STATE *of* MINISTRY TO WOMEN

LEADERS REPORT

A survey of Evangelical and Black Protestant
women's ministry leaders

Lifeway research

METHODOLOGY

- The online survey of 842 women's ministry leaders was conducted April 19–May 22, 2023.

- Sample lists of women who may have women's ministry roles were developed from Lifeway's ministry and sales lists.

- Each respondent was screened to ensure they are the women's ministry leader at their church and that their church is an evangelical or Black Protestant church in the U.S.

- Southern Baptist women's ministry leaders were oversampled. The 466 SBC responses were weighted down to reflect their correct proportion of evangelical and Black Protestant churches.

- Responses were weighted by church size, region, and religious tradition/denomination to more accurately reflect the population.

- The usable sample is 842 surveys with 733 answering all questions.

- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed ±5.8%. This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting.

- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

LIMITATIONS

Probability samples for evangelical and Black Protestant women's ministry leaders do not exist. When representative sampling is not possible, it is important to obtain as wide a variety of respondents as possible.

This study is limited to respondents or their churches who have interacted with Lifeway in some way in the last 3 years. Groups that interact with Lifeway less will be underrepresented in this study. Note that some groups are less represented because the scope of this study does not include churches that do not have women's ministry activities or a women's ministry leader.

The variety included in this robust sampling effort is due to the many leadership and enrichment events, women's ministry products, survey research, and free church and women's ministry content that have led thousands of women to interact with Lifeway.

Indications of the breadth of the sample prior to weighting include:
- Sizes of churches participating (27% <100, 28% 100–249, 20% 250–499, 25% 500+)
- Ethnicity of leader (88% White, 6% African American, 3% Hispanic, 3% Other)
- Locations of churches participating (29% rural, 34% small city, 20% suburb, 18% large city)
- Ages of women's ministry leaders (6% 18–34, 28% 35–49, 37% 50–64, 29% 65+)
- Region of churches participating (4% Northeast, 19% Midwest, 61% South, 17% West)

Lifeway research

75% of churches with activities specifically for women have an organized women's ministry

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Yes — 75%

Nothing formal, but there are activities specifically for women — 25%
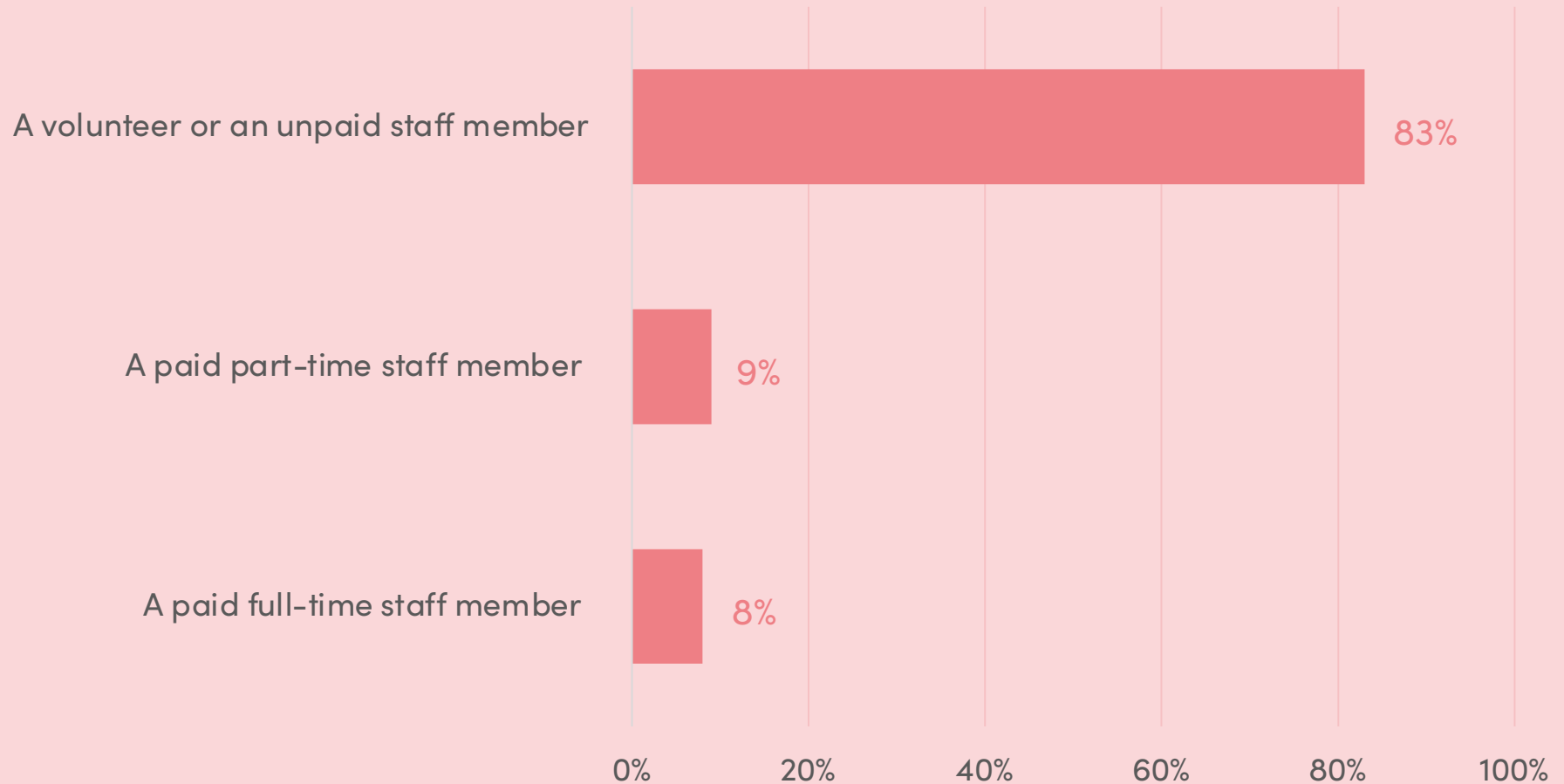
0%　20%　40%　60%　80%　100%
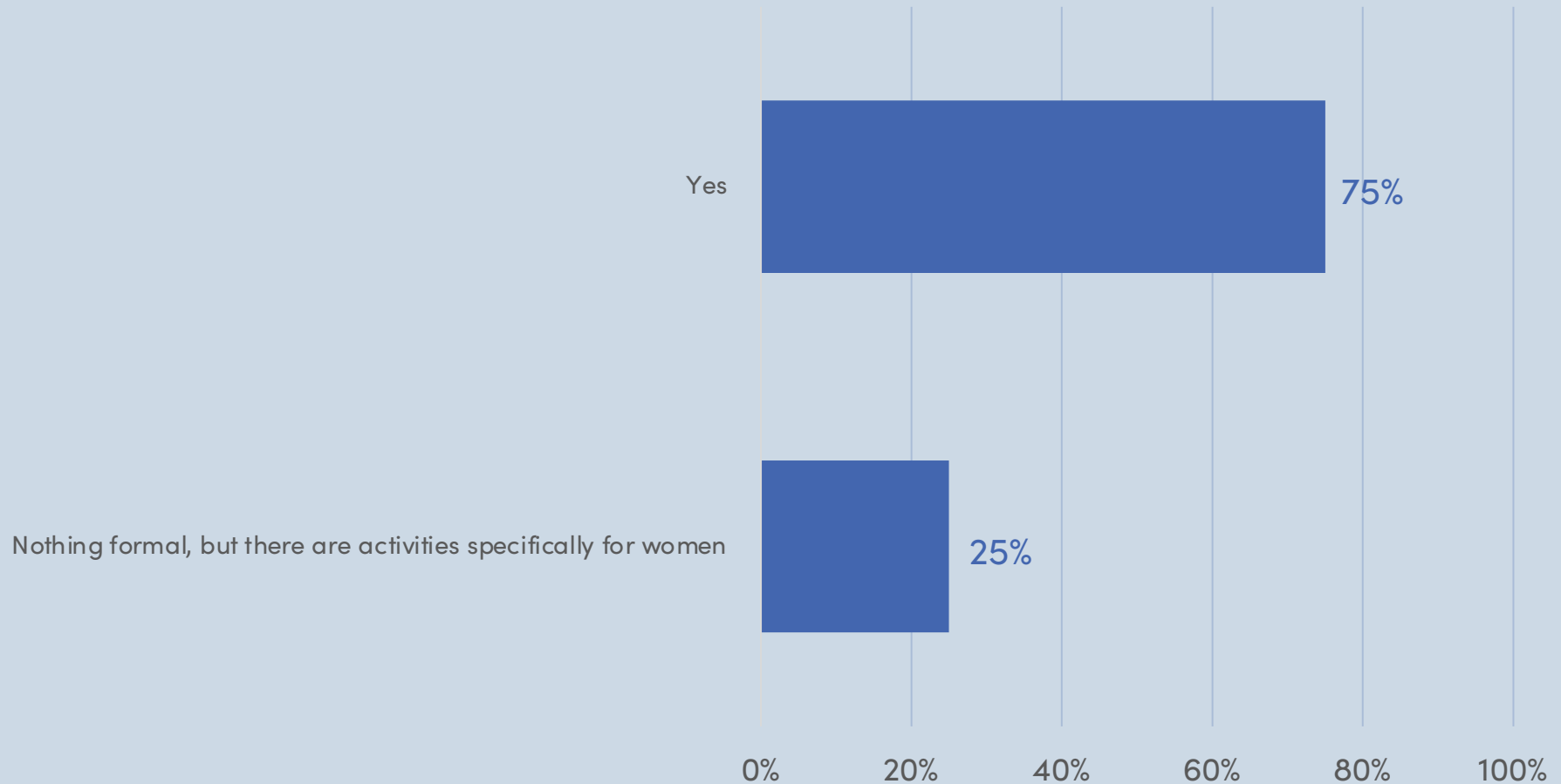
Q5: "Does your church currently have an organized women's ministry of some kind? (Select one))" n=842
Note: Those with no activities specifically for women were excluded from this study

Lifeway research

About 1 in 6 women's ministry leaders are in a paid position

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

A volunteer or an unpaid staff member — 83%

A paid part-time staff member — 9%

A paid full-time staff member — 8%
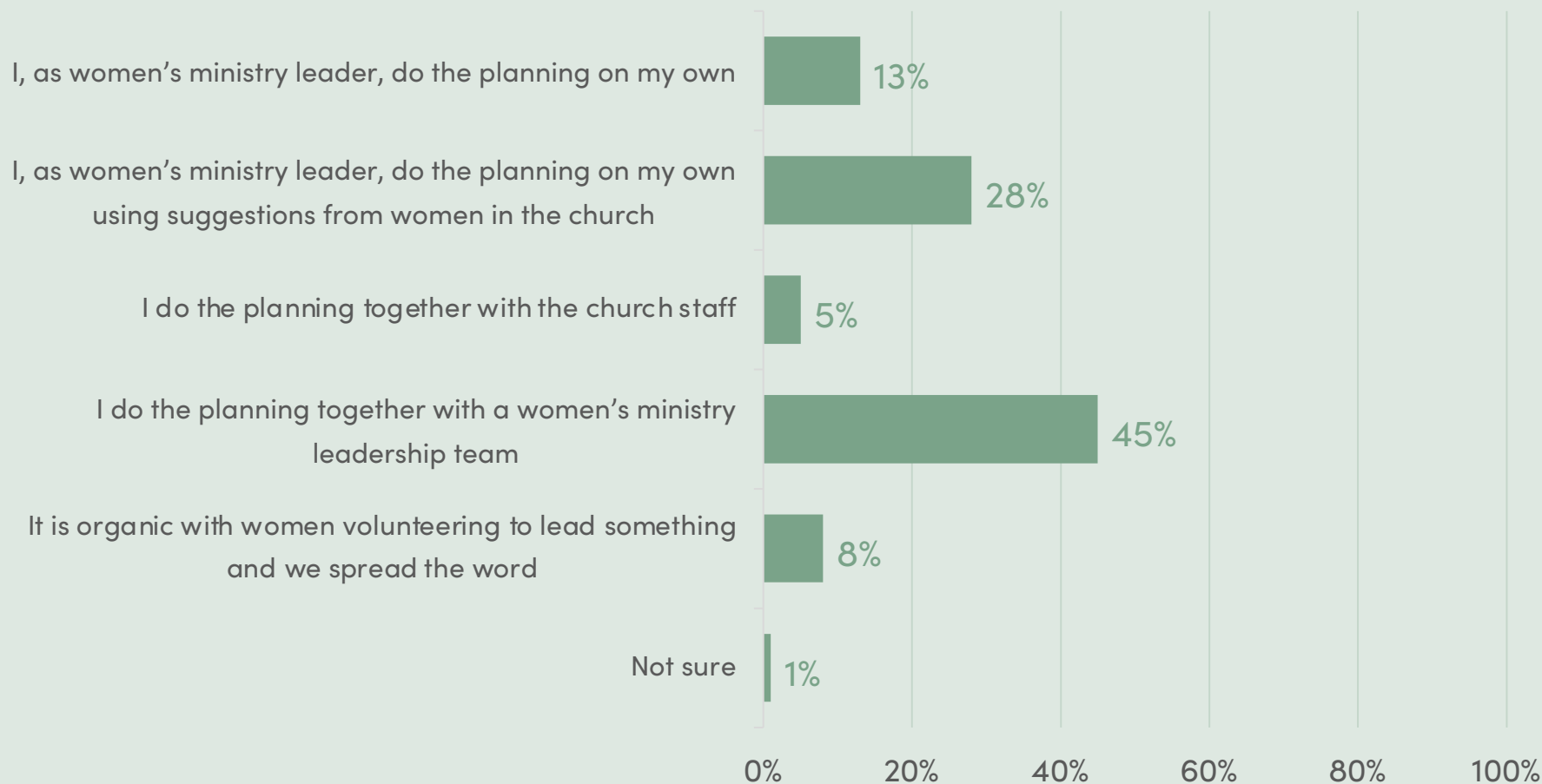
Q7: "Which of the following best describes your role as the leader of your church's women's ministry? I am… (Select one)" n=842

Lifeway research

45% of leaders say they plan together with a women's ministry leadership team

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

I, as women's ministry leader, do the planning on my own — 13%

I, as women's ministry leader, do the planning on my own using suggestions from women in the church — 28%

I do the planning together with the church staff — 5%

I do the planning together with a women's ministry leadership team — 45%

It is organic with women volunteering to lead something and we spread the word — 8%

Not sure — 1%
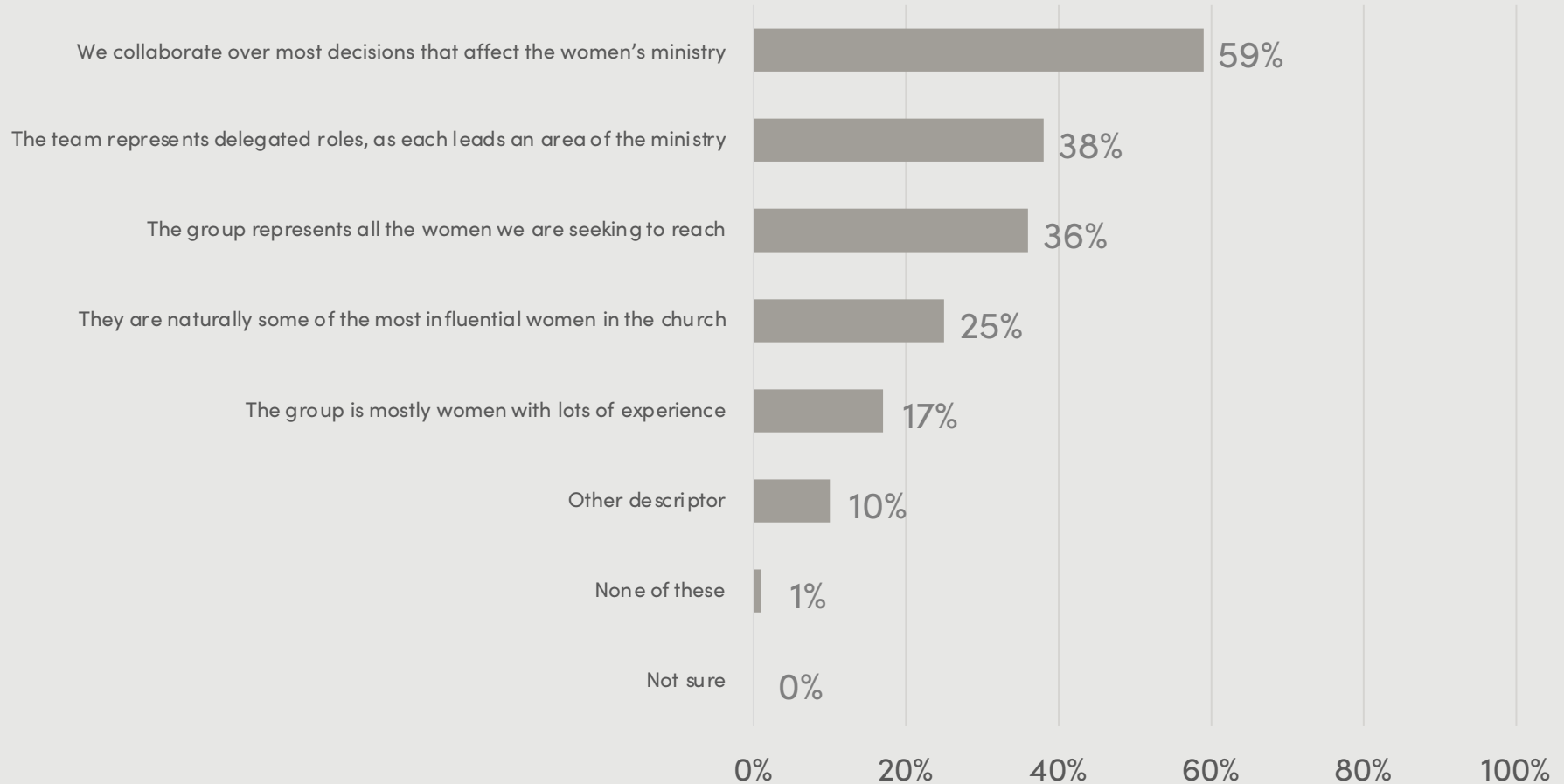
Q17: "Which of the following best describes who is responsible for setting plans for your women's ministry? (Select one)" n=842

"Which of the following describe the women on your women's ministry leadership team?"

Among leaders who plan together with a women's ministry team

Description	Percentage
We collaborate over most decisions that affect the women's ministry	59%
The team represents delegated roles, as each leads an area of the ministry	38%
The group represents all the women we are seeking to reach	36%
They are naturally some of the most influential women in the church	25%
The group is mostly women with lots of experience	17%
Other descriptor	10%
None of these	1%
Not sure	0%

Q18: "Which of the following describe the women on your women's ministry leadership team? (Select all that apply)" n=457

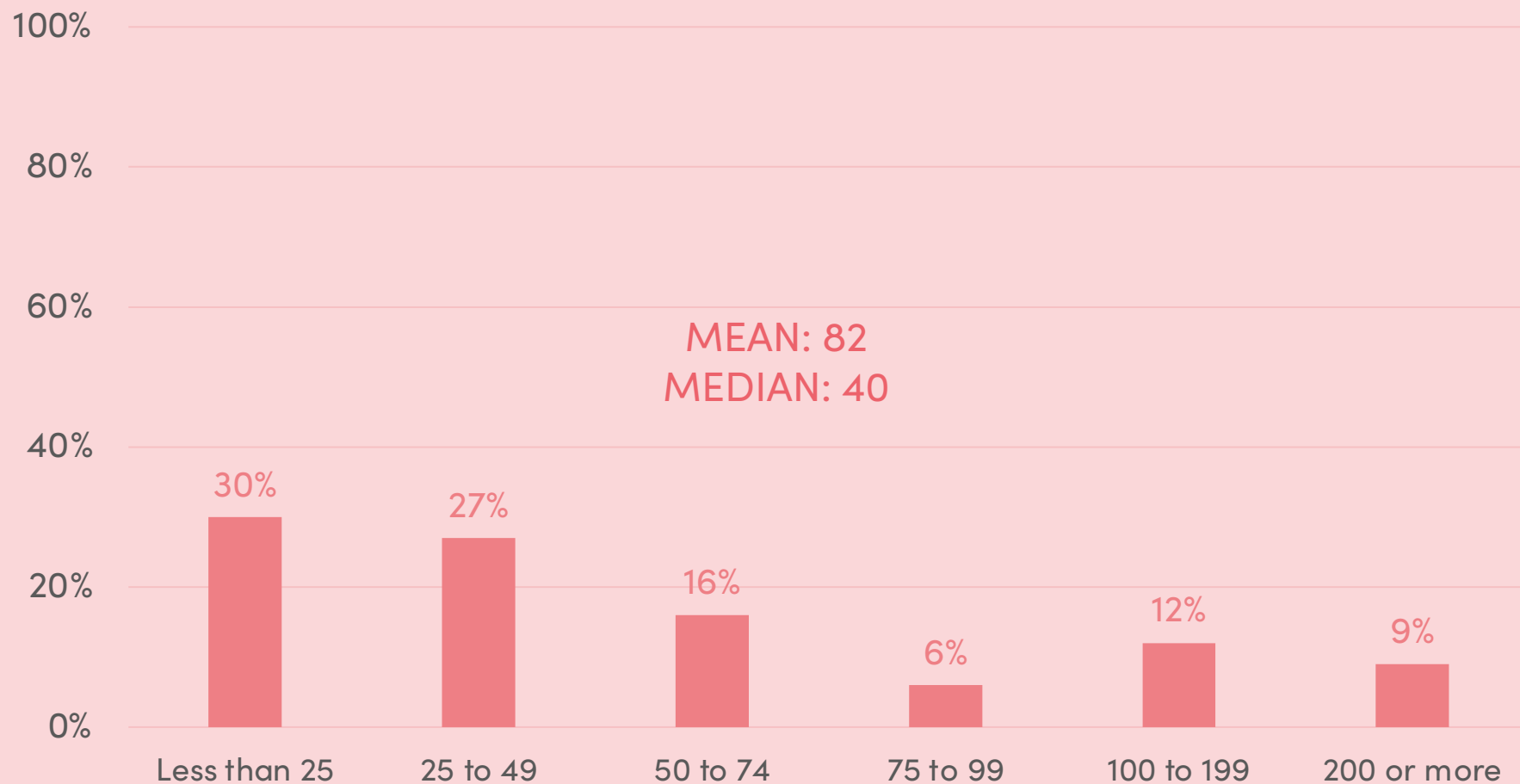# Number of women participating at any level in your women's ministry who are a regular part of the church

