

The Greatest Needs of Pastors

Mental Challenges

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

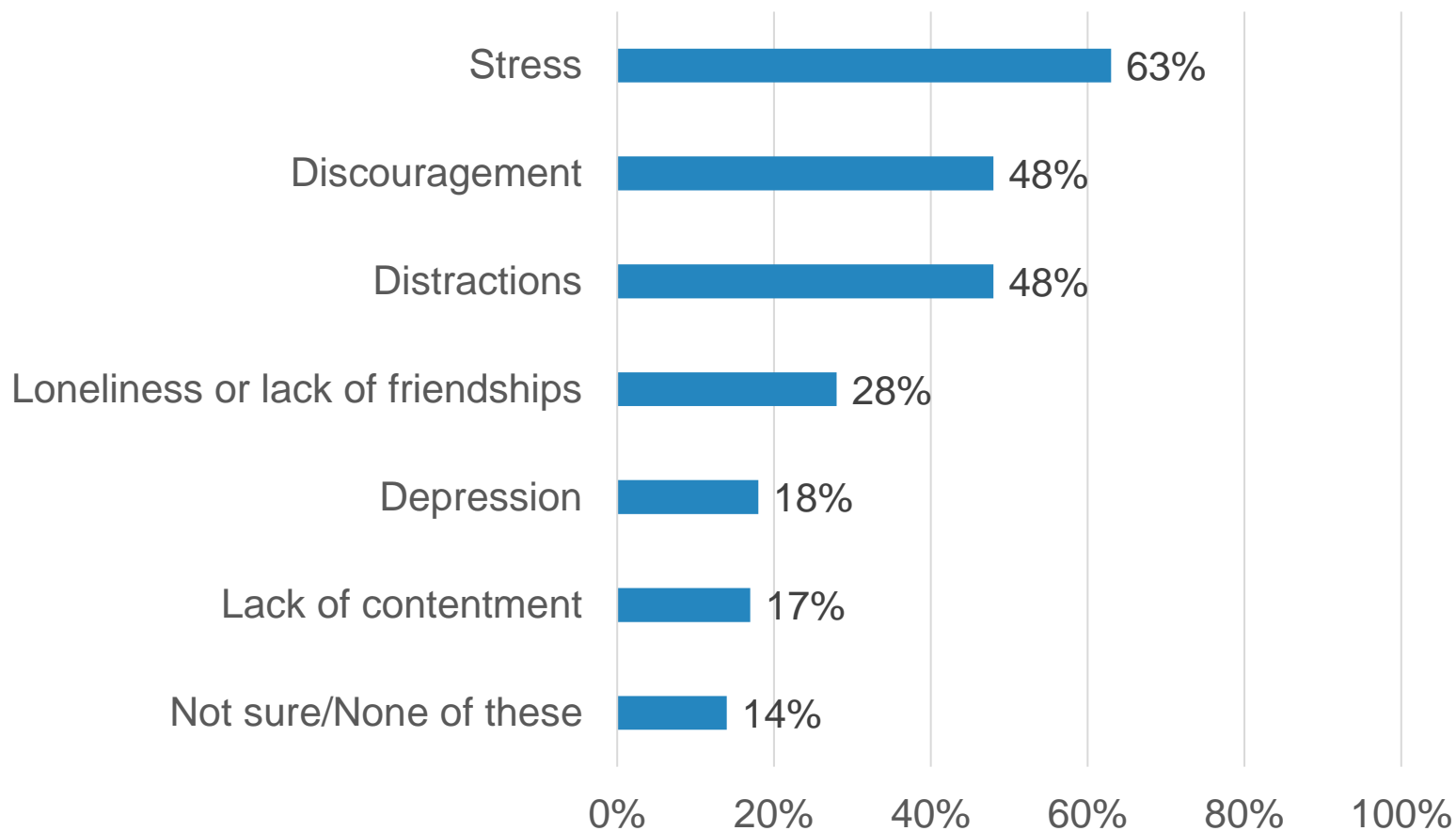
Lifeway **research**

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

“Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor.”

