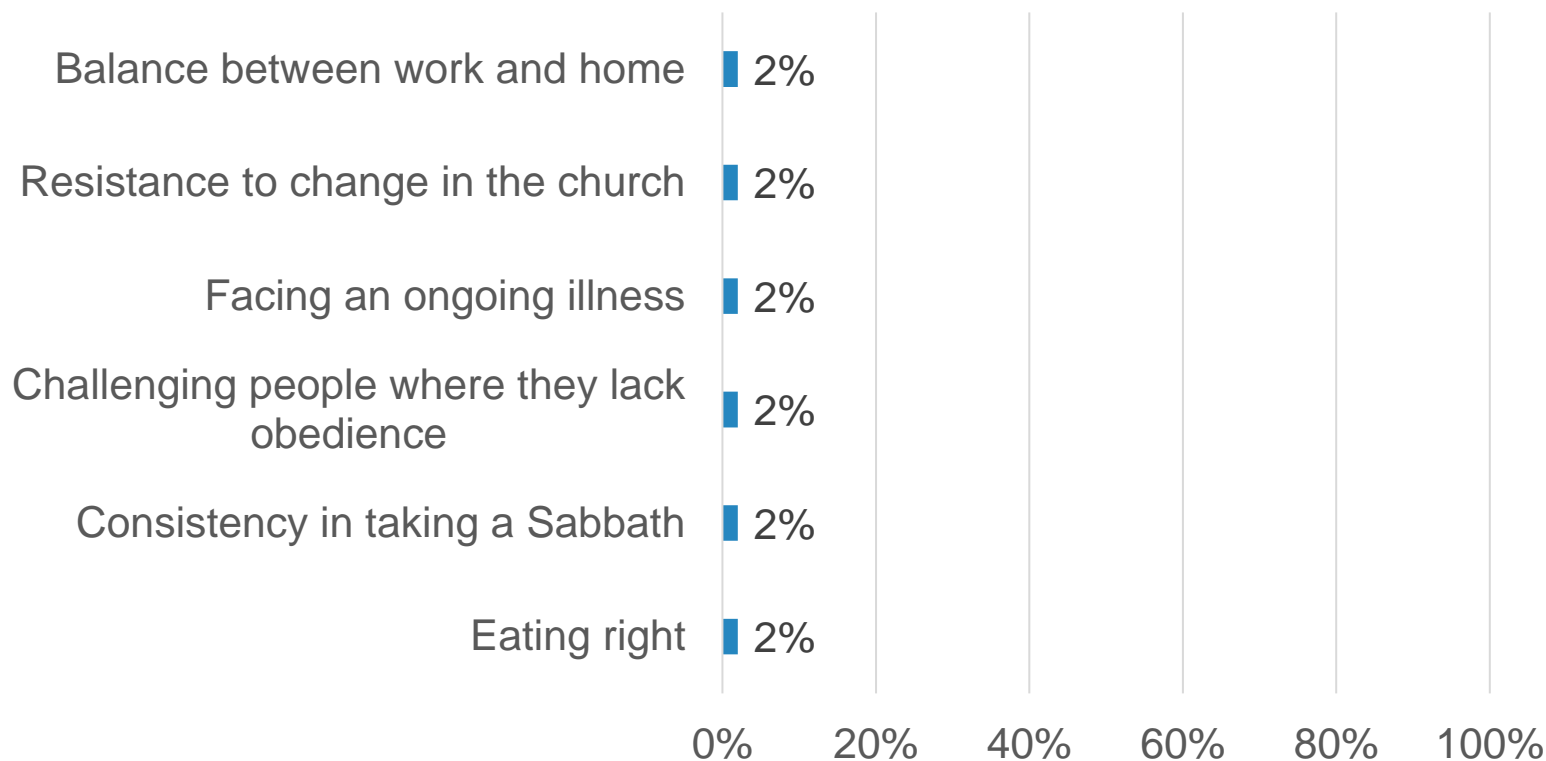
Among Protestant Pastors



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“Among all the specific needs we have discussed which one is currently the greatest need that you most need to address?” *(Continued)*