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

MEAN: 52
MEDIAN: 25

48%	Less than 25
26%	25 to 49
8%	50 to 74
4%	75 to 99
7%	100 to 199
6%	200 or more
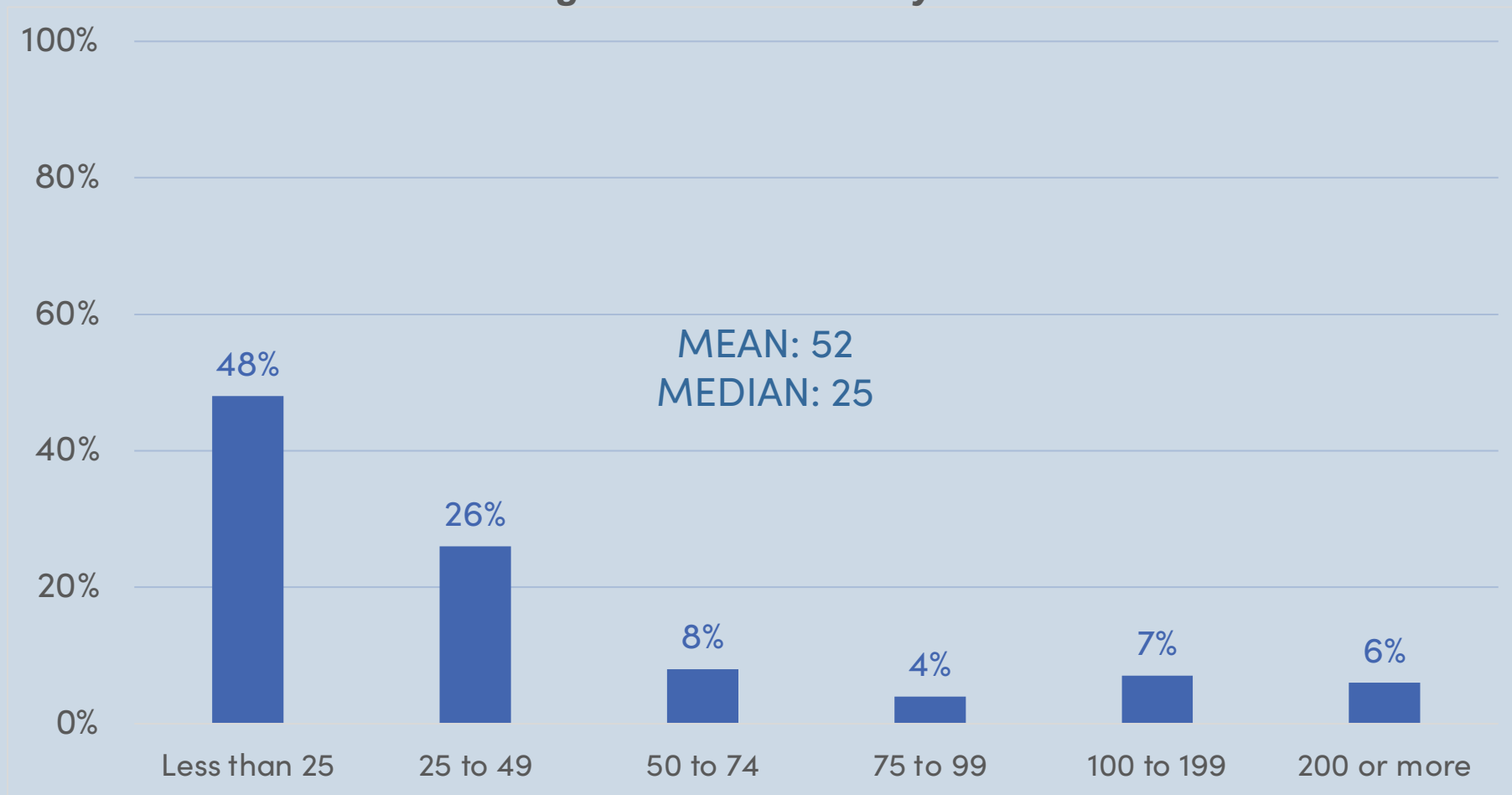
Q20: "About how many women participate at any level in your women's ministry who are a regular part of your church?" n=814

Lifeway research

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Attendance at largest women's ministry event last year

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

MEAN: 82
MEDIAN: 40

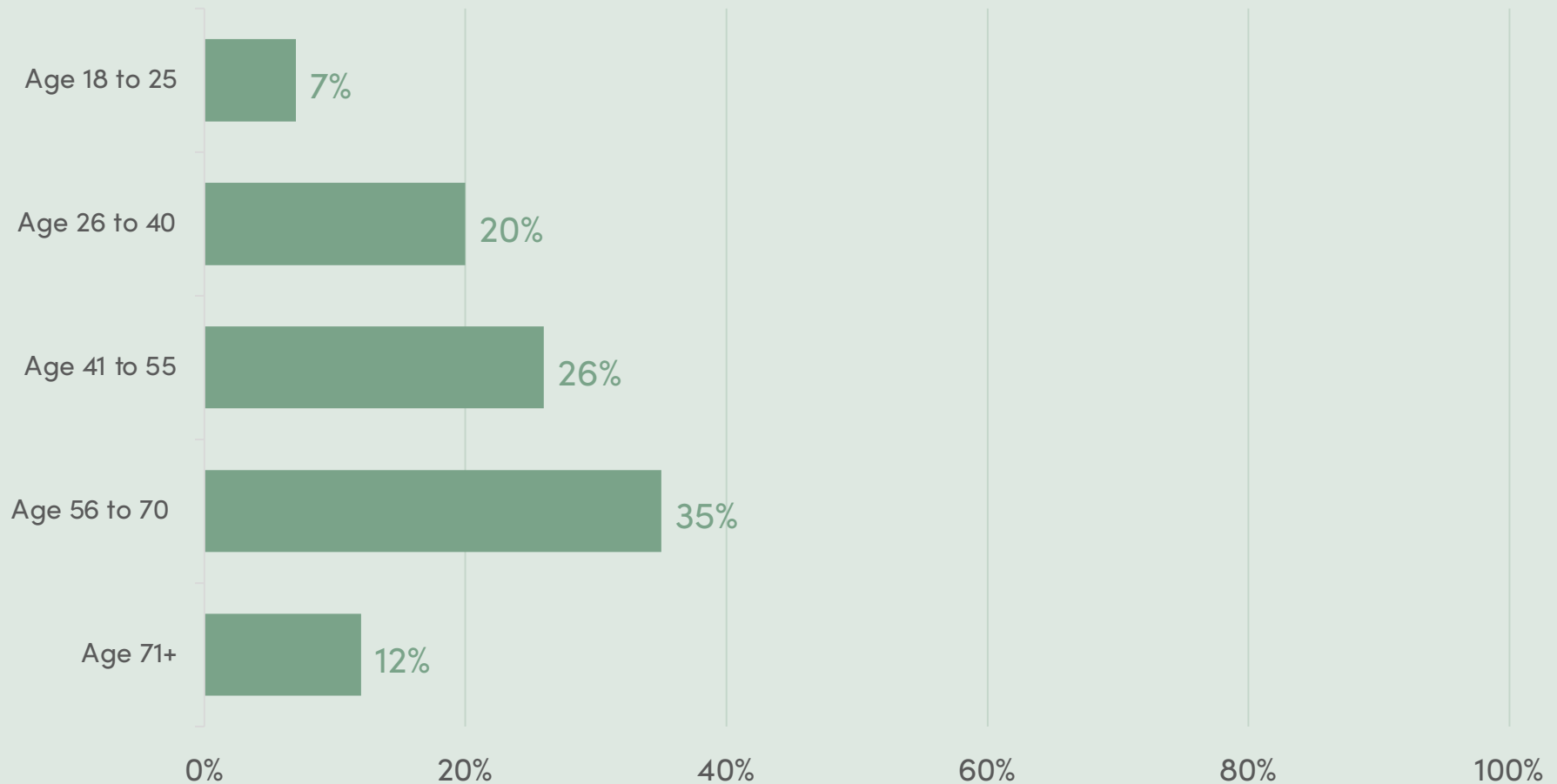| Less than 25	25 to 49	50 to 74	75 to 99	100 to 199	200 or more
30%	27%	16%	6%	12%	9%

Q21: "What was the attendance at your largest women's ministry event this last year?"   n=810

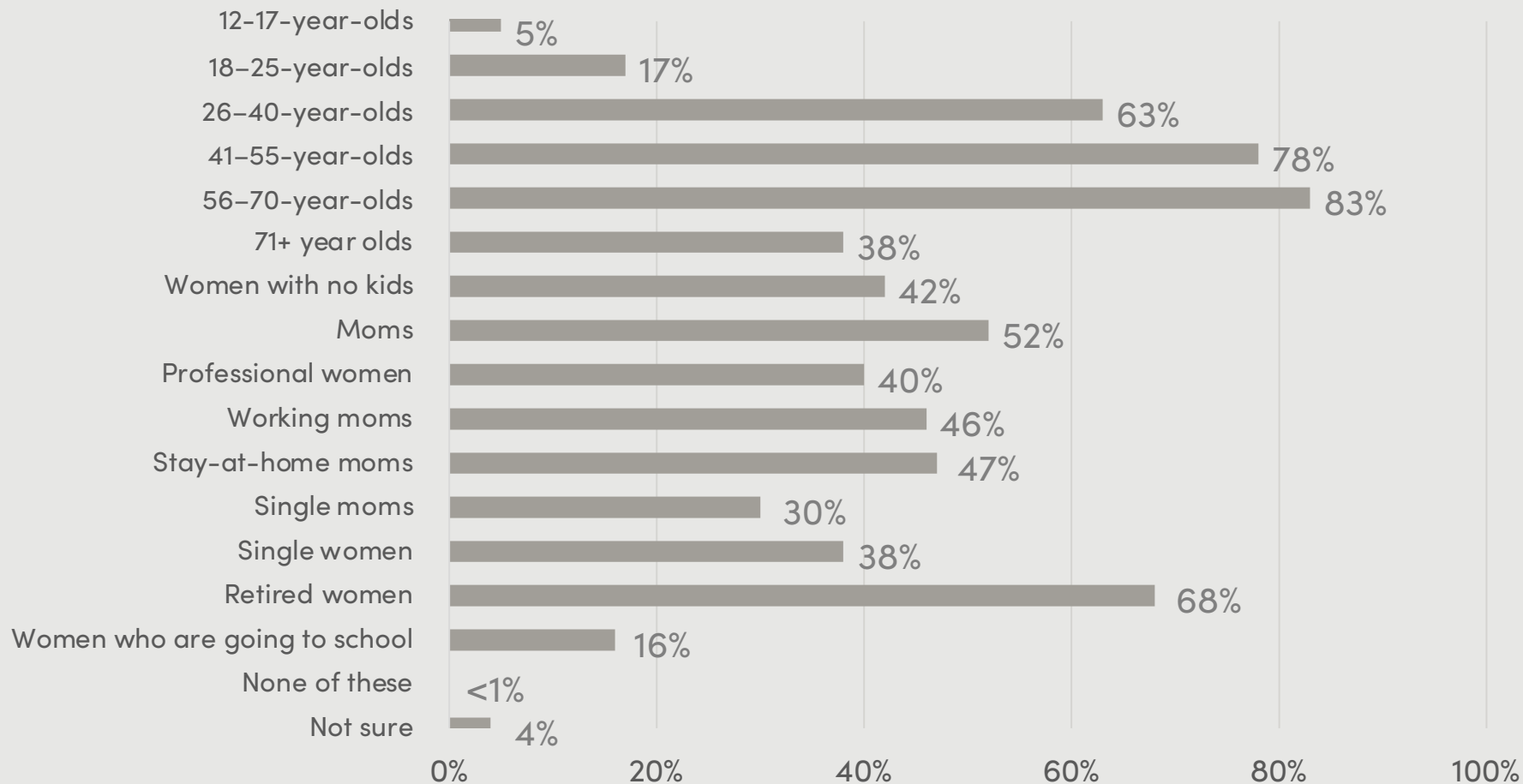# Average percentage of women participating in women's ministry in each age group

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Age 18 to 25 — 7%
Age 26 to 40 — 20%
Age 41 to 55 — 26%
Age 56 to 70 — 35%
Age 71+ — 12%

Q22 "Please estimate the percentage of the women who participate in your women's ministry by age groups." n=805

Lifeway research

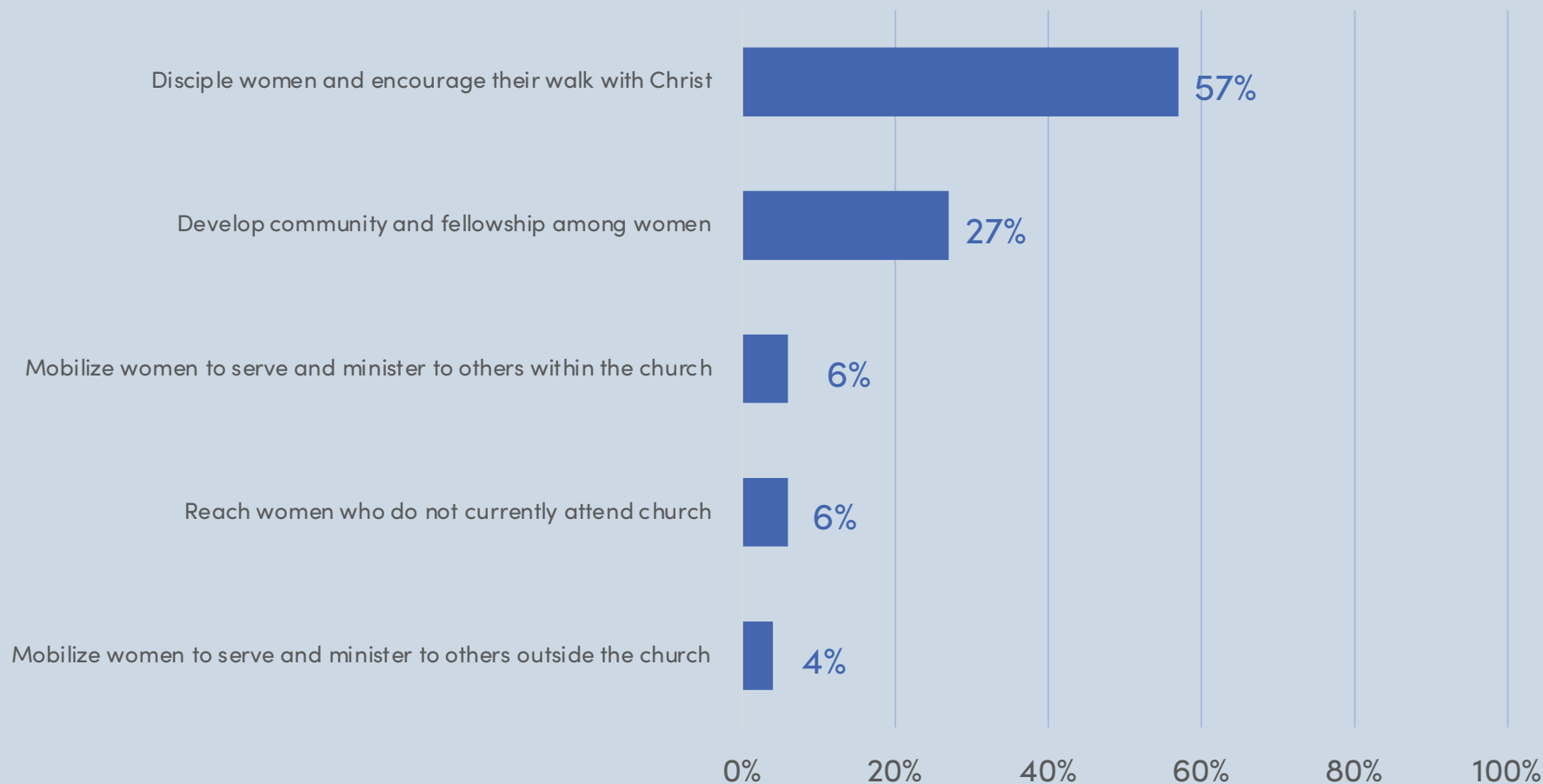# Groups leaders believe their church's women's ministry is well designed to meet their needs

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Group	Percent
12–17-year-olds	5%
18–25-year-olds	17%
26–40-year-olds	63%
41–55-year-olds	78%
56–70-year-olds	83%
71+ year olds	38%
Women with no kids	42%
Moms	52%
Professional women	40%
Working moms	46%
Stay-at-home moms	47%
Single moms	30%
Single women	38%
Retired women	68%
Women who are going to school	16%
None of these	<1%
Not sure	4%

Q23: "For which of the following groups do you believe your church's women's ministry is well designed to meet their needs? Please only select those where your belief is confirmed by women in that group regularly participating. (Select ALL that apply)" n=798

Lifeway research

Highest ranked priority for women's ministry is to disciple women and encourage their walk with Christ

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Category	Percentage
Disciple women and encourage their walk with Christ	57%
Develop community and fellowship among women	27%
Mobilize women to serve and minister to others within the church	6%
Reach women who do not currently attend church	6%
Mobilize women to serve and minister to others outside the church	4%

Q24: "Describe the priorities of your women's ministry by ranking the following goals in priority order (1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest)."
n=790

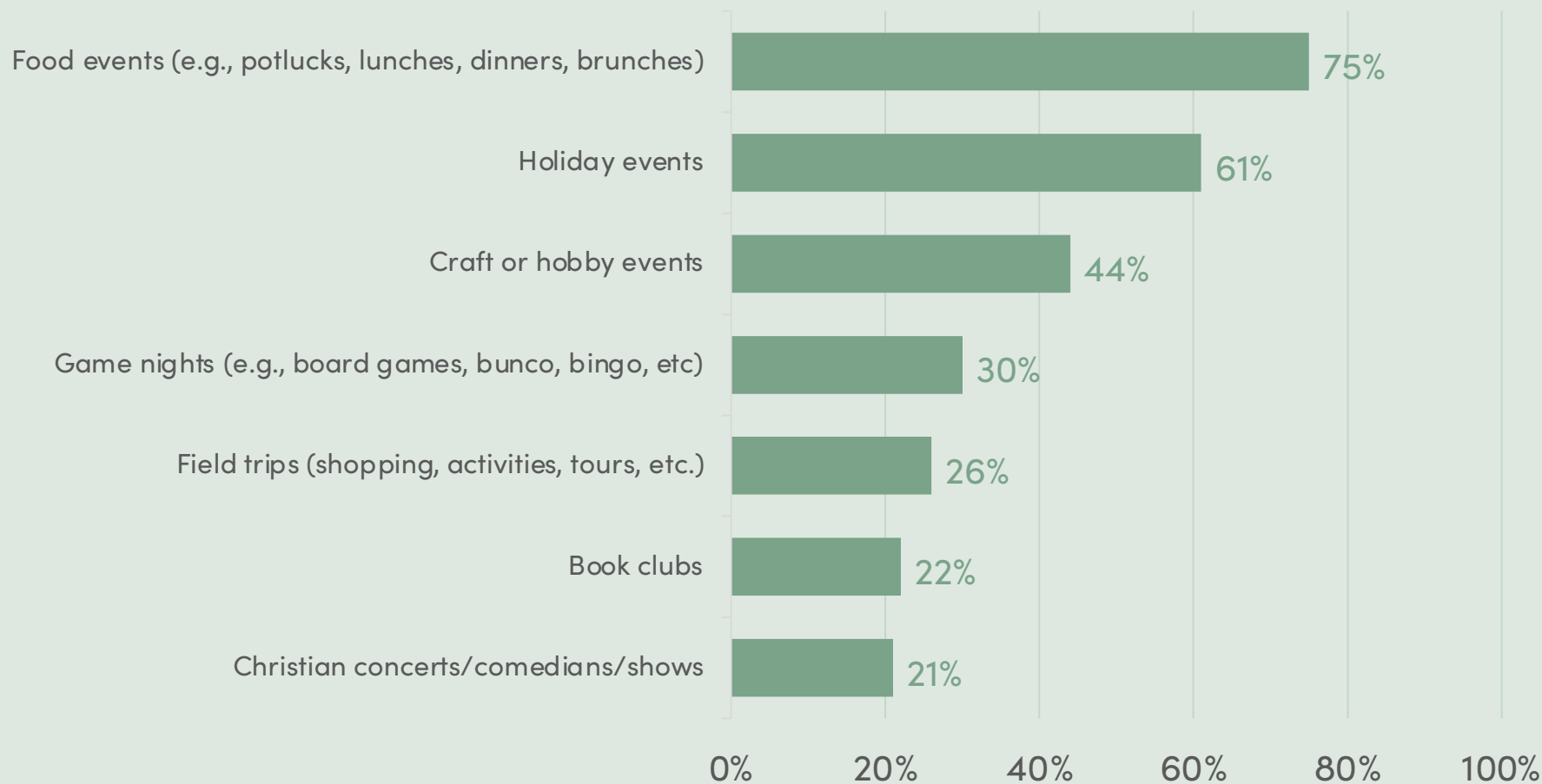# TWO highest ranked priorities for women's ministry are discipling and building community among women