Among Protestant Pastors

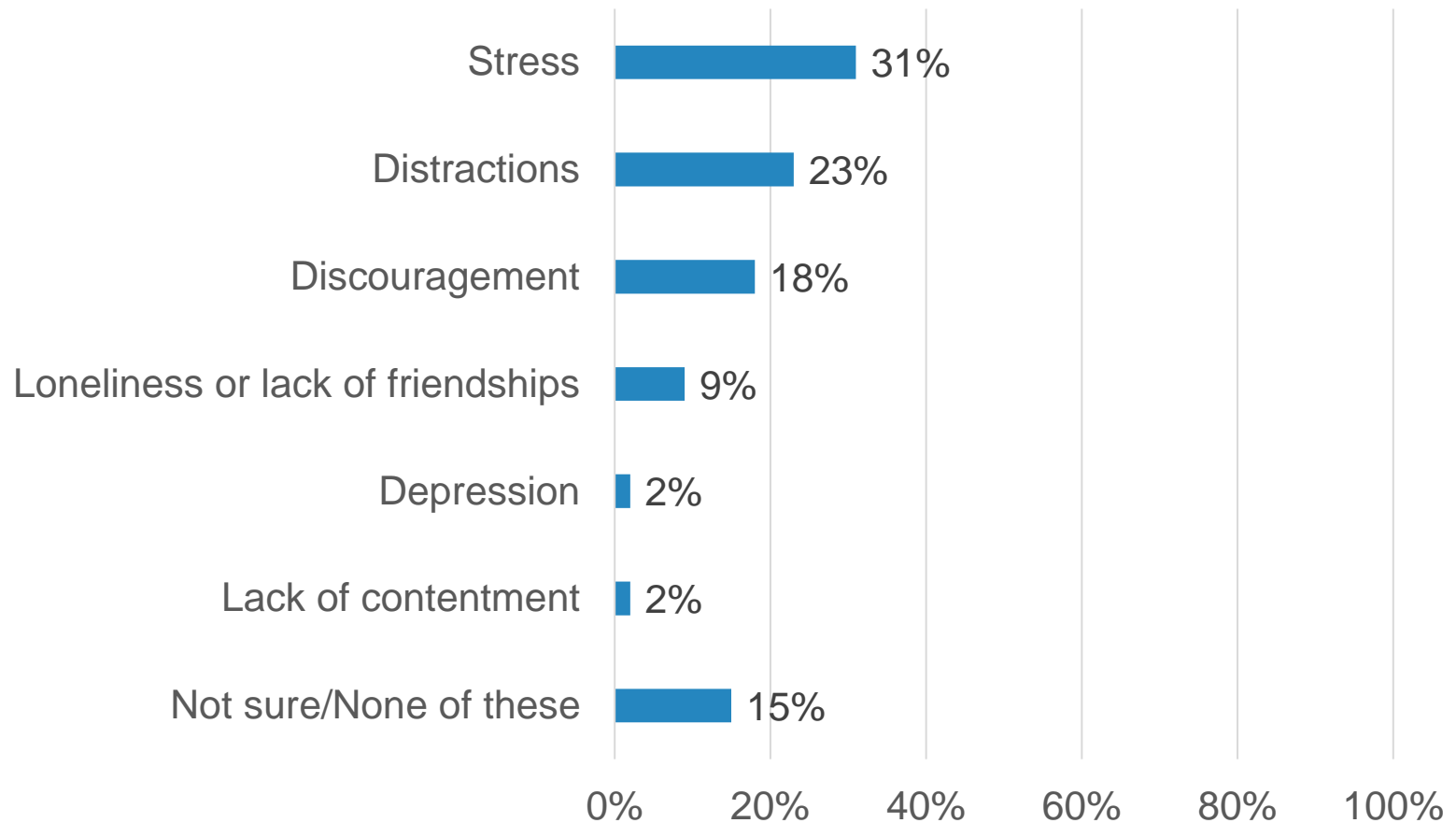


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Q6: “Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor. (Select all that apply)”