Among Protestant Pastors

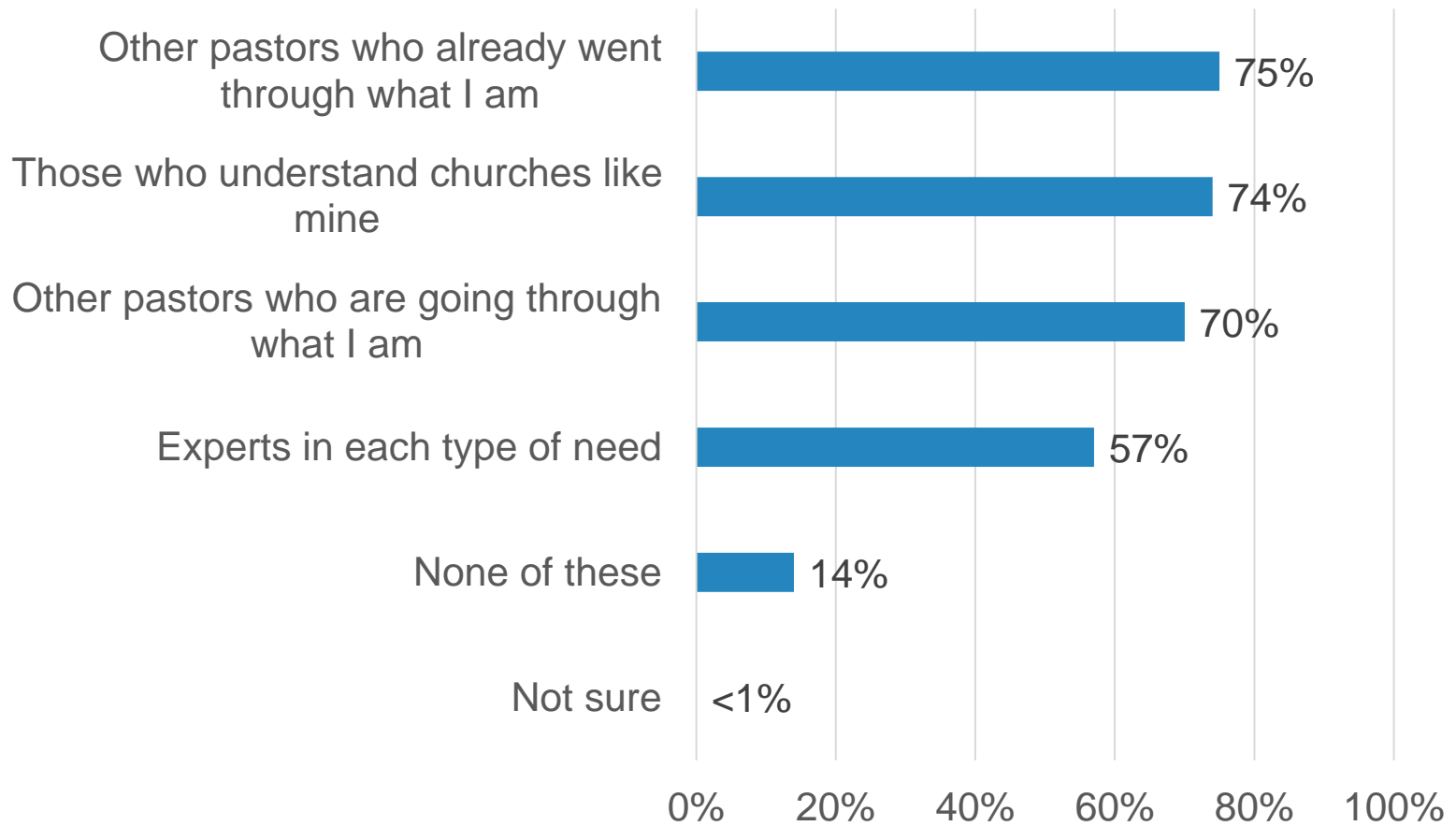


1%: Discouragement, Consistently of Bible reading not related to sermon or teaching preparation, Distractions, Taking time for hobbies or interests away from the job, Caring for aging parents, Leadership, Conflict management or resolution, Caring too much about people’s approval or criticism, Financial stress, Friendships and fellowship with others, Relationships with other pastors, Communication, Preaching, Loneliness or lack of friendships, Children, People’s strong opinions about non-essentials, People’s unrealistic expectations of the pastor, Consistently resting, Depression. At least one pastor picked each of the 44 possible items.

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“If help were available for these types of needs, from which of the following sources would you be interested in getting advice or guidance?”

Among Protestant Pastors



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Significant Differences

Pastor

Age

Gender

Ethnicity

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

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Significant Differences

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

| AGE | GENDER | ETHNICITY | EDUCATION | SELF-IDENTIFIED |
|-------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 18-44 | Male | White | No College Degree | Evangelical |
| 45-54 | Female | African American | Bachelor's Degree | Mainline |
| 55-64 | | Other Ethnicities | Graduate Degree | |
| 65+ | | | Doctoral Degree | |

Significant Statistical Differences

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

| REGION | DENOMINATION GROUP | ATTENDANCE |
|-----------|----------------------------|------------|
| Northeast | Baptist | 0-49 |
| South | Lutheran | 50-99 |
| Midwest | Methodist | 100-249 |
| West | Pentecostal | 250+ |
| | Presbyterian/Reformed | |
| | Christian/Church of Christ | |
| | Non-denominational | |

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

“If help were available for these types of needs, from which of the following sources would you be interested in getting advice or guidance?”

Experts in each type of need

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (40%)

Other pastors who are going through what I am

- White pastors (73%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (56%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (55%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (72%) or a Master’s degree (73%) are more likely to select than those with a Doctoral degree (61%)

“If help were available for these types of needs, from which of the following sources would you be interested in getting advice or guidance?” *(continued)*

Other pastors who already went through what I am

- White pastors (77%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (59%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (83%) and 45-54 (83%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (75%) and 65+ (57%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (77%) are more likely to select than those with a Doctoral degree (67%)

Those who understand churches like mine

- White pastors (77%) are more likely to select than Other Ethnicity pastors (61%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (63%)
- Pentecostals (78%) and Non-denominational (80%) are more likely to select than Christian/Church of Christ (63%)