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
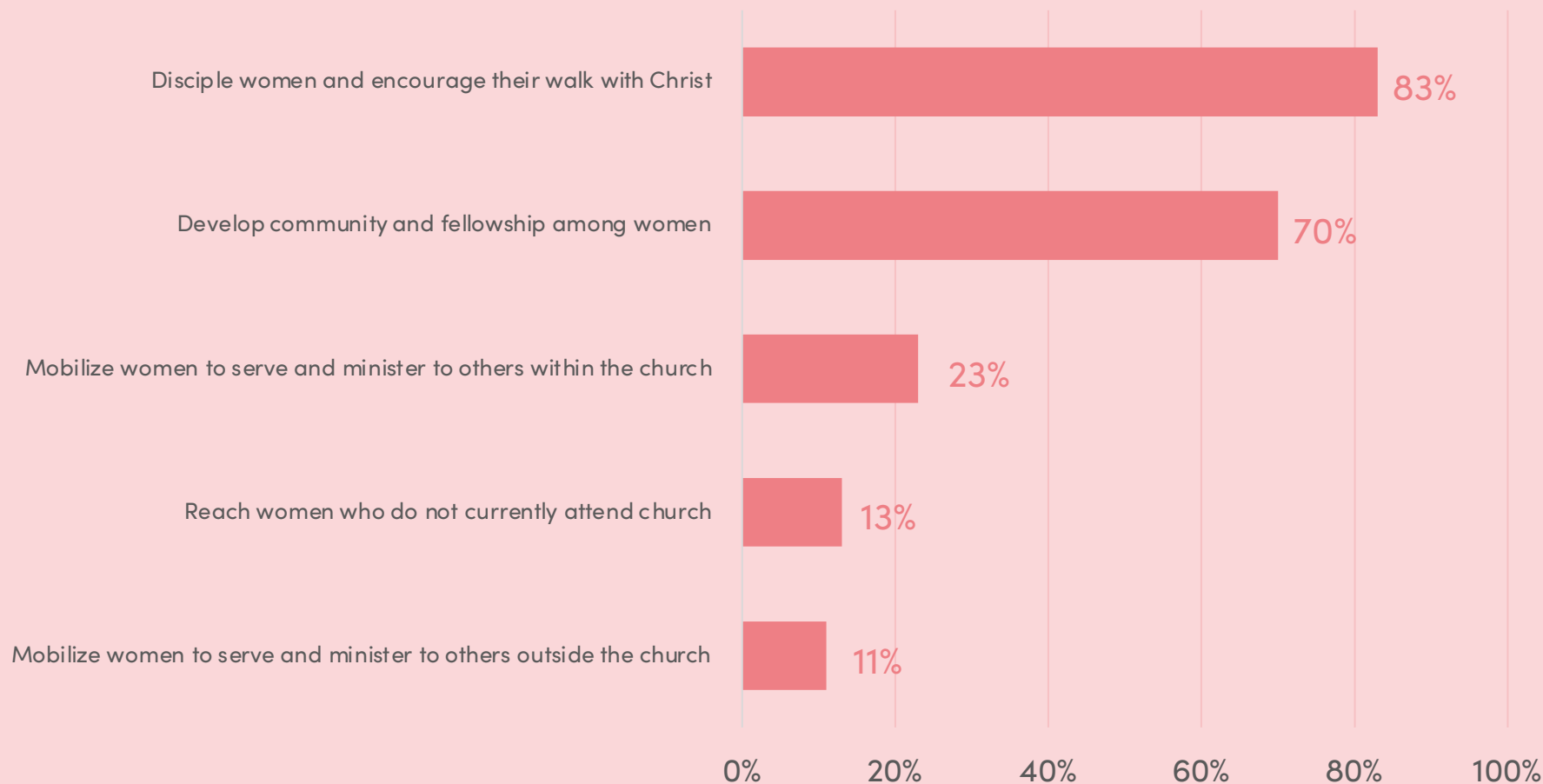
Disciple women and encourage their walk with Christ — 83%

Develop community and fellowship among women — 70%

Mobilize women to serve and minister to others within the church — 23%

Reach women who do not currently attend church — 13%

Mobilize women to serve and minister to others outside the church — 11%

Q24: "Describe the priorities of your women's ministry by ranking the following goals in priority order (1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest)."
n=790

Lifeway research

Events conducted in the last year to develop community and fellowship among new and existing women

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Food events (e.g., potlucks, lunches, dinners, brunches) — 75%

Holiday events — 61%

Craft or hobby events — 44%

Game nights (e.g., board games, bunco, bingo, etc) — 30%

Field trips (shopping, activities, tours, etc.) — 26%

Book clubs — 22%

Christian concerts/comedians/shows — 21%

Q25: "Which, if any, of the following events has your women's ministry conducted in the last year to develop community and fellowship among new and existing women in your church? (Select ALL that apply)" n=787

Lifeway research

Events conducted in the last year to develop community and fellowship among new and existing women *cont'd*

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
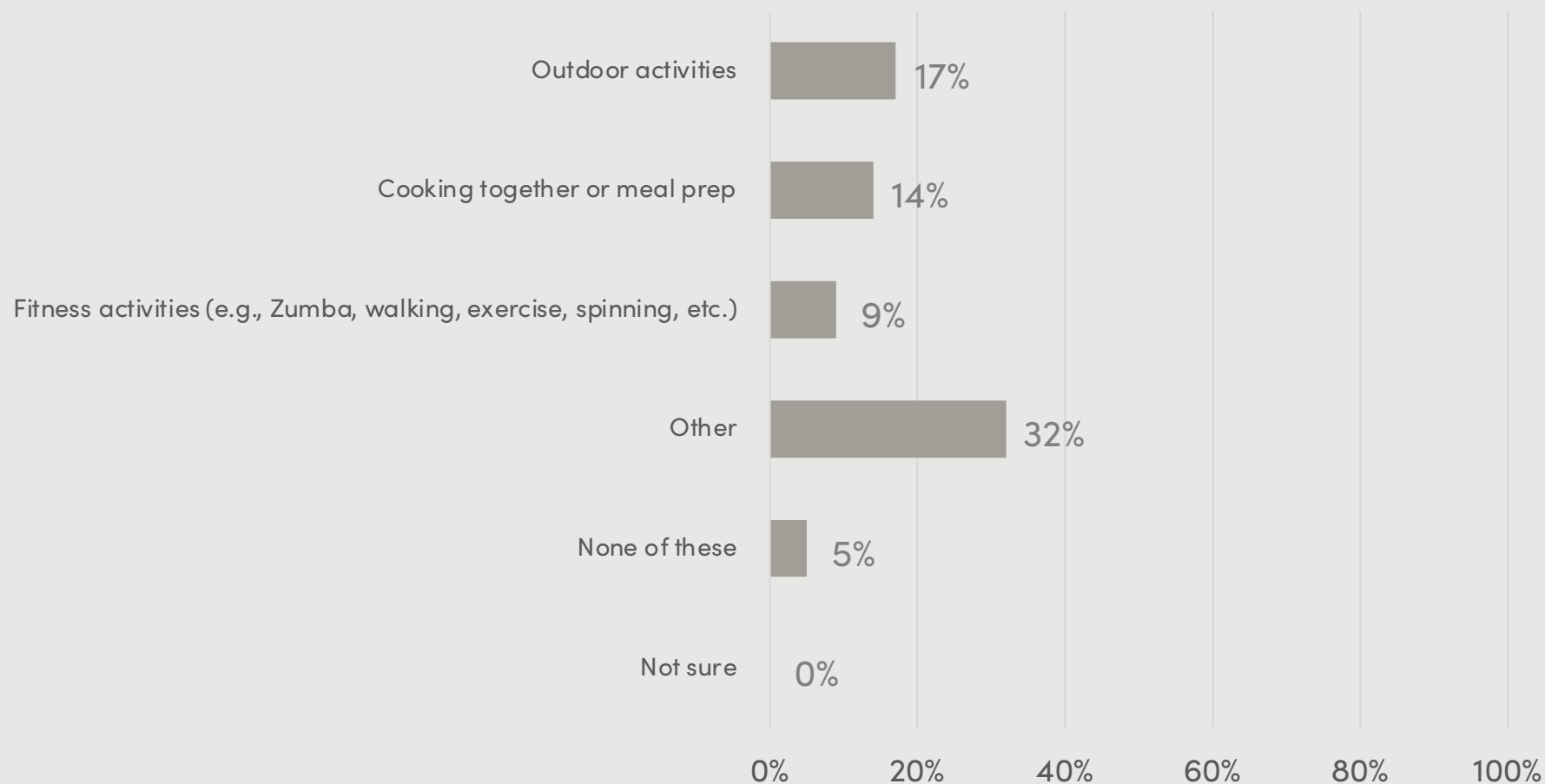
Outdoor activities — 17%
Cooking together or meal prep — 14%
Fitness activities (e.g., Zumba, walking, exercise, spinning, etc.) — 9%
Other — 32%
None of these — 5%
Not sure — 0%

Q25: "Which, if any, of the following events has your women's ministry conducted in the last year to develop community and fellowship among new and existing women in your church? (Select ALL that apply)" n=787

Lifeway research

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TWO events most effective in developing community among women in your church

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Event	Percentage
Food events	59%
Holiday events	36%
Craft or hobby events	18%
Game nights	14%
Book clubs	12%
Field trips	8%
Christian concerts/comedians/shows	5%
Cooking together or meal prep	5%
Outdoor activities	3%
Fitness activities	1%
Other	21%
None of these	5%
Not sure	<1%
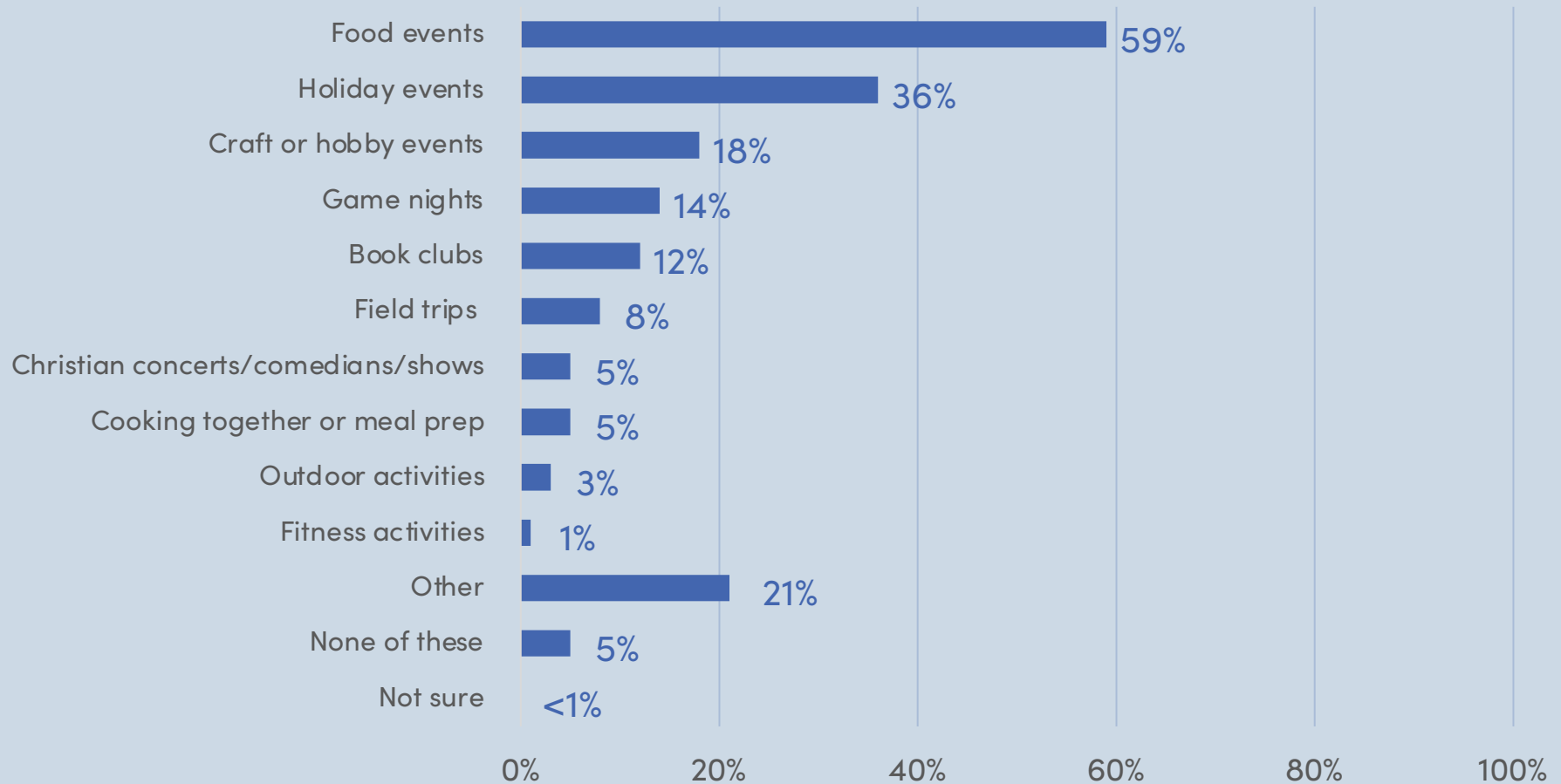
Q26: "Which two of these have been most effective in developing community among women in your church? (Select two)" n=787

Lifeway research

Events conducted in the last year to disciple women and encourage their walk with Christ

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Category	Percentage
Offered Bible studies for women	88%
Offered times for women to pray together	57%
Provided opportunities to serve others in our local community	48%
Attended conferences as a group	40%
Shared a Bible reading plan	36%
Offered mentoring	35%
Offered Bible study skills training	30%
Shared written advice or encouragement (e.g., blog, articles)	29%

Q27: "Which, if any, of the following events has your women's ministry conducted in the last year to disciple women and encourage their walk with Christ? (Select all that apply)" n=783

Lifeway research

Events conducted in the last year to disciple women and encourage their walk with Christ *cont'd*

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Category	Percent
Hosted conferences	23%
Hosted topical events (e.g., mental health, anxiety, parenting)	15%
Hosted simulcasts	15%
Offered grief recovery groups	14%
Other	7%
None of these	2%
Not sure	<1%

Q27: "Which, if any, of the following events has your women's ministry conducted in the last year to disciple women and encourage their walk with Christ? (Select all that apply)" n=783

Lifeway research

TWO most effective events at encouraging women on their faith journey with Christ

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Offered Bible studies for women	80%
Offered times for women to pray together	23%
Attended conferences as a group	16%
Provided opportunities to serve others in our local community	13%
Offered mentoring	12%
Hosted conferences	10%
Offered Bible study skills training	8%

Q28: "Which two of these have been most effective at encouraging women on their faith journey with Christ? (Select two)" n=783

Lifeway research

TWO most effective events at encouraging women on their faith journey with Christ *cont'd*

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Shared written advice or encouragement	7%
Shared a Bible reading plan	7%
Hosted simulcasts	4%
Hosted topical events	4%
Offered grief recovery groups	1%
Other	2%
None of these	2%
Not sure	<1%

Q28: "Which two of these have been most effective at encouraging women on their faith journey with Christ? (Select two)" n=783

Lifeway research

Bible studies your church has offered in the last year for women

Among churches that offered Bible studies for women

Offered Bible studies outside of work hours	85%
Offered Bible studies during the day on weekdays	57%
Offered Bible studies for moms with young children	29%
None of these	3%
Not sure	<1%
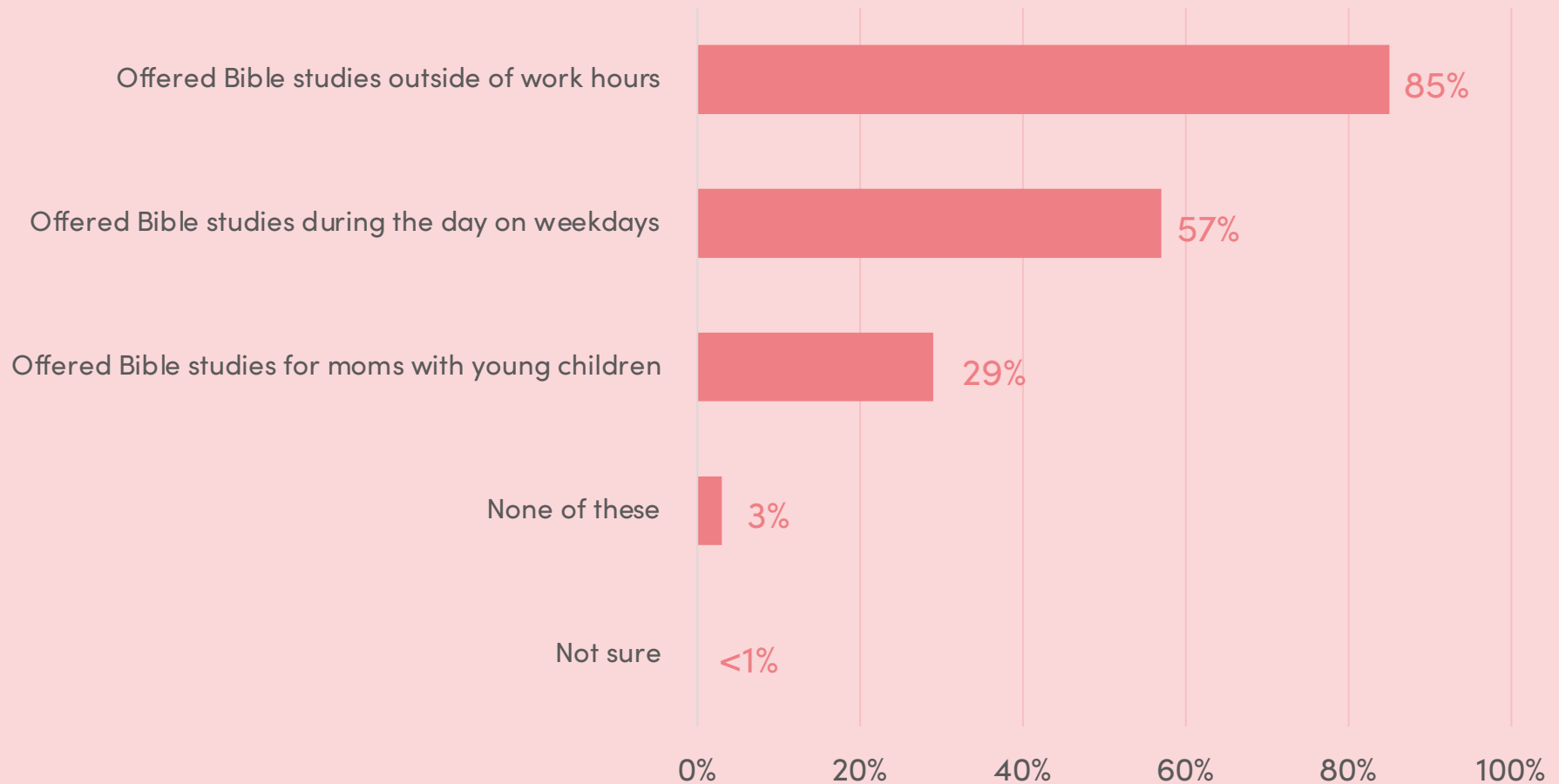
Q29: "Which of the following describe the Bible studies your church has offered in the last year for women? (Select all that apply)" n=708

Ongoing responsibilities that fall to the women's ministry to lead in your church

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Category	Percentage
Providing women's fellowship and connection opportunities	81%
Providing women's small group Bible studies	77%
Providing fun, social events for women	72%
Discipleship of women	61%
Providing a women's large group Bible study	48%
Outreach to women	47%
Mentoring women	47%

Q30: "Which of the following are specific ongoing responsibilities that fall to the women's ministry to lead in your church? (Select all that apply)"
n=778

Lifeway research

22

Ongoing responsibilities that fall to the women's ministry to lead in your church *cont'd*

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Providing a women's prayer ministry — 32%

Counseling or pastoral care for women — 25%

Leadership training for women — 25%

Providing fitness opportunities for women — 5%

None of these — 1%

Not sure — 1%

Q30: "Which of the following are specific ongoing responsibilities that fall to the women's ministry to lead in your church? (Select all that apply)"
n=778

Lifeway research

Specific responsibilities for the women's ministry to provide as needed for your church

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Providing "meal trains" for those facing illness or a crisis — 55%

Providing food for funerals — 47%

Caregiving for women in crisis — 40%

Decorating the church — 40%

Baby showers — 37%

(X-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

Lifeway research

Specific responsibilities for the women's ministry to provide as needed for your church *cont'd*

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Category	Percentage
Caregiving for families in crisis	33%
Bridal showers	30%
Weddings	13%
None of these	19%
Not sure	5%

Q31: "Which of the following are specific responsibilities for the women's ministry to provide as needed for your church? (Select all that apply)" n=777

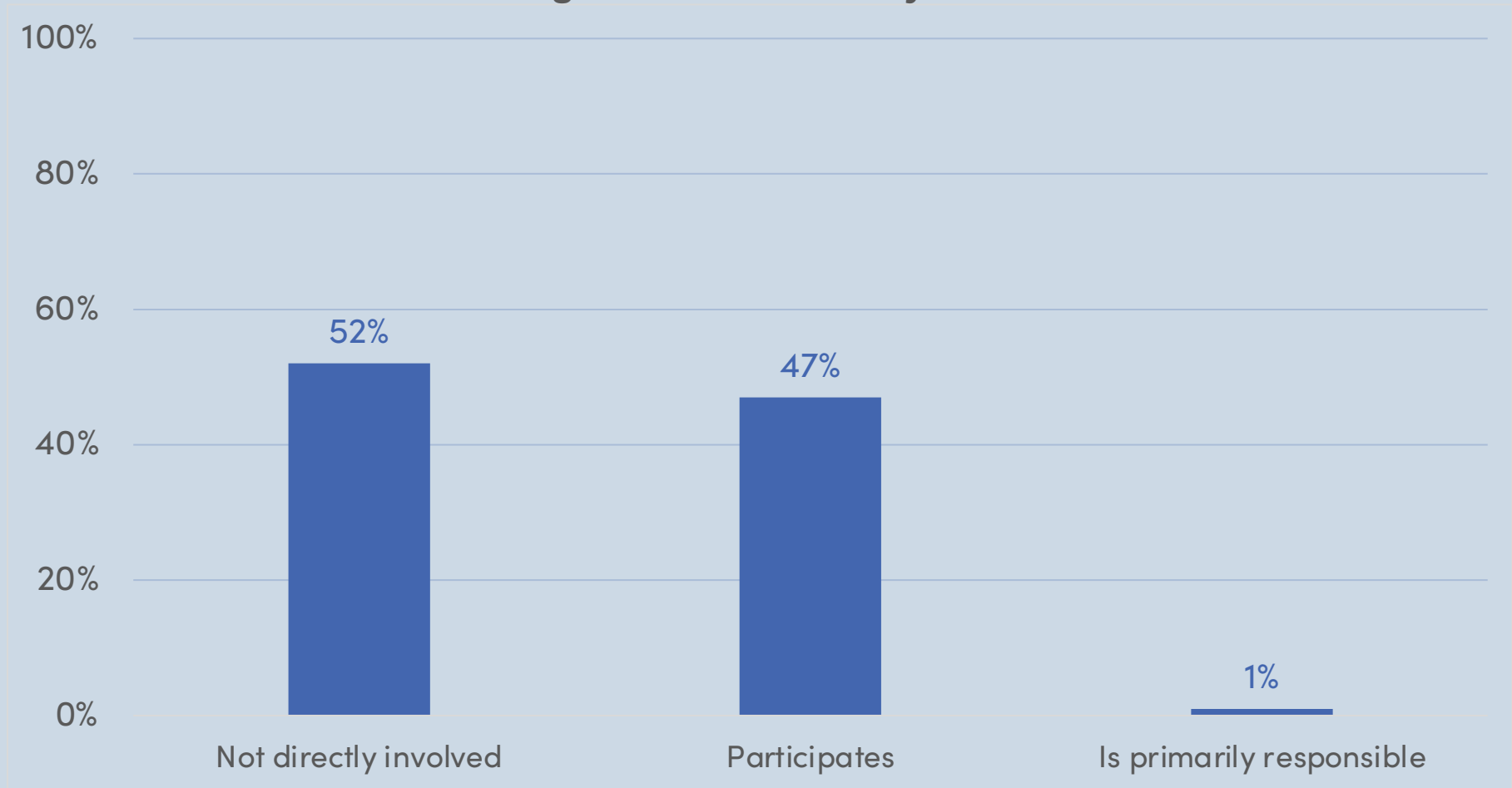# Level of women's ministry involvement: Benevolence ministry