31% say they most need to address the mental challenge of stress

Among Protestant Pastors

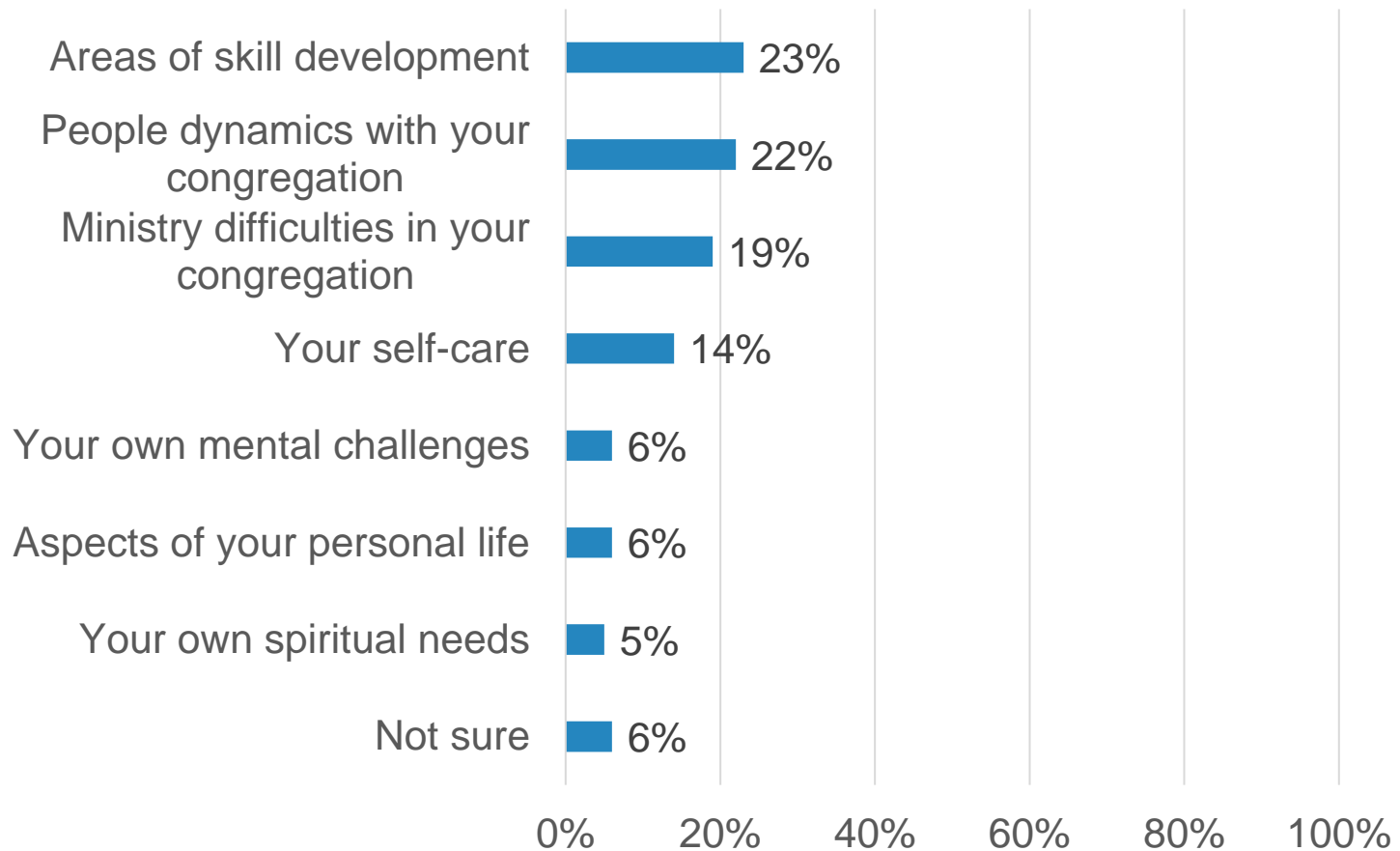


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Q7: "Among the mental challenges you just selected, which one do you most need to address today?"

“Broadly speaking, which area is the most challenging or requires the most attention for you today?”

Among Protestant Pastors



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Q16: “Broadly speaking, which area is the most challenging or requires the most attention for you today?”

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

“Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor?”

Depression

- Pastors age 18-44 (25%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (15%) and 65+ (12%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (20%) or a Master’s degree (21%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (10%) or a Doctoral degree (10%)
- Baptists (20%), Methodists (20%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (25%) are more likely to select than Pentecostals (10%) and Non-denominational (8%)

“Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor?” *(continued)*

Discouragement

- White pastors (50%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (35%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (35%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral degree are the least likely to select (30%)

“Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor?” *(continued)*

Distractions

- White pastors (49%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (37%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (54%) and 45-54 (51%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (39%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (49% v. 38%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (52%) are more likely to select than those with a Doctoral degree (39%)
- Baptists (54%) are more likely to select than Methodists (40%), Presbyterian/Reformed (40%), and Christian/Church of Christ (38%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (53%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 50-99 (43%)

“Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor?” *(continued)*

Loneliness of lack of friendships

- Pastors age 18-44 (37%) and 45-54 (30%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (20%)

“Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor?” *(continued)*

Stress

- White pastors (64%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (52%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (78%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (47%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (67%) or a Master’s degree (66%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (54%) or a Doctoral degree (51%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (52%)

“Which of the following mental challenges do you face in your ministry as a pastor?” *(continued)*

Lack of contentment

- Pastors age 18-44 (22%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (16%) and 65+ (13%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree are the most likely to select (25%)

“Among the mental challenges you just selected, which one do you most need to address today?”

- White pastors (24%) are more likely to select “Distractions” than African American pastors (14%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (37%) and 45-54 (33%) are more likely to select “Stress” than pastors age 65+ (23%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select “Stress” than males (44% v. 29%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (22%) are more likely to select “Discouragement” than those with a Doctoral degree (11%)
- Pastors in the Northeast are the least likely to select “Distractions” (15%)
- Baptists (27%) and Non-denominational (28%) are more likely to select “Distractions” than Methodists (14%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (41%) are more likely to select “Stress” than those with attendance of 0-49 (22%) and 100-249 (31%)

“Broadly speaking, which area is the most challenging or requires the most attention for you today?”

- White pastors (23%) are more likely to select “People dynamics with your congregation” than African American pastors (13%)
- African American pastors (31%) are more likely to select “Areas of skill development” than pastors of Other Ethnicities (14%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select “People dynamics with your congregation” (30%)
- Pastors age 55-64 (25%) and 65+ (30%) are more likely to select “Areas of skill development” than those 18-44 (17%) and 45-54 (18%)
- Pastors with no college degree (32%) are more likely to select “Areas of skill development” than those with a Bachelor’s degree (21%) or a Master’s degree (20%)

“Broadly speaking, which area is the most challenging or requires the most attention for you today?” *(continued)*

- Pastors in the West (29%) are more likely to select “People dynamics with your congregation” than those in the South (20%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (23%) are more likely to select “Ministry difficulties in your congregation” than those in the West (13%)
- Methodists (28%) and Pentecostals (29%) are more likely to select “Areas of skill development” than Christian/Church of Christ (14%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (30%) are more likely to select “Areas of skill development” than those with attendance of 100-249 (21%) and 250+ (17%)