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
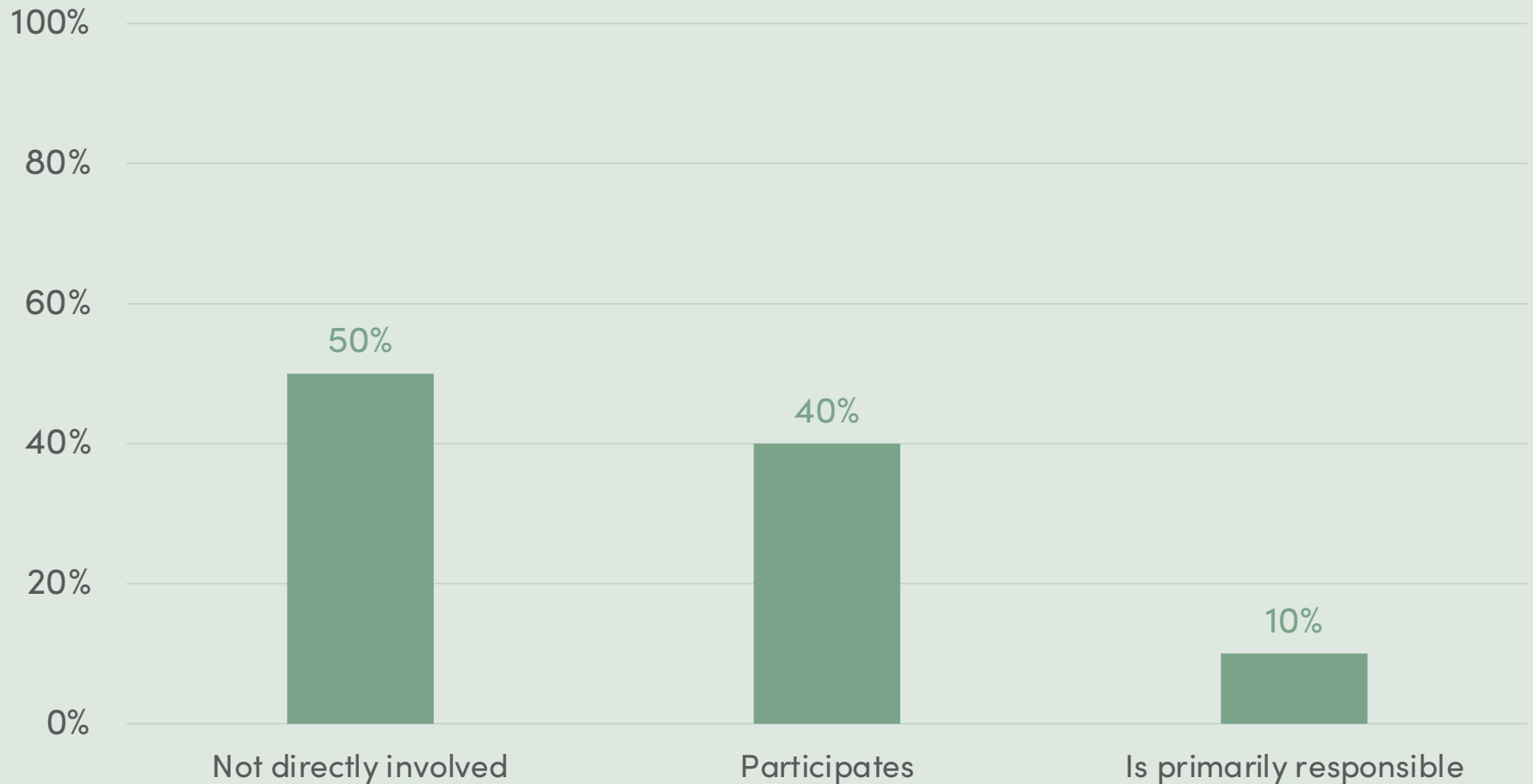
Q32_1: "Please indicate your women's ministry's level of involvement in the following ministries at your church. Benevolence ministry " n=770

Lifeway research

Level of women's ministry involvement: Providing food for church-wide events

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Lifeway research

Level of women's ministry involvement: Hosting church-wide events
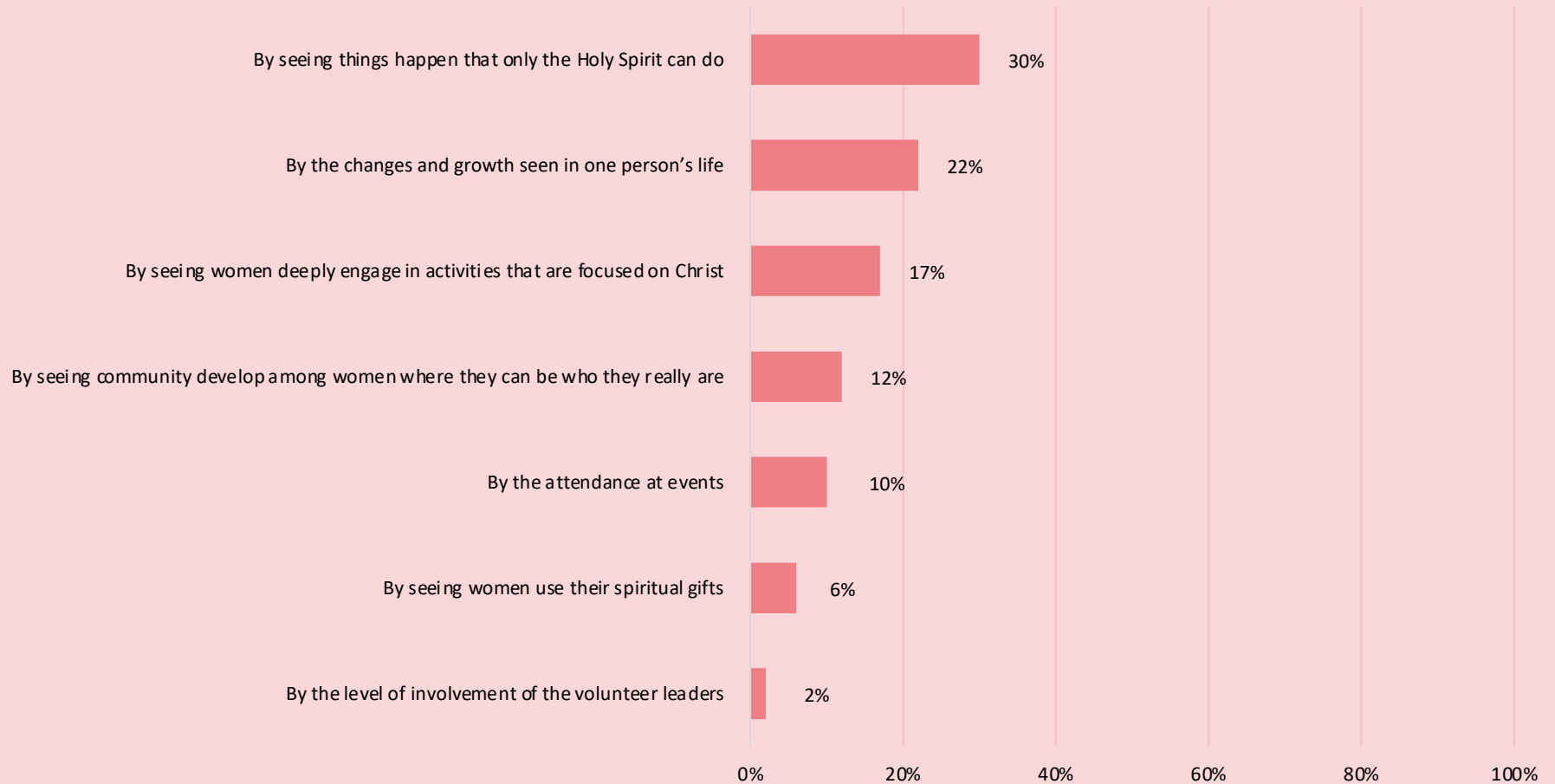
Among Women's Ministry Leaders
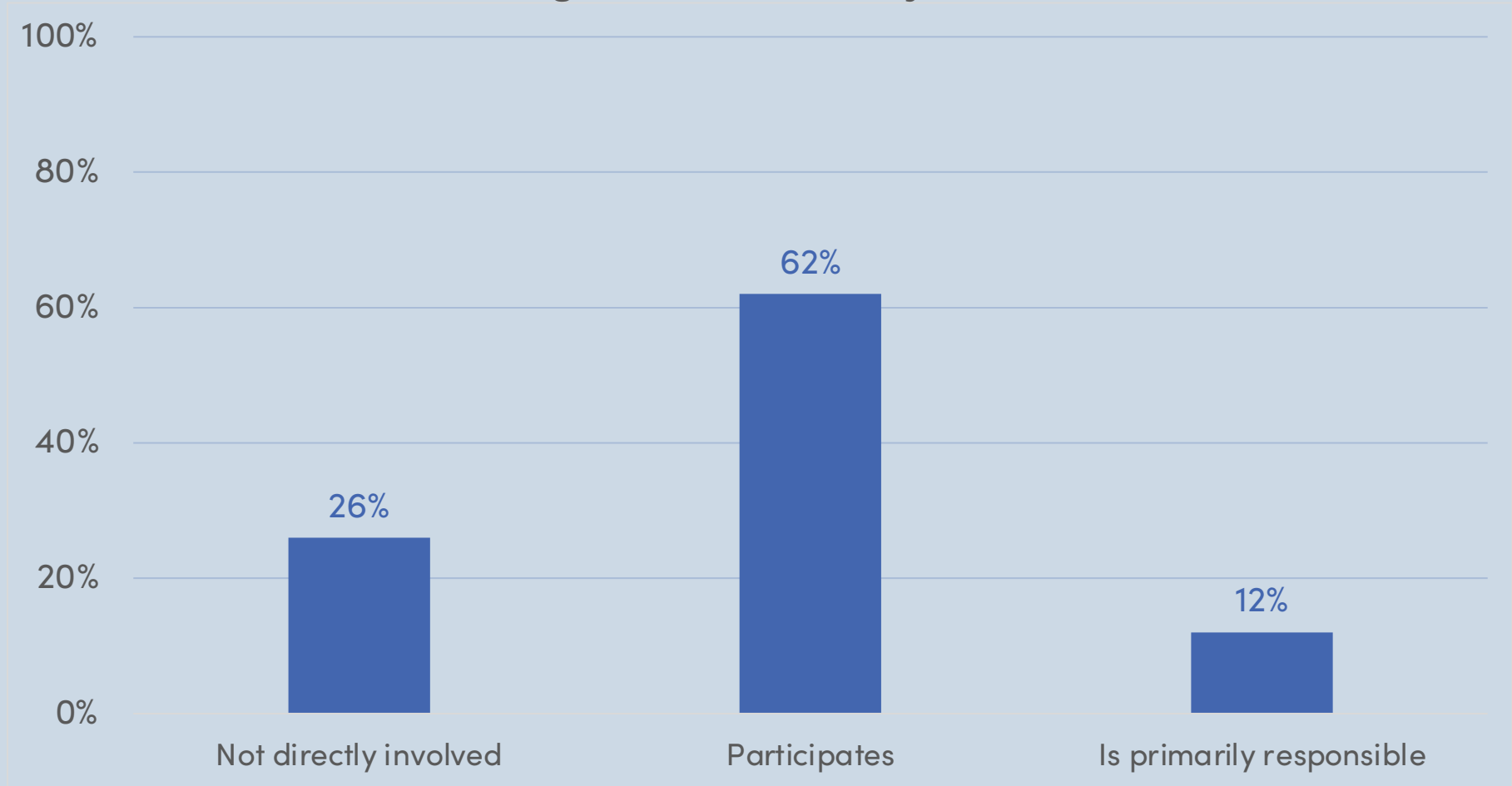
Q32_3: "Please indicate your women's ministry's level of involvement in the following ministries at your church. Hosting church-wide events" n=770

Lifeway research

Level of women's ministry involvement: Providing a church-wide prayer ministry

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
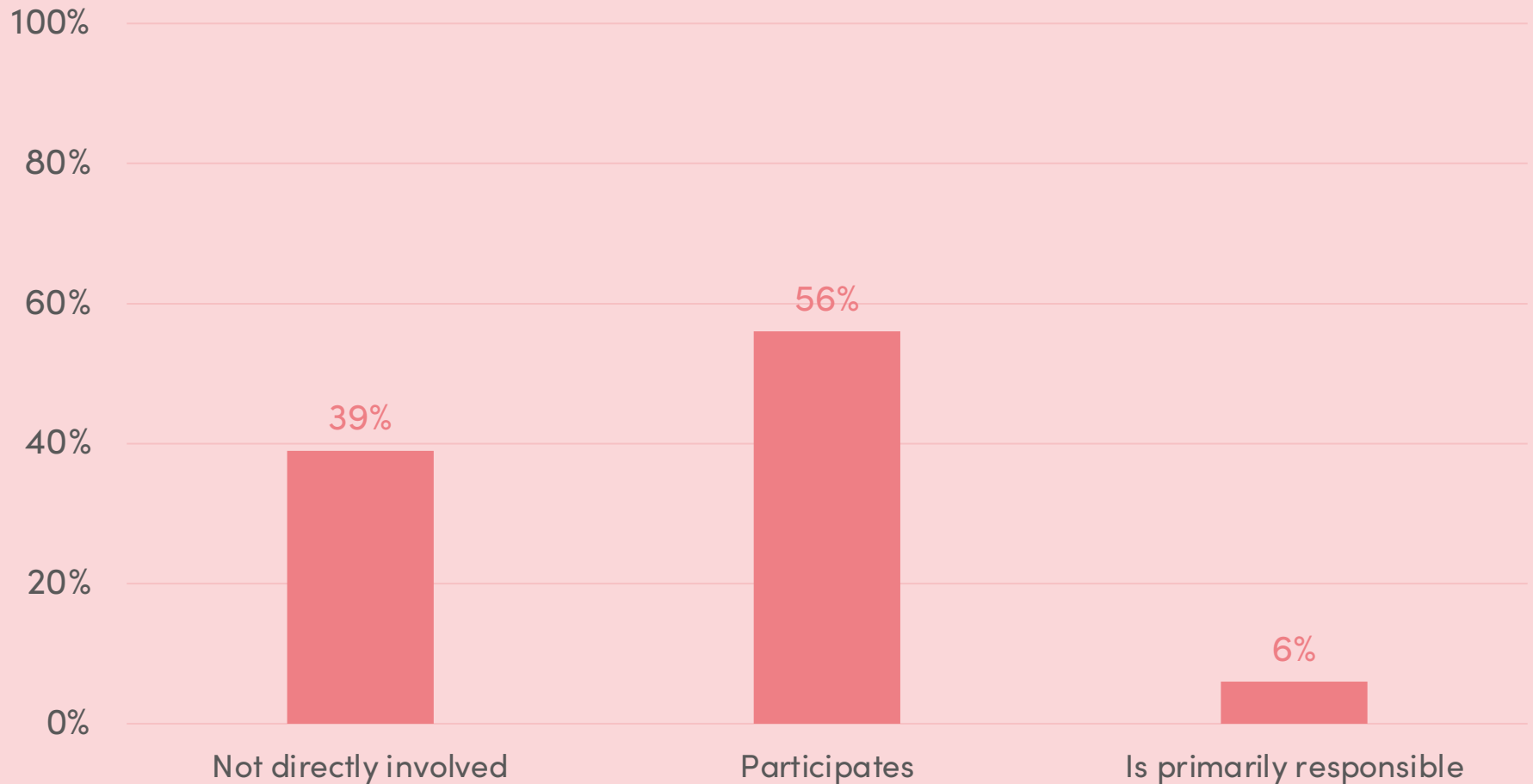
Q32_4: "Please indicate your women's ministry's level of involvement in the following ministries at your church. Providing a church-wide prayer ministry"   n=770

Lifeway research

Level of women's ministry involvement: Recruiting volunteers for church-wide events or projects

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Level of women's ministry involvement: Providing childcare for church gatherings

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
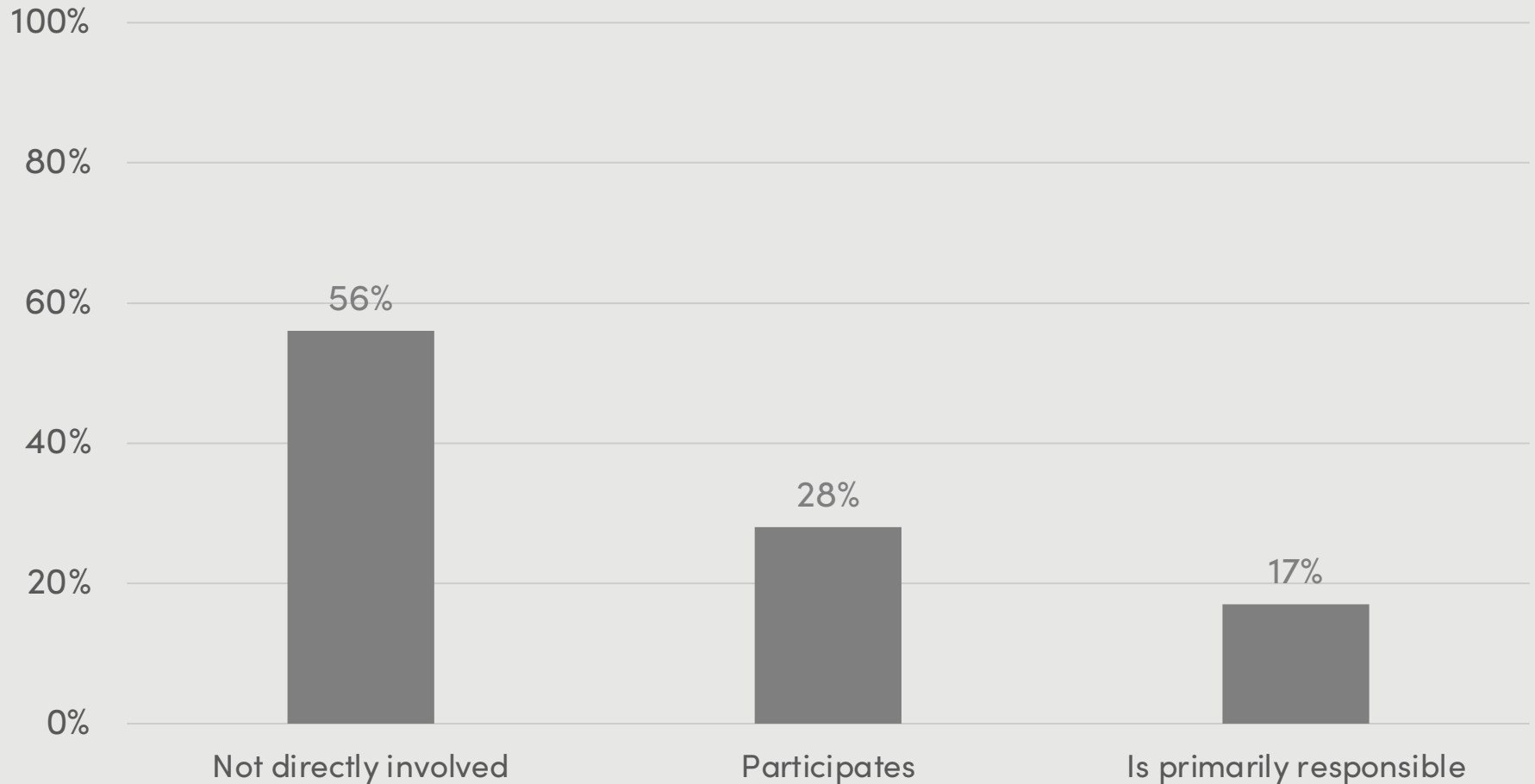
Q32_6: "Please indicate your women's ministry's level of involvement in the following ministries at your church. Providing childcare for church gatherings" n=770

Lifeway research

Level of women's ministry involvement:
Visiting the sick or hospitalized

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q32_7: "Please indicate your women's ministry's level of involvement in the following ministries at your church. Visiting the sick or hospitalized" n=770

Lifeway research

Highest priority measure of the effectiveness of your women's ministry efforts

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

By seeing things happen that only the Holy Spirit can do — 30%

By the changes and growth seen in one person's life — 22%

By seeing women deeply engage in activities that are focused on Christ — 17%

By seeing community develop among women where they can be who they really are — 12%

By the attendance at events — 10%

By seeing women use their spiritual gifts — 6%

By the level of involvement of the volunteer leaders — 2%

Q33: "Indicate which of the following you personally use to measure the effectiveness of your women's ministry efforts by ranking the following measurements in priority order (1 being the highest and 7 being the lowest)." n=749

Lifeway research

TOP TWO priorities for measuring the effectiveness of your women's ministry efforts
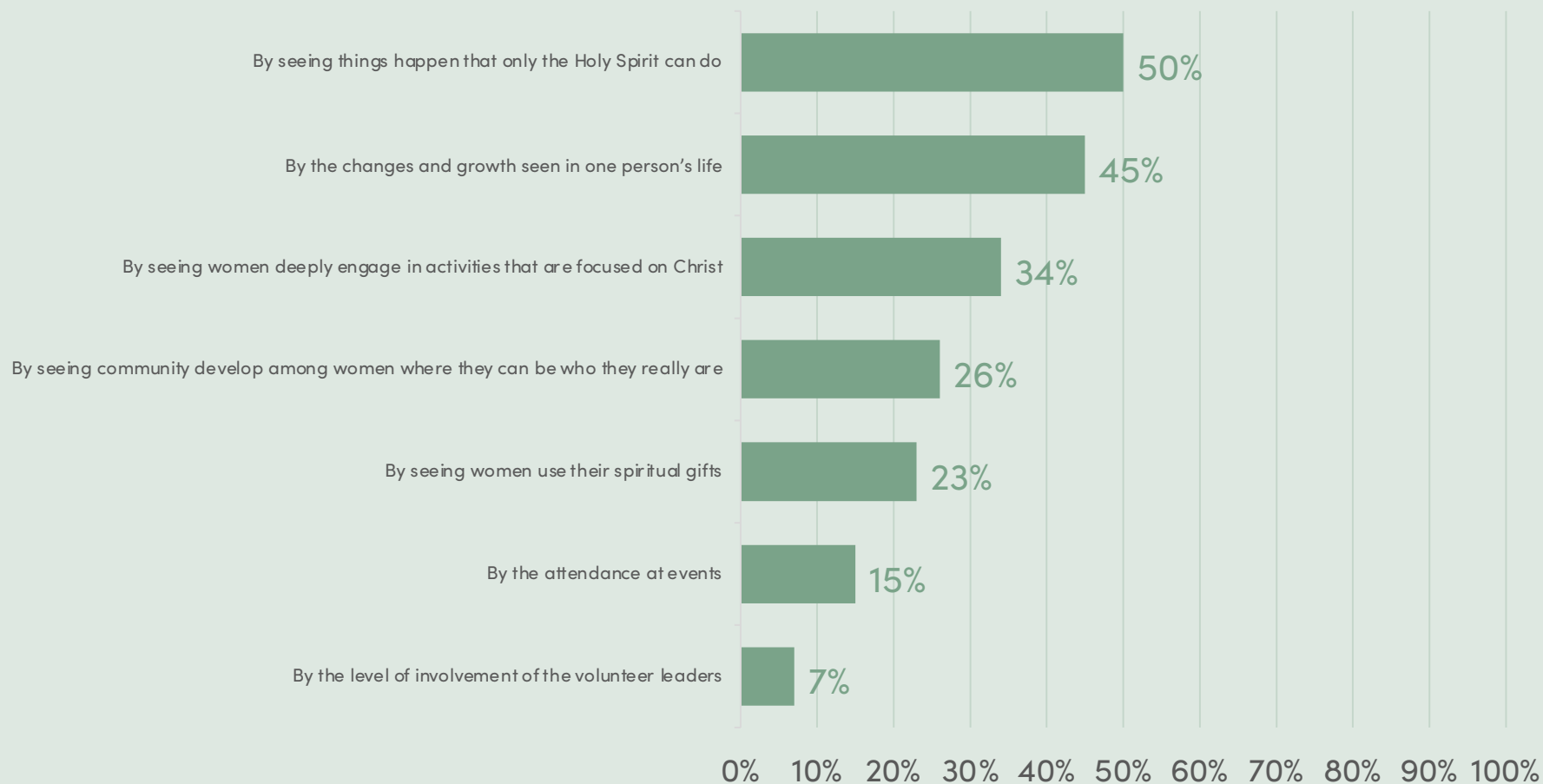
Among Women's Ministry Leaders

By seeing things happen that only the Holy Spirit can do — 50%

By the changes and growth seen in one person's life — 45%

By seeing women deeply engage in activities that are focused on Christ — 34%

By seeing community develop among women where they can be who they really are — 26%

By seeing women use their spiritual gifts — 23%

By the attendance at events — 15%

By the level of involvement of the volunteer leaders — 7%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q33: "Indicate which of the following you personally use to measure the effectiveness of your women's ministry efforts by ranking the following measurements in priority order (1 being the highest and 7 being the lowest)." n=749

Lifeway research

Impact of your current women's ministry: Draws women from outside our church into Christian community

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Lifeway research

Impact of your current women's ministry: Connects existing women in our church into community
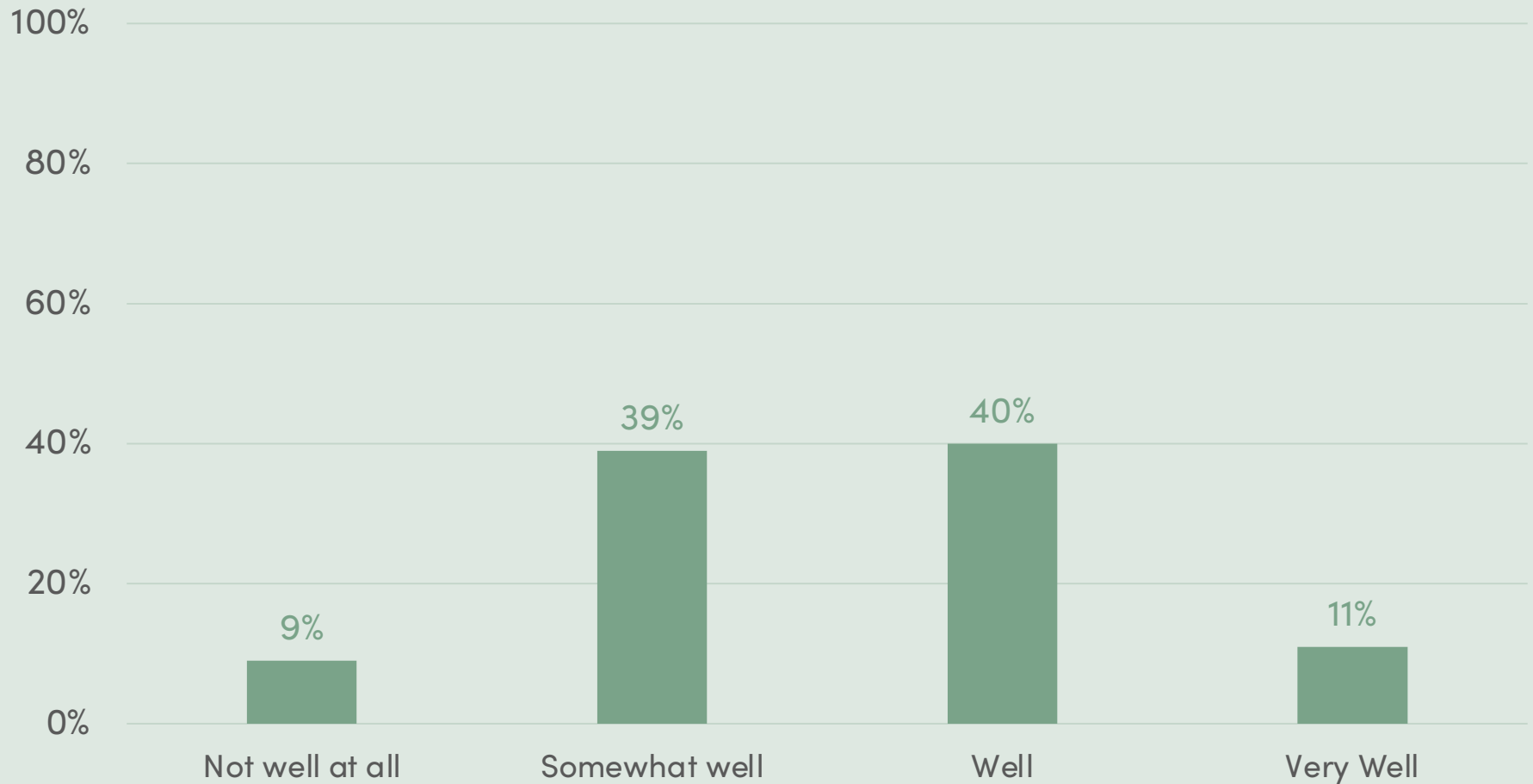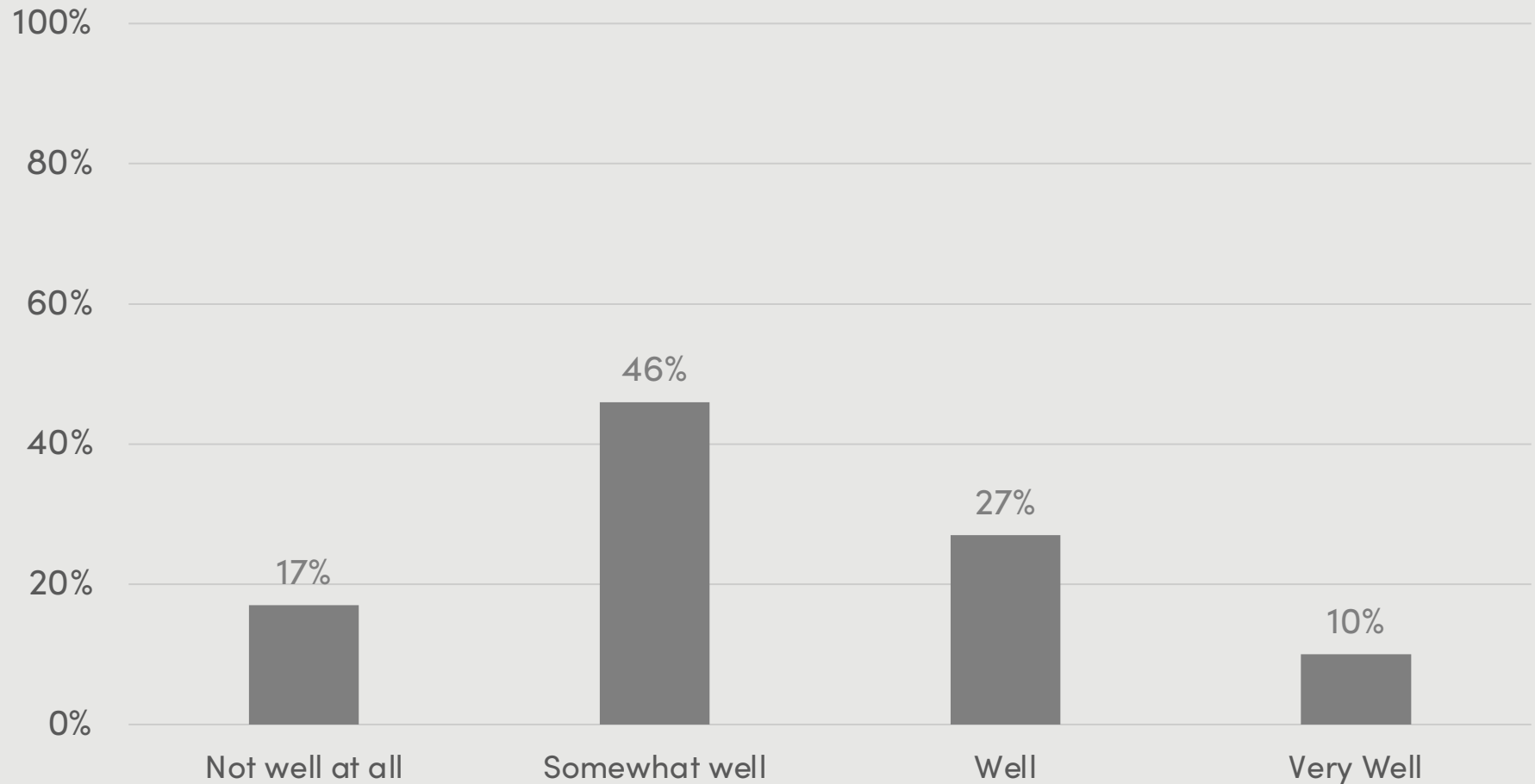
Among Women's Ministry Leaders
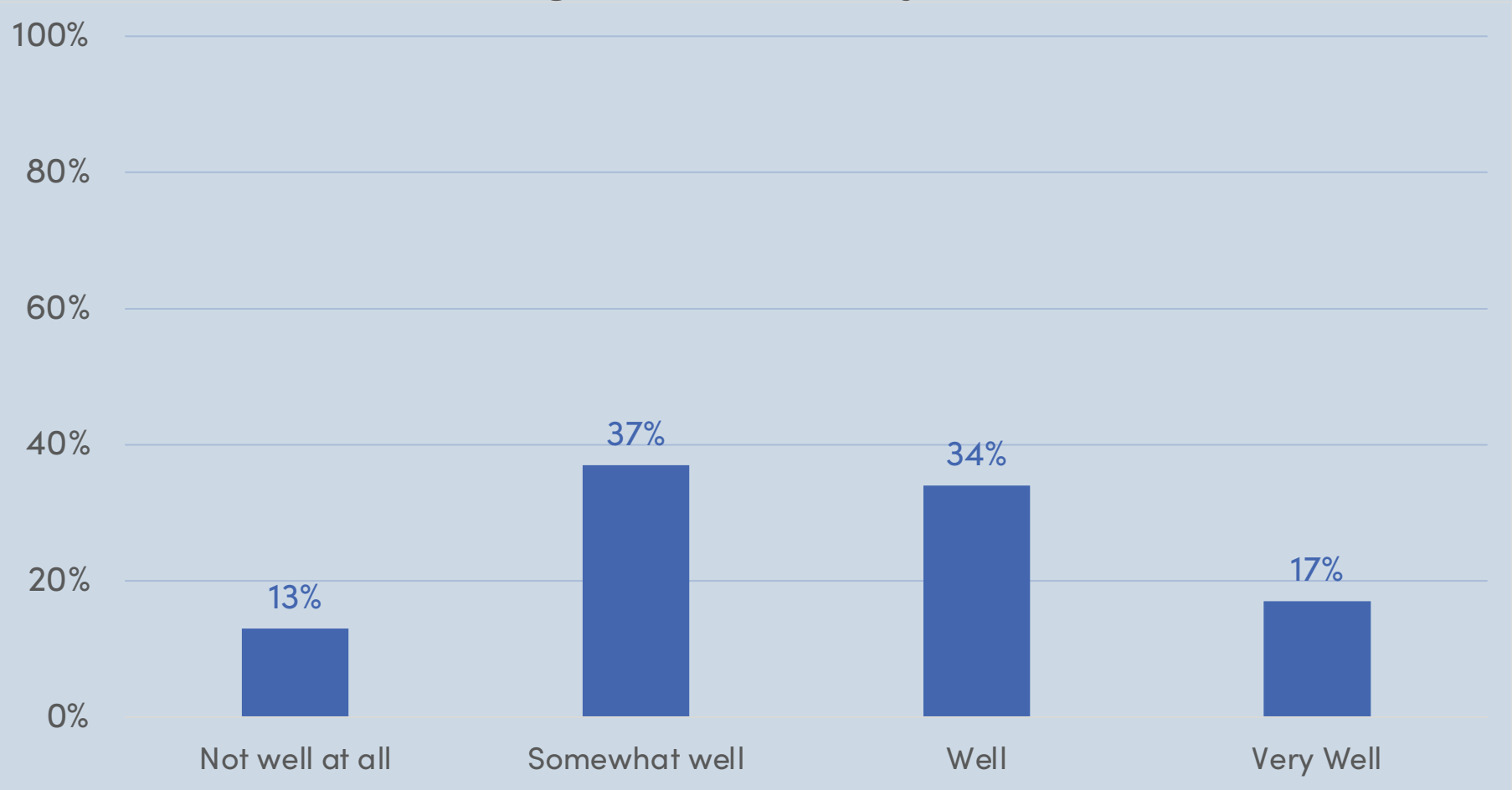
Q35_2: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Connects existing women in our church into community" n=741

Lifeway research

Impact of your current women's ministry: Engages existing women in our church to serve others
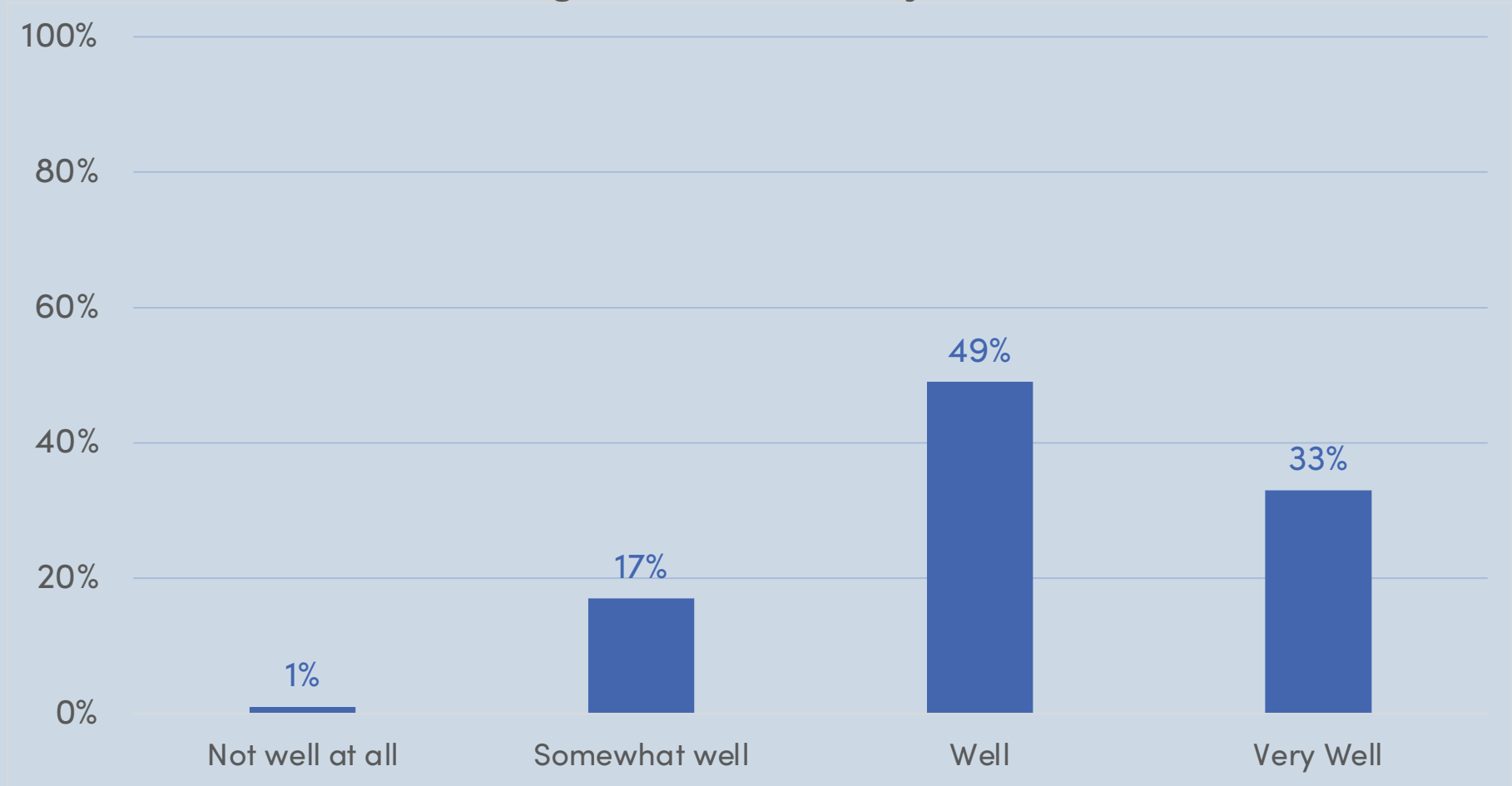
Among Women's Ministry Leaders
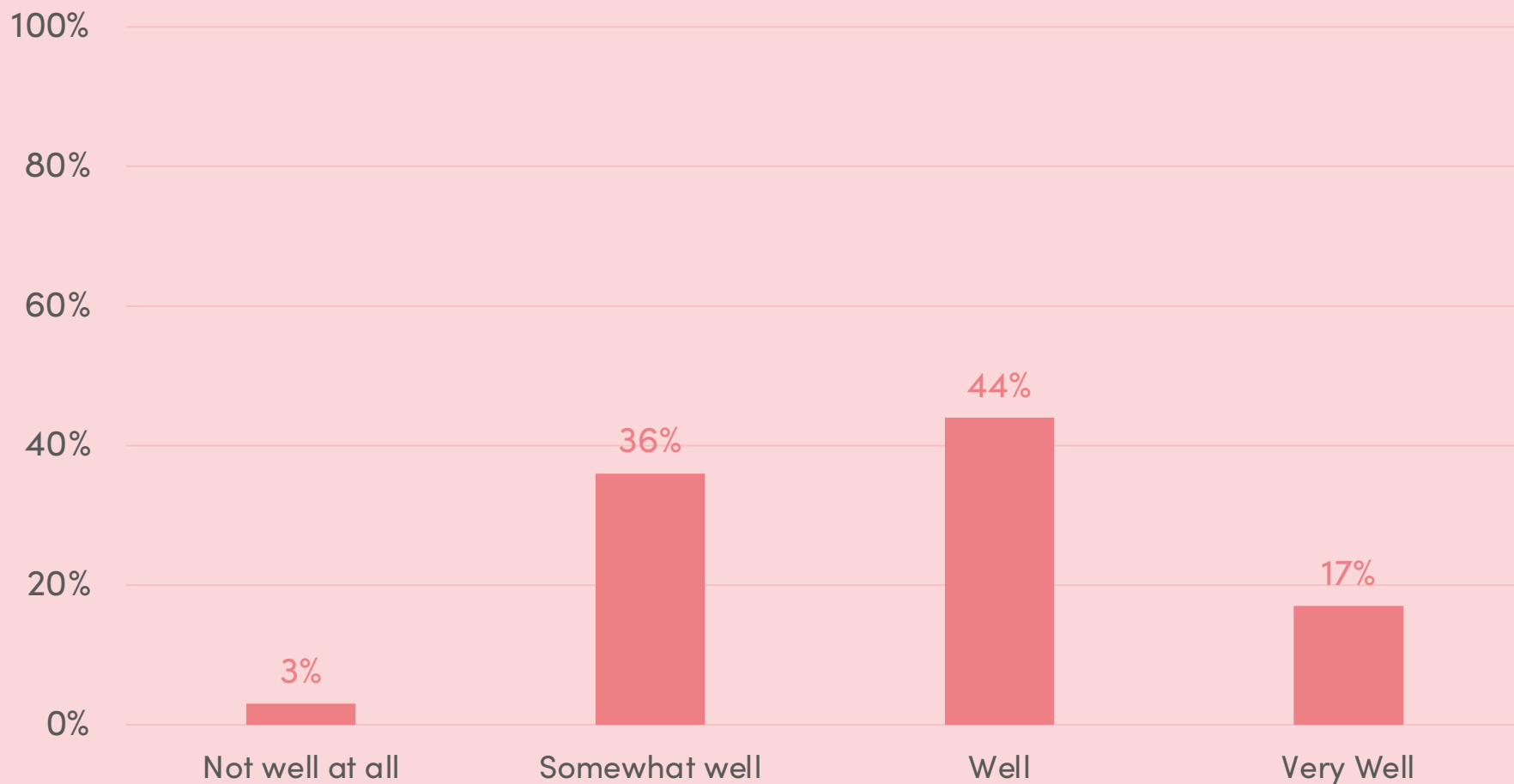
Q35_3: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Engages existing women in our church to serve others"   n=741

Lifeway research

Impact of your current women's ministry: Mobilizes women to turn from sins
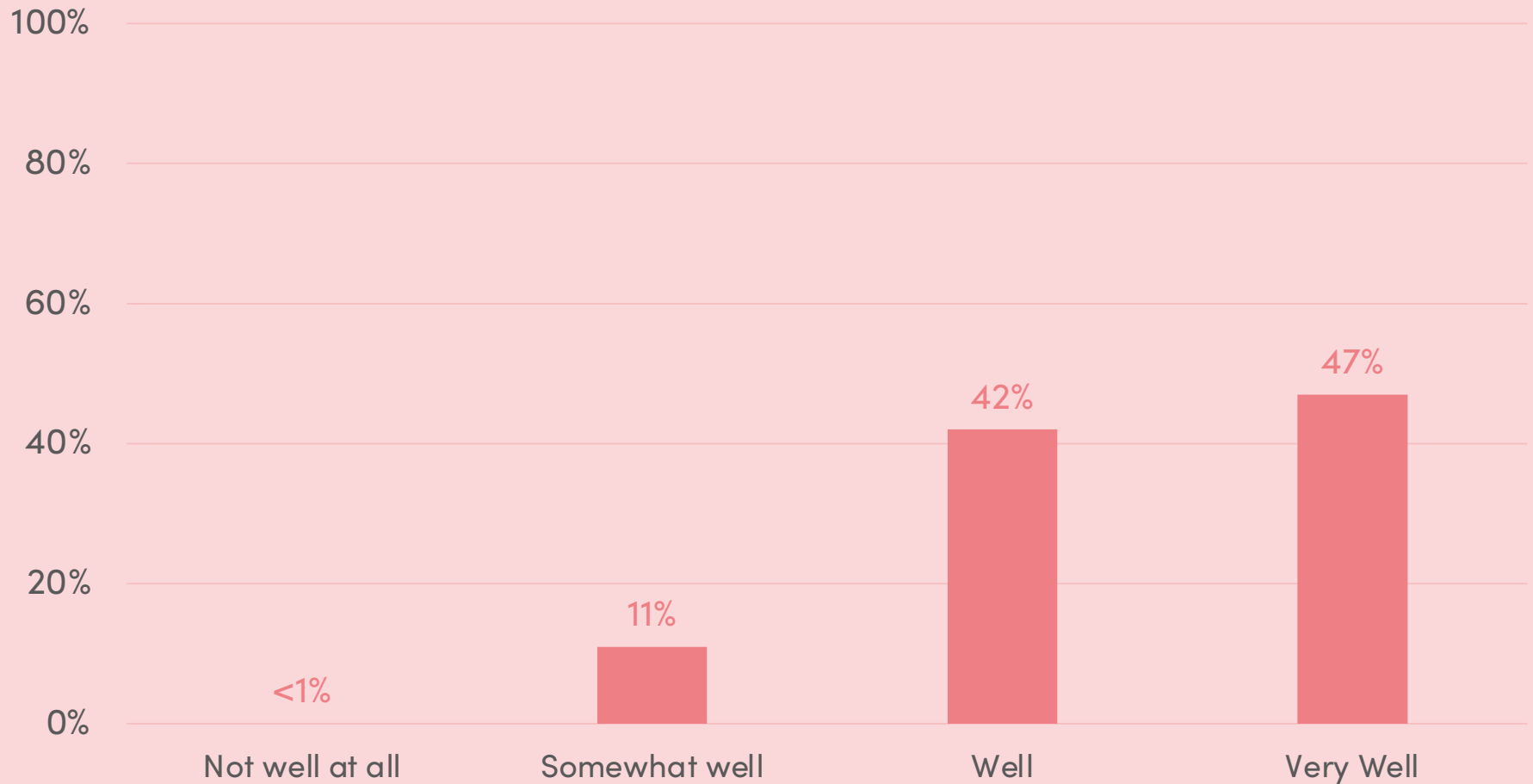
Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q35_4: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Mobilizes women to turn from sins" n=741

Impact of your current women's ministry:
Helps women find healing from trauma, hurts, and grief

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q35_5: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Helps women find healing from trauma, hurts, and grief" n=741

Impact of your current women's ministry: Encourages women to obey God

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Lifeway research

Impact of your current women's ministry: Encourages the spiritual growth of women
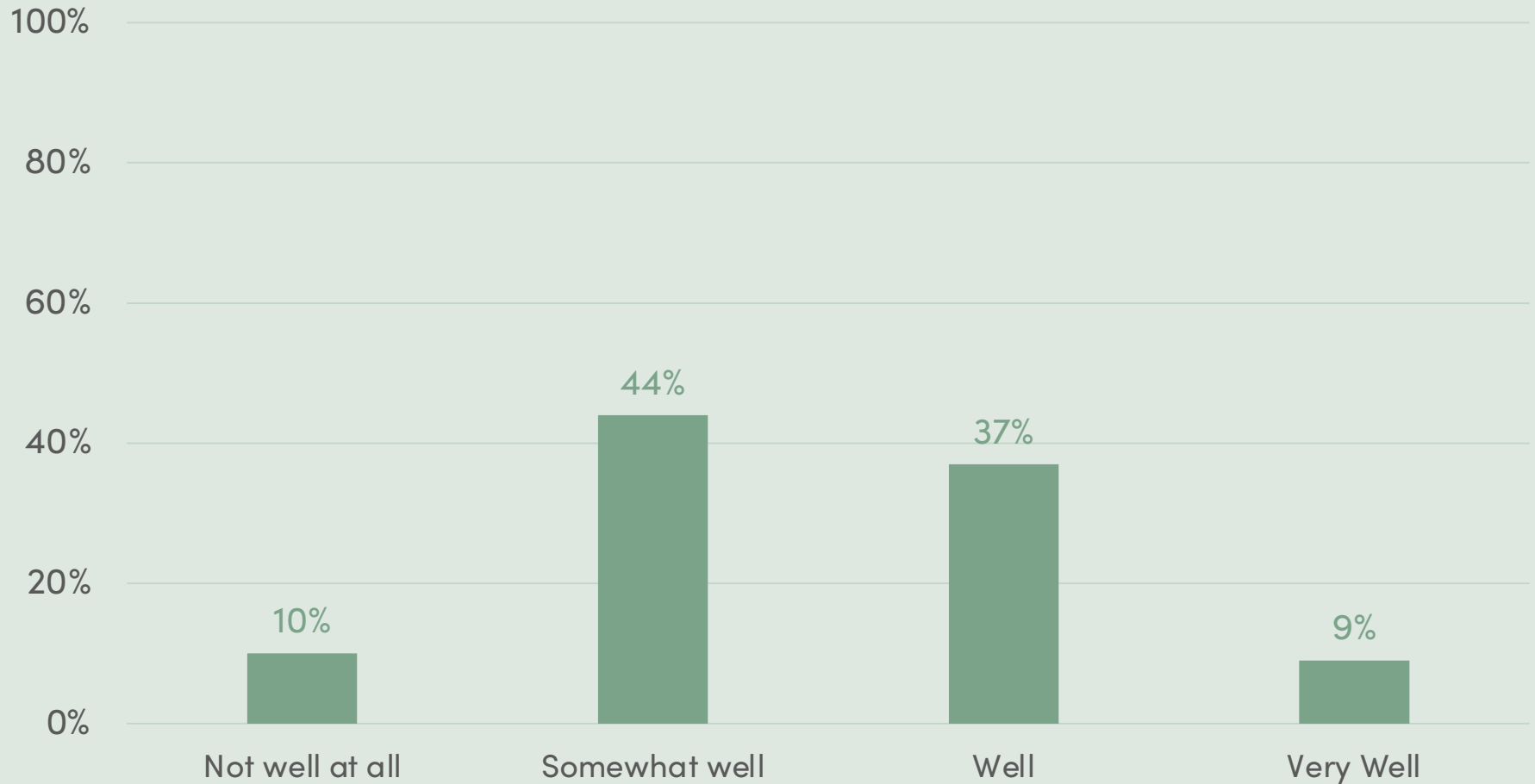
Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q35_7: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Encourages the spiritual growth of women" n=741

Impact of your current women's ministry: Mobilizes women to share the gospel personally
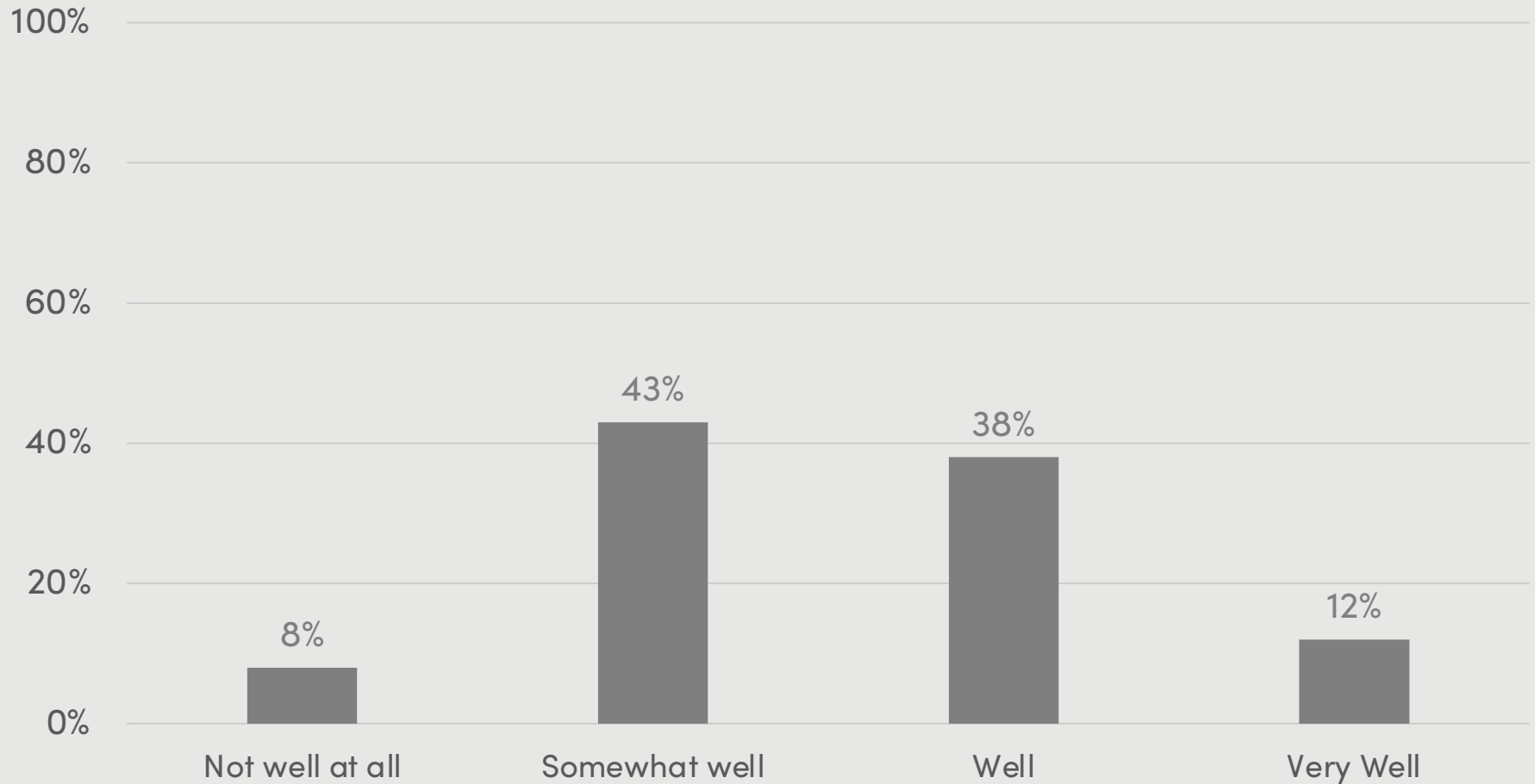
Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q35_8: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Mobilizes women to share the gospel personally" n=741

Impact of your current women's ministry: Mobilizes women to invite people to church
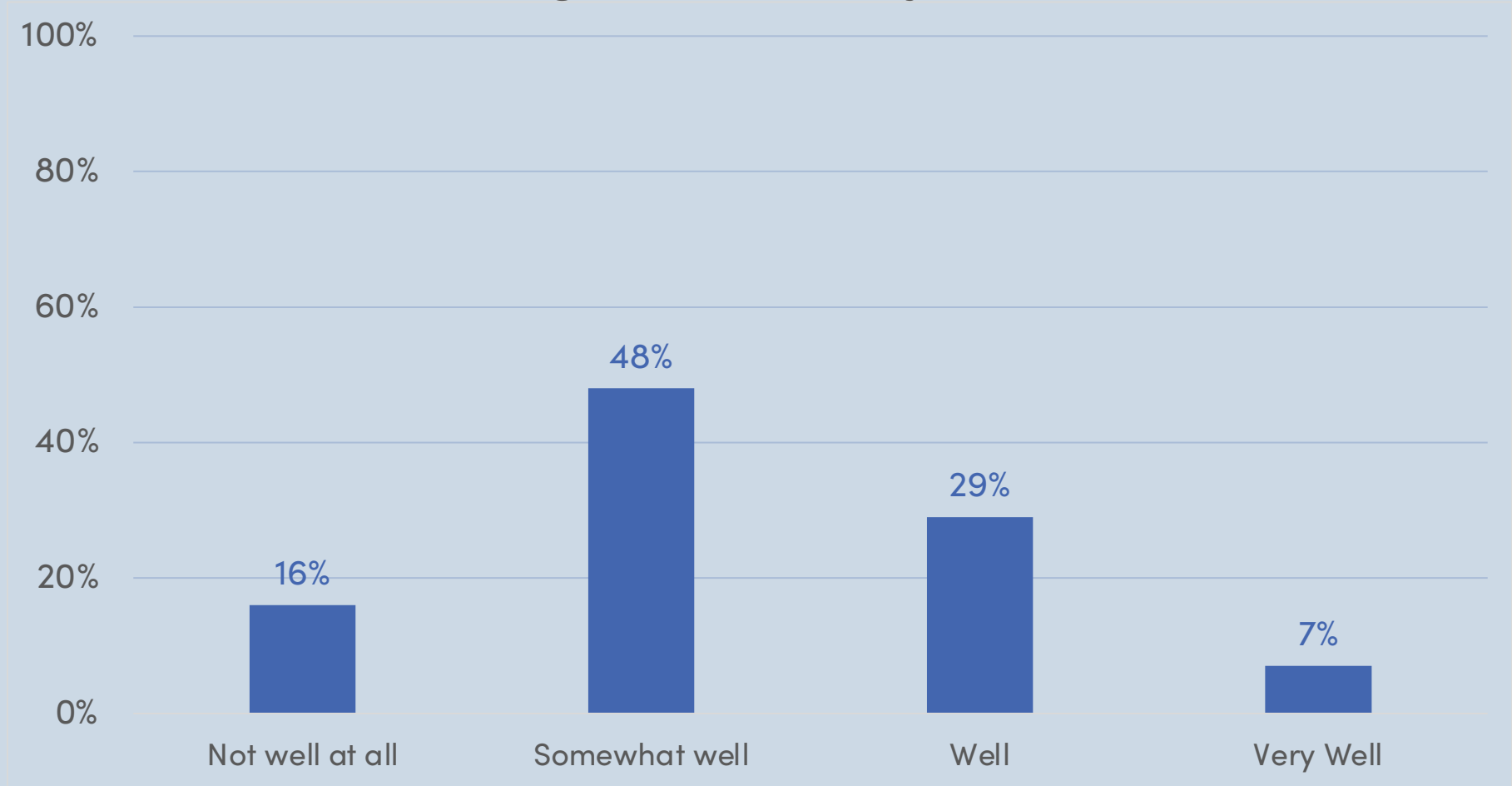
Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q35_9: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Mobilizes women to invite people to church" n=741

Lifeway research

Impact of your current women's ministry: Improves marriages

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q35_10: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Improves marriages" n=741

Impact of your current women's ministry: Improves the spiritual direction of kids through their mothers
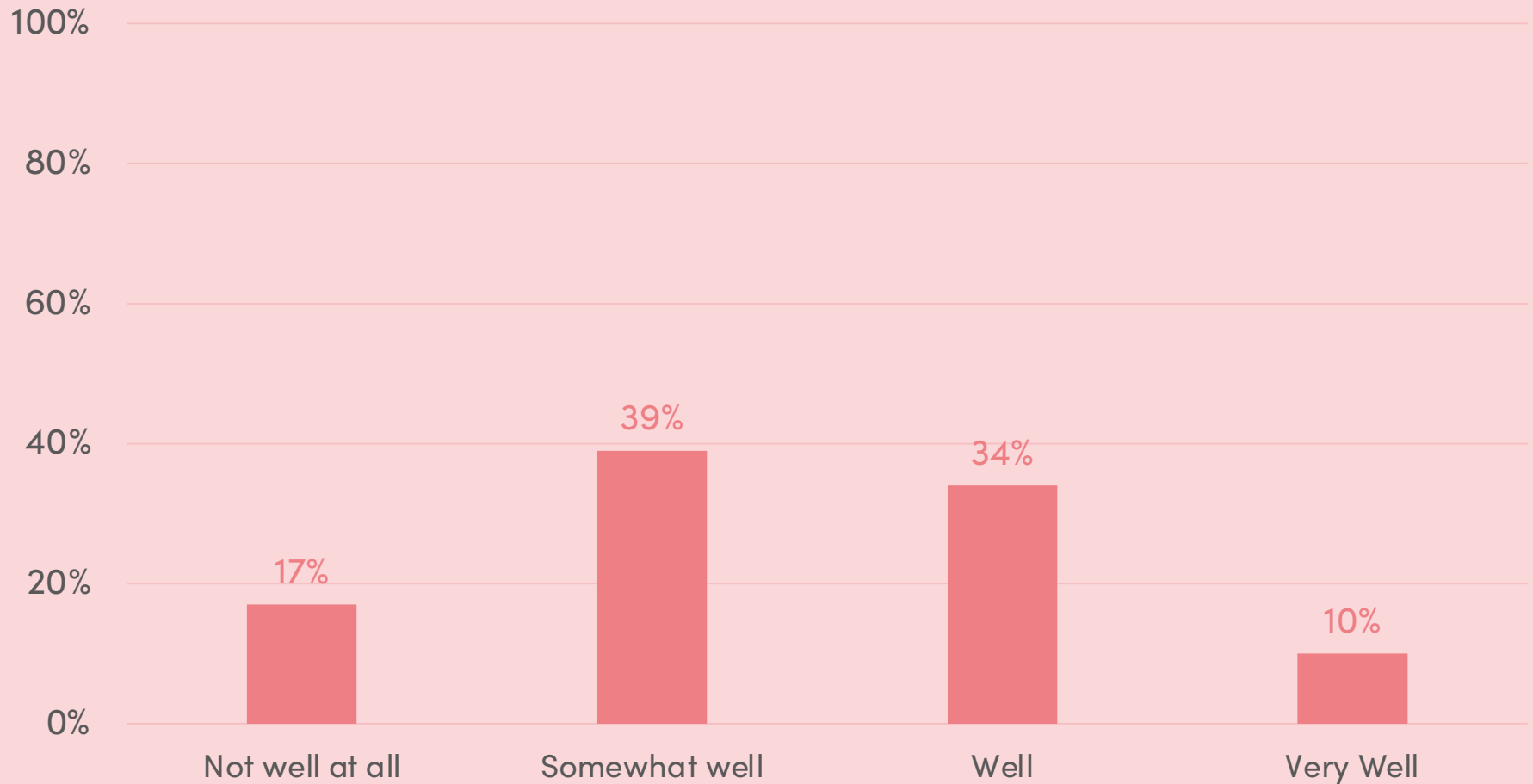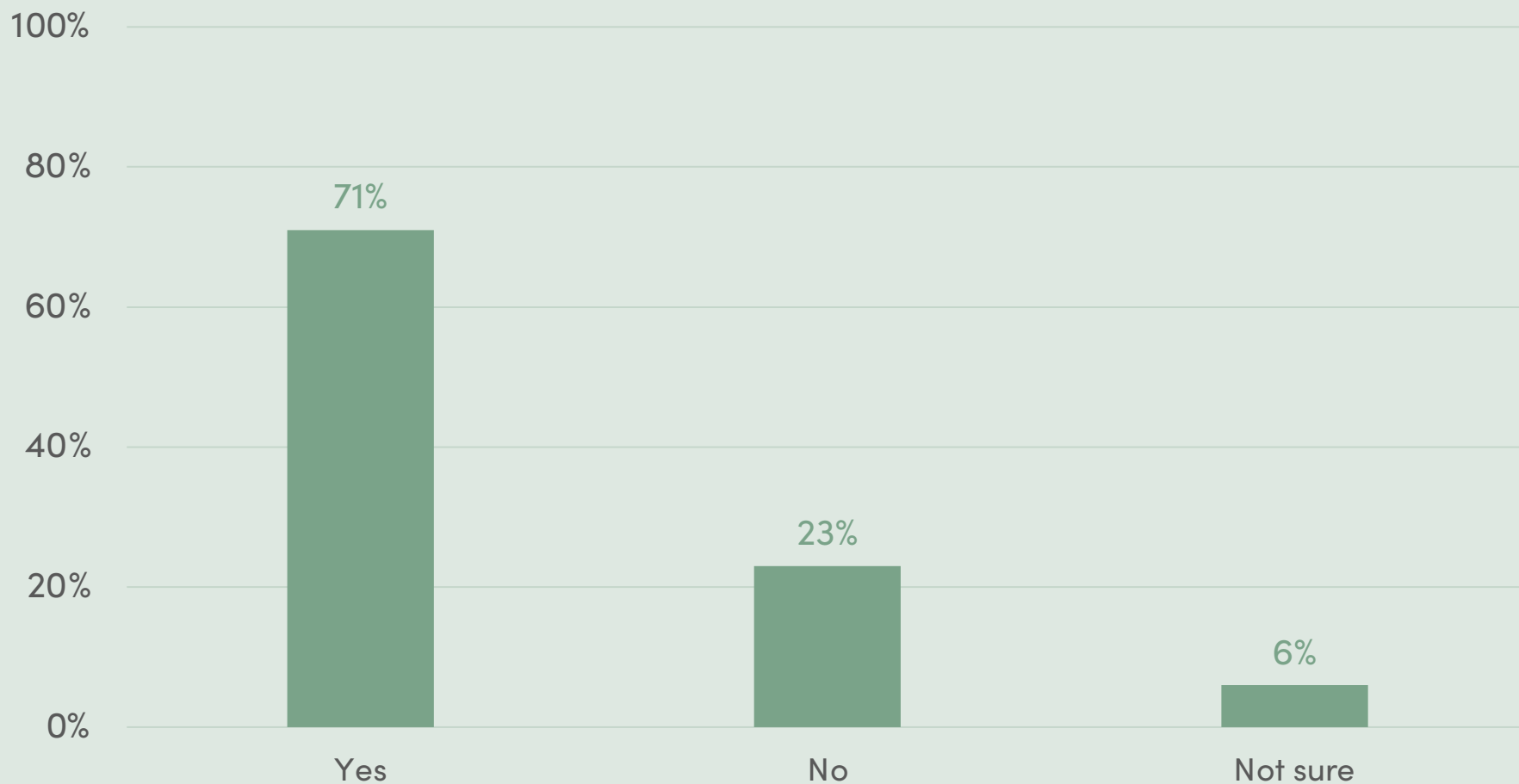
Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q35_11: "How well does your women's ministry currently impact each of these potential areas of ministry? (Select one response for each area of ministry) Improves the spiritual direction of kids through their mothers"   n=741

71% say that their churches provide the women's ministry with funds from the church budget

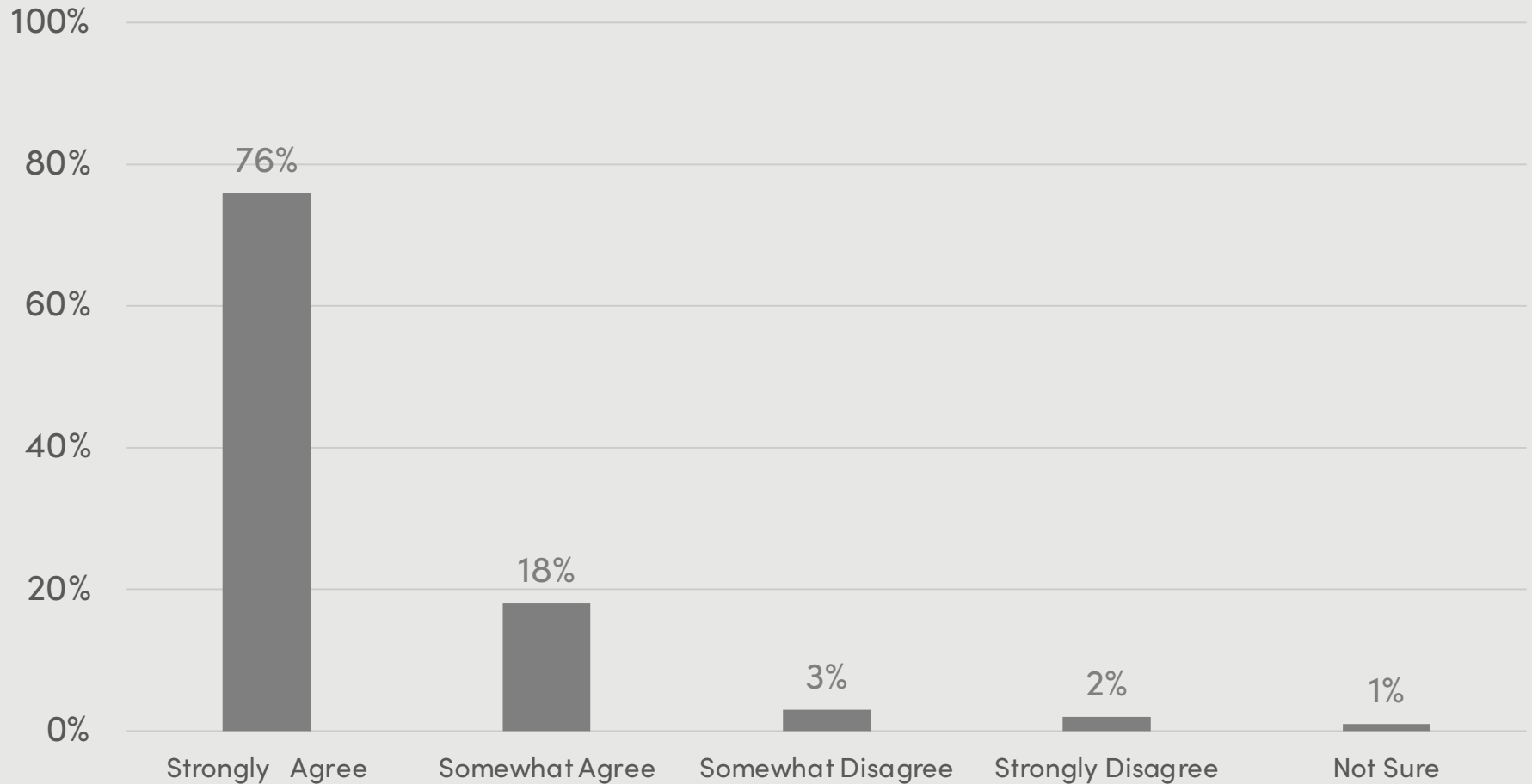## *Among Women's Ministry Leaders*

Q36: "Does your church provide the women's ministry with funds from the church budget to spend?" n=741

Lifeway research

94% agree that women's ministry regularly receives support from their pastor

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Q37: "Our women's ministry regularly receives support from our church's pastor(s)."   n=741

Lifeway research

93% agree that their church values their women's ministry

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
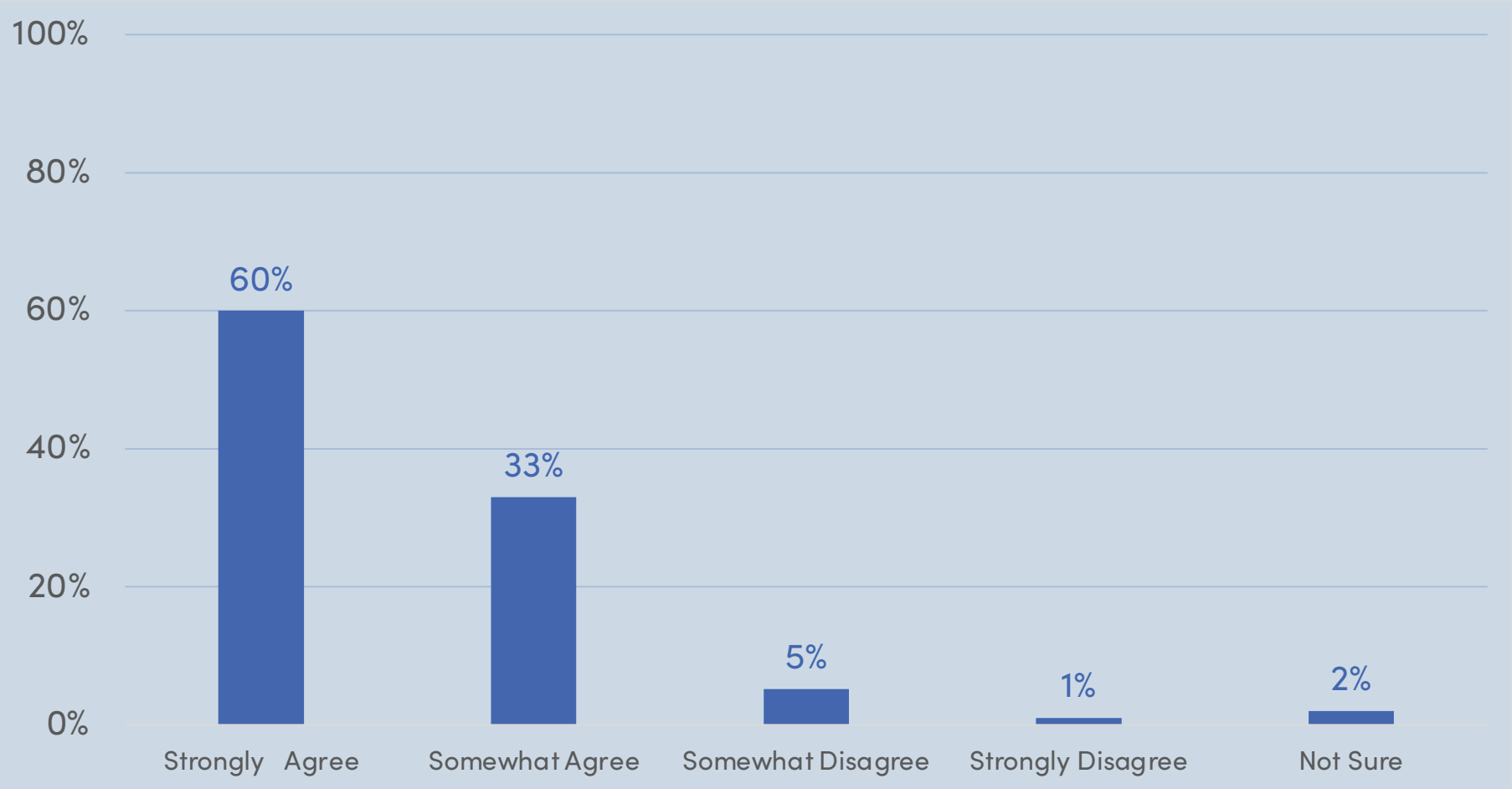
Q38: "Our entire church values our women's ministry." n=741

Lifeway research

95% agree that each month they sense God confirming their call to lead women's ministry

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
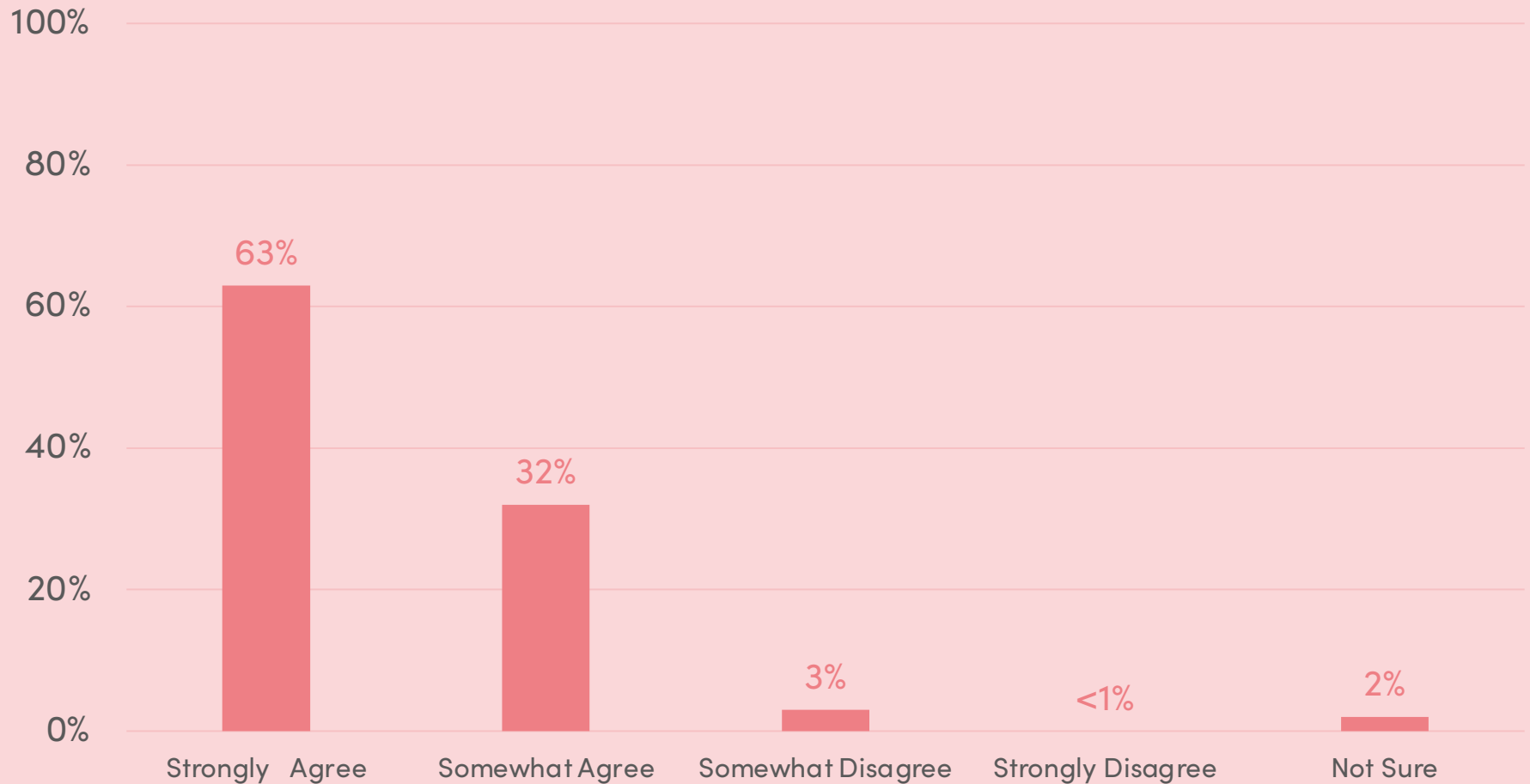
Q39: "Each month, I sense God confirming that I am called to lead our church's women's ministry."   n=740

97% agree that each month they witness God's faithfulness to work in women's lives

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
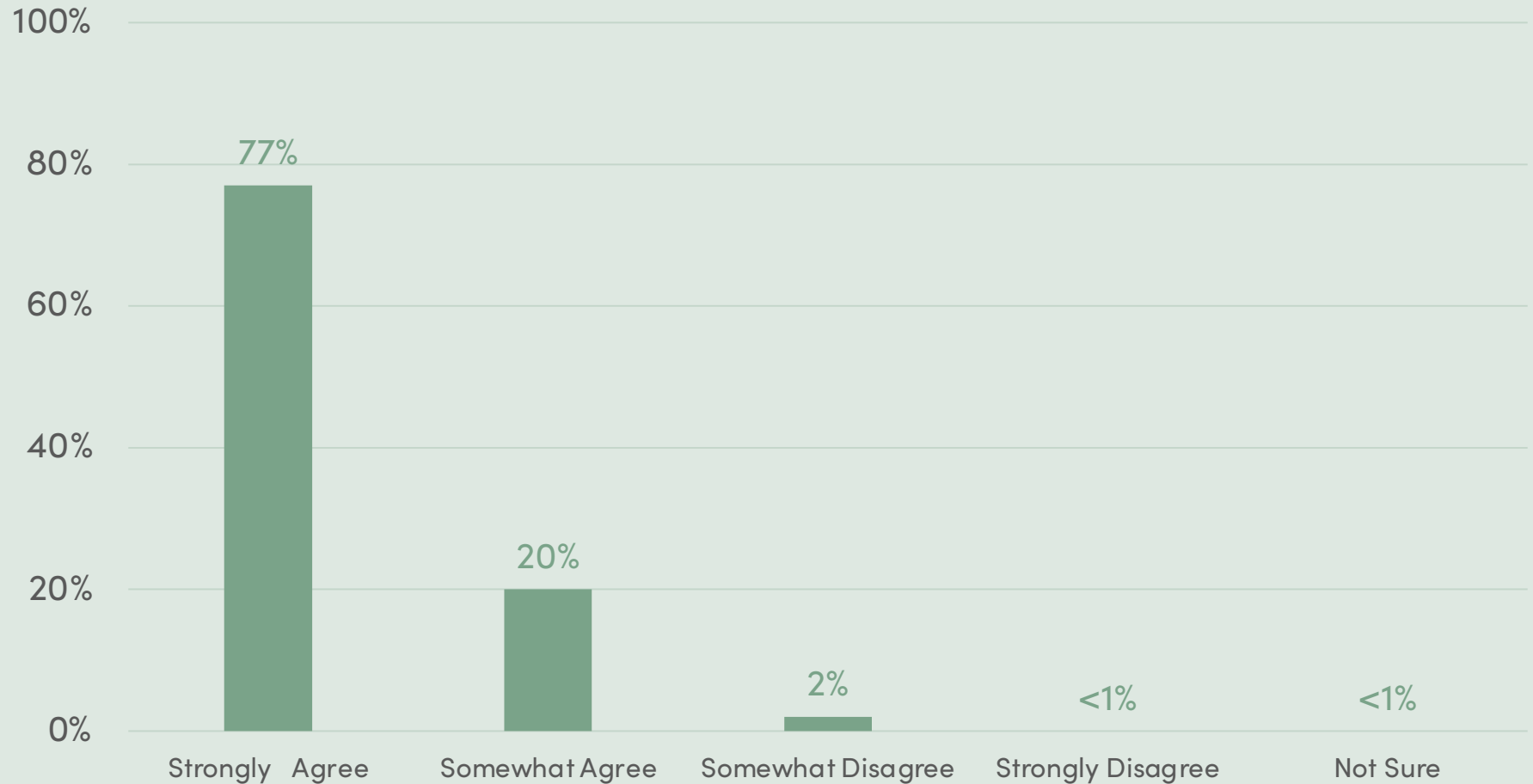
Q40: "Each month, I witness God's faithfulness to work in women's lives in our church." n=740

Lifeway research

50

29% agree that each month they wonder if their efforts in women's ministry matter

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
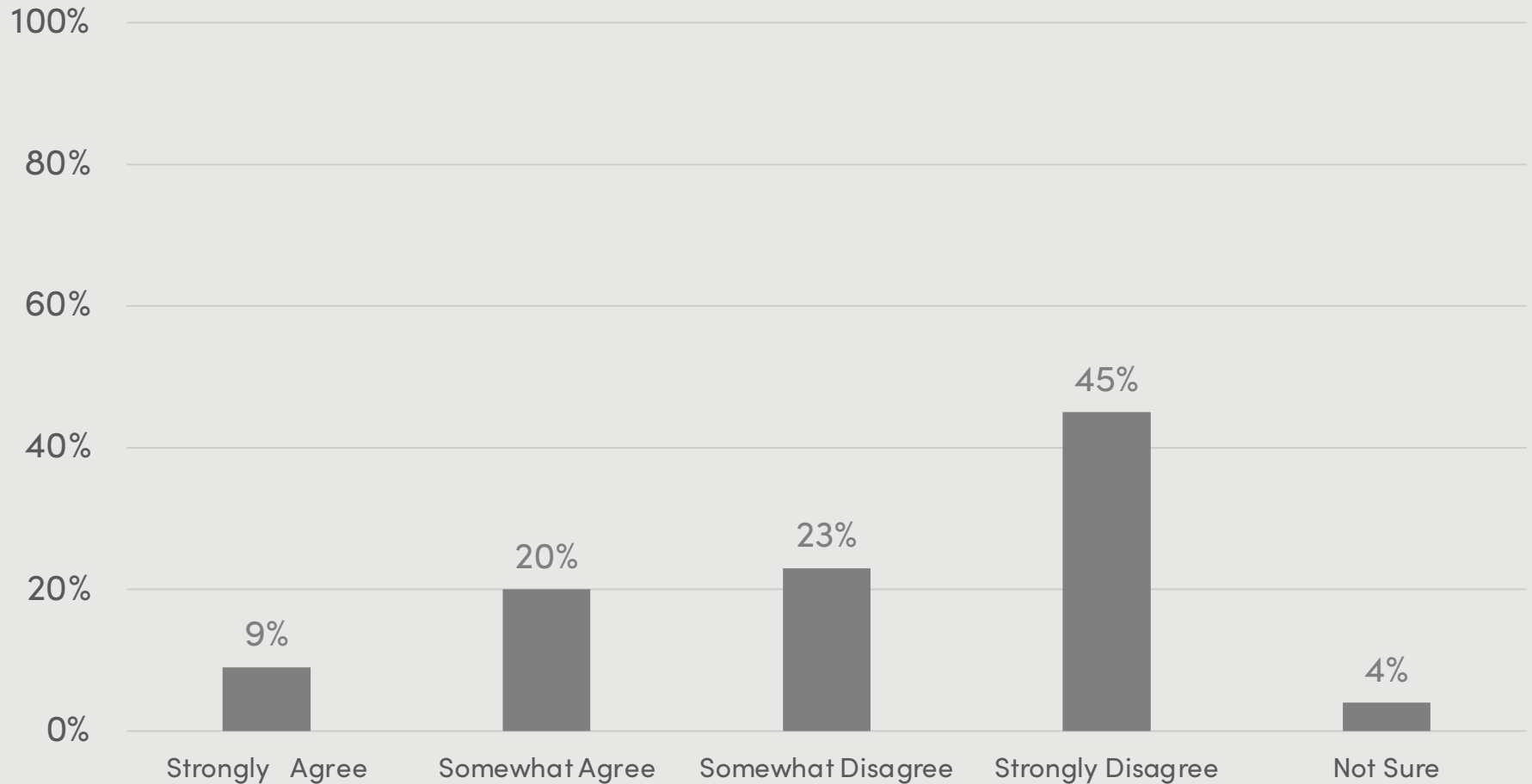
Q41: "Each month, I wonder if our efforts in women's ministry matter."   n=738

82% agree that each month they hear women giving God glory for what they are experiencing in women's ministry

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
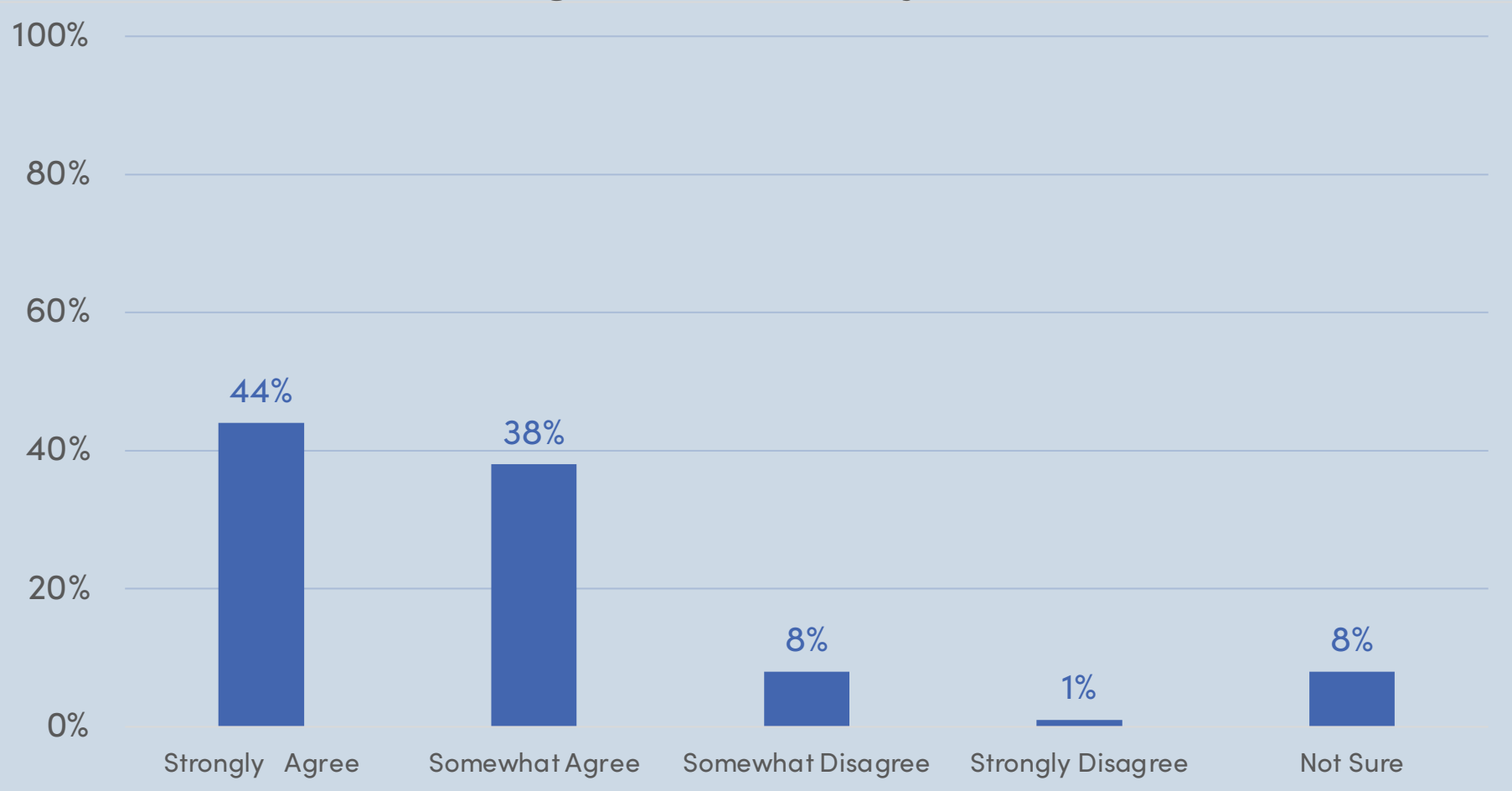
Q42: "Each month, I hear women giving God glory for what they are experiencing in our women's ministry." n=738

Lifeway research

94% agree that each month they feel led by God in their leadership of women's ministry

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
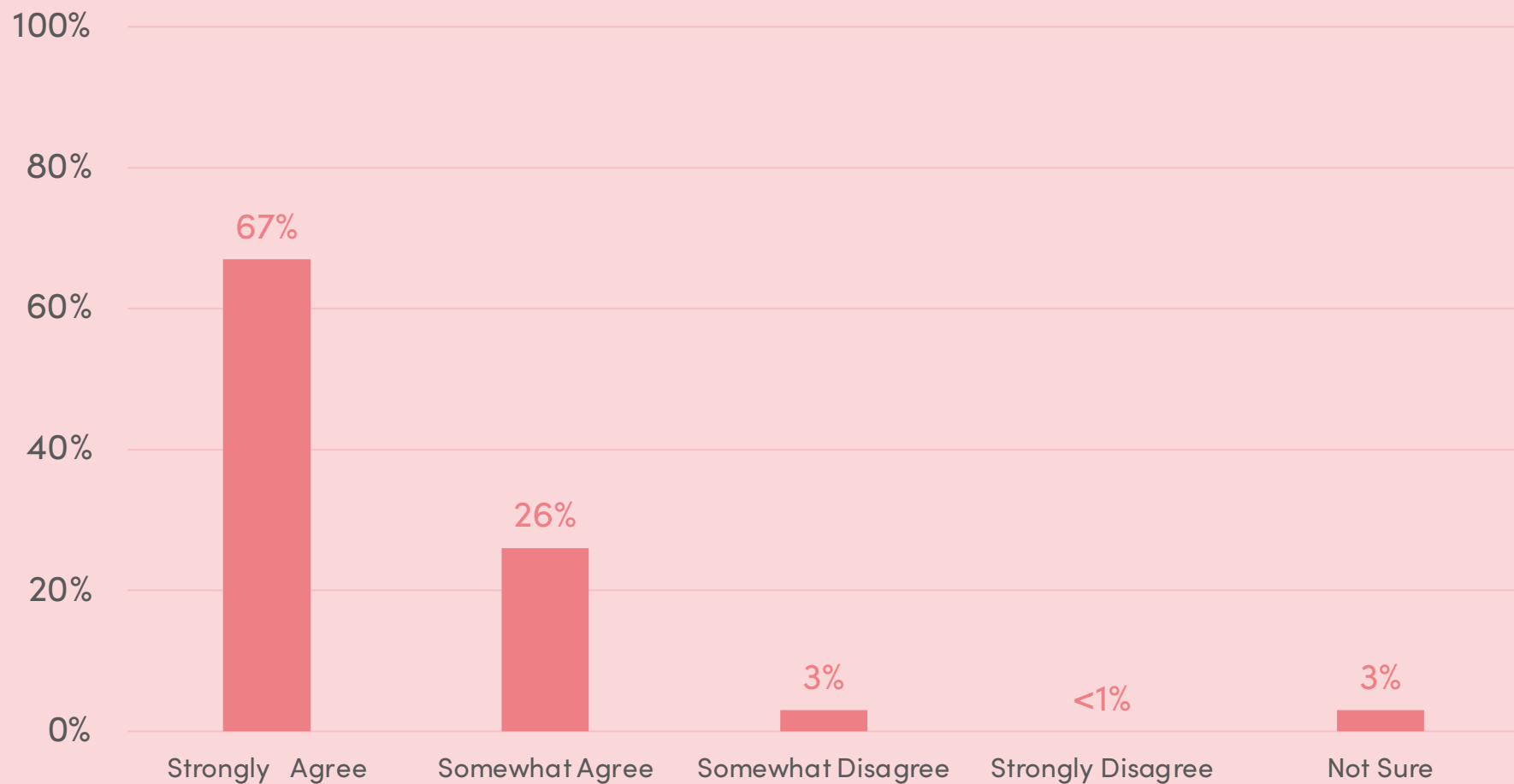
Q43: "Each month, I feel led by God in my leadership of our church's women's ministry." n=738

Strongly Agree — 67%
Somewhat Agree — 26%
Somewhat Disagree — 3%
Strongly Disagree — <1%
Not Sure — 3%

"Why do you choose to lead the women's ministry in your church?"

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

Reason	Percent
I feel called	77%
There was a need	55%
It is my gifting	51%
I love to teach	46%
I was asked	28%
No one else would do it	15%
Other	10%
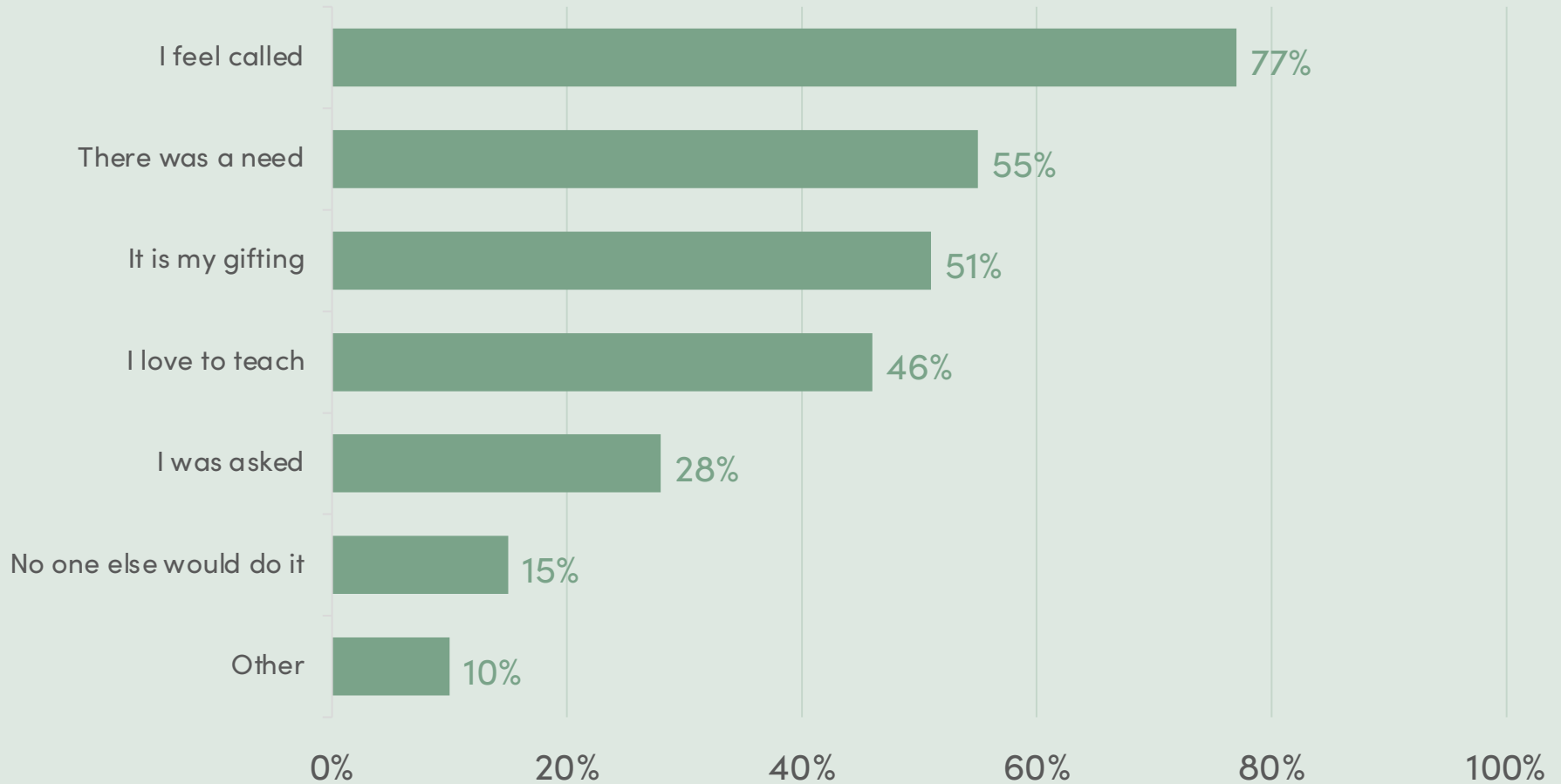
Q44: "Why do you choose to lead the women's ministry in your church? (Select all that apply)" n=738

Lifeway research

Training women's ministry leaders have received

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

I have read books on women's ministry	60%
I have read articles on women's ministry	57%
I have attended women's ministry leadership conferences	55%
I was mentored by a women's ministry leader	46%
I have listened to podcasts on women's ministry	42%
I was trained by our pastor or church staff member	15%
I have seminary training	14%
Other training	24%
I have not received any training on women's ministry	13%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Q45: "Which of the following describe your training as a women's ministry leader? (Select all that apply)" n=738

Lifeway research

"What are the biggest challenges your church's women's ministry faces?"

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
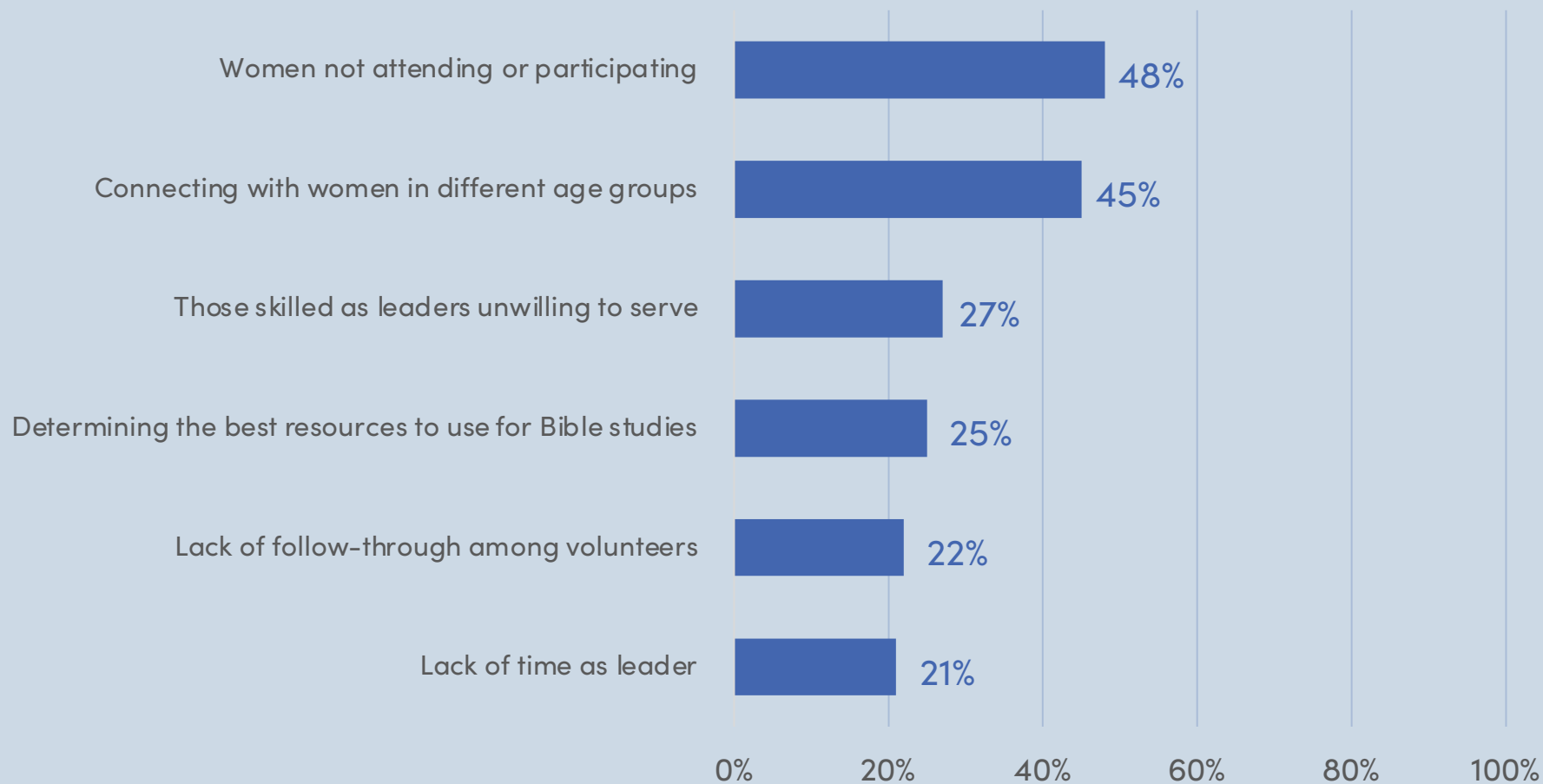
Challenge	Percentage
Women not attending or participating	48%
Connecting with women in different age groups	45%
Those skilled as leaders unwilling to serve	27%
Determining the best resources to use for Bible studies	25%
Lack of follow-through among volunteers	22%
Lack of time as leader	21%

Q46: "What are the biggest challenges your church's women's ministry faces? (Select all that apply)" n=737

Lifeway research

"What are the biggest challenges your church's women's ministry faces?" *cont'd*

Among Women's Ministry Leaders
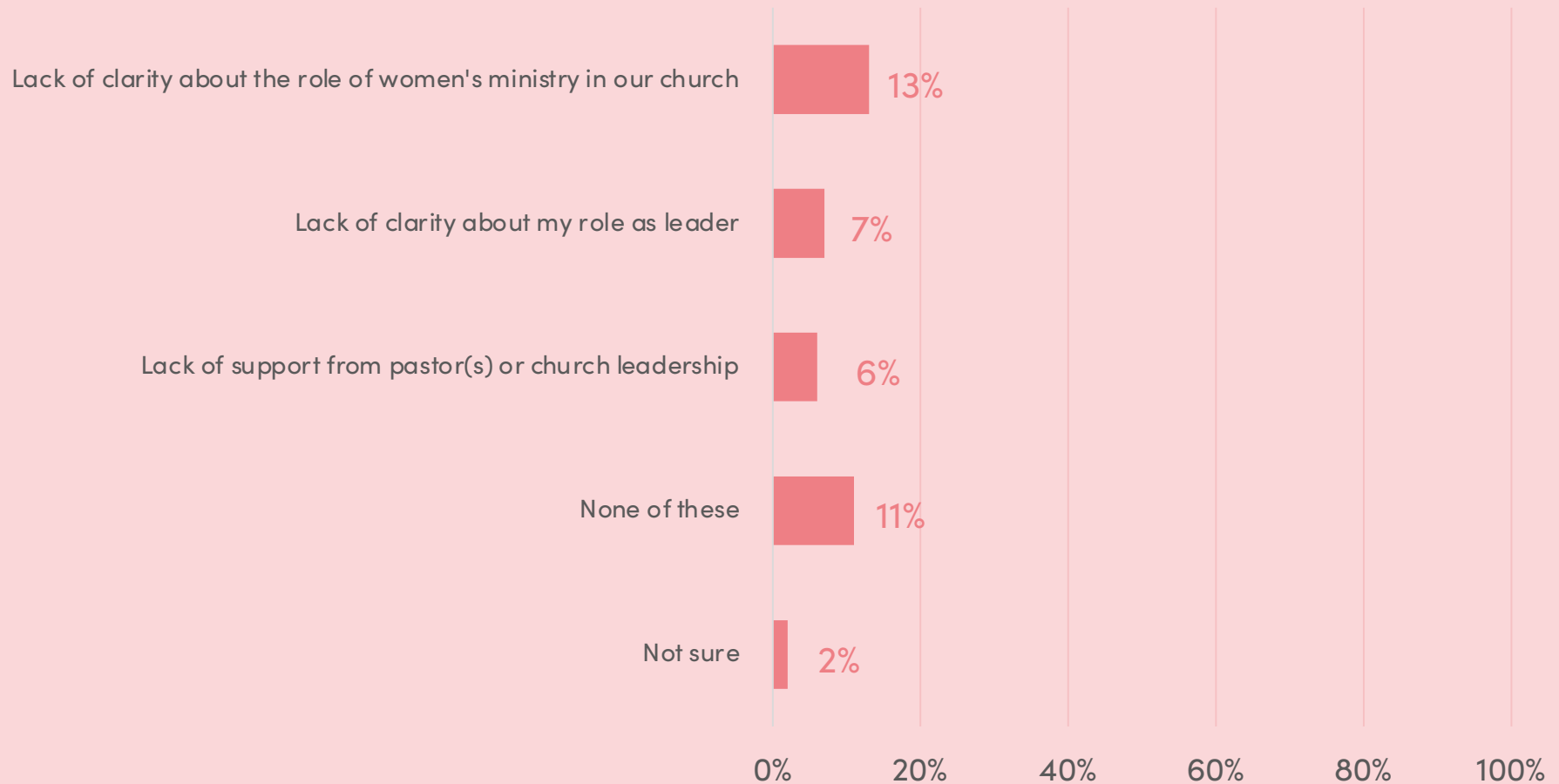
Lack of clarity about the role of women's ministry in our church **13%**

Lack of clarity about my role as leader **7%**

Lack of support from pastor(s) or church leadership **6%**

None of these **11%**

Not sure **2%**

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Q46: "What are the biggest challenges your church's women's ministry faces? (Select all that apply)" n=737

Lifeway research

"In which of the following areas do you feel you need to develop the most as a women's ministry leader?"

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

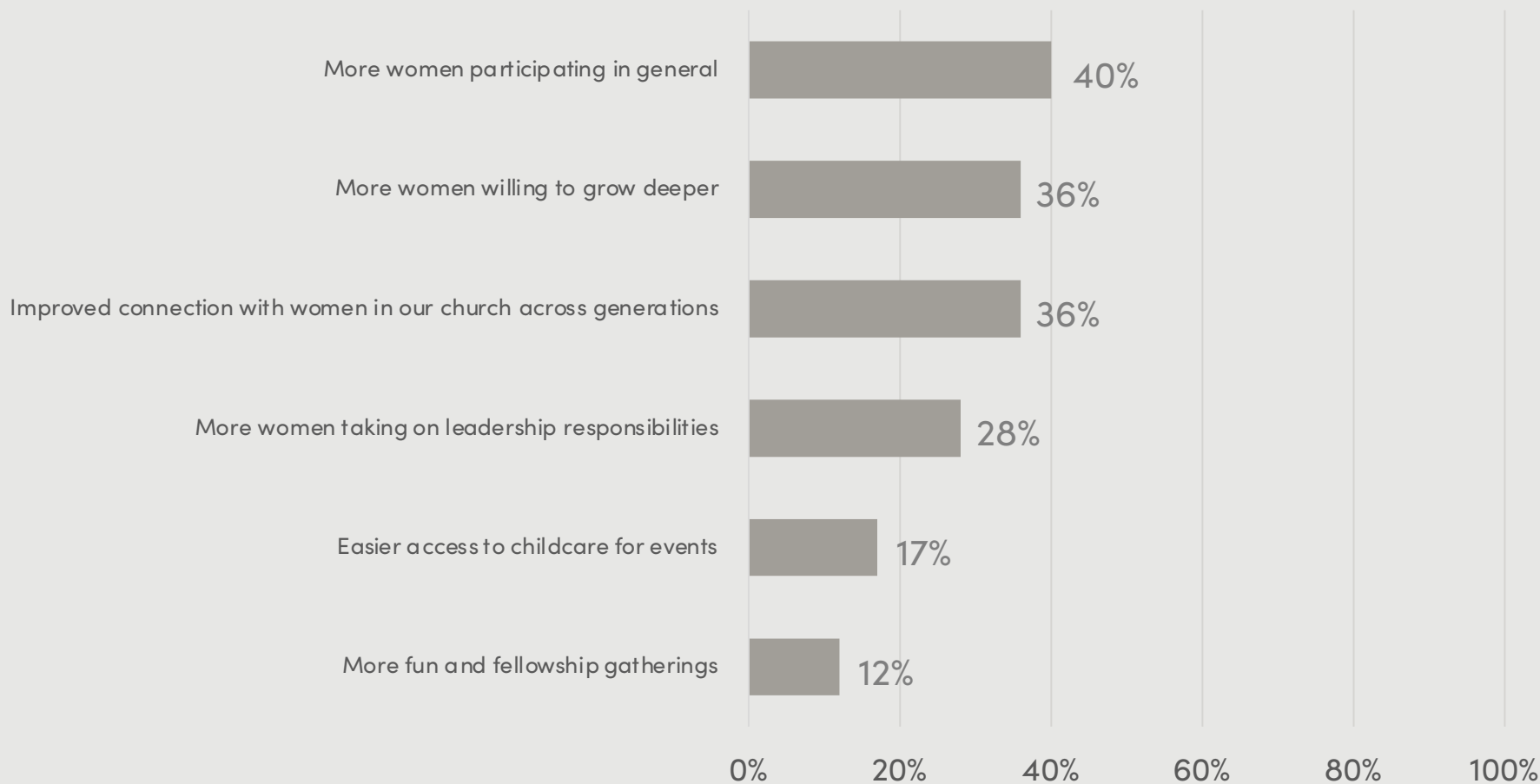|	
Recruiting leaders	43%
Vision and direction	40%
Teaching and training	33%
Promoting and advertising	30%
Conflict management	23%
Communication	23%
Caring and nurturing	21%
Organizing and planning	20%
Leading	19%
None of these	4%
Not sure	4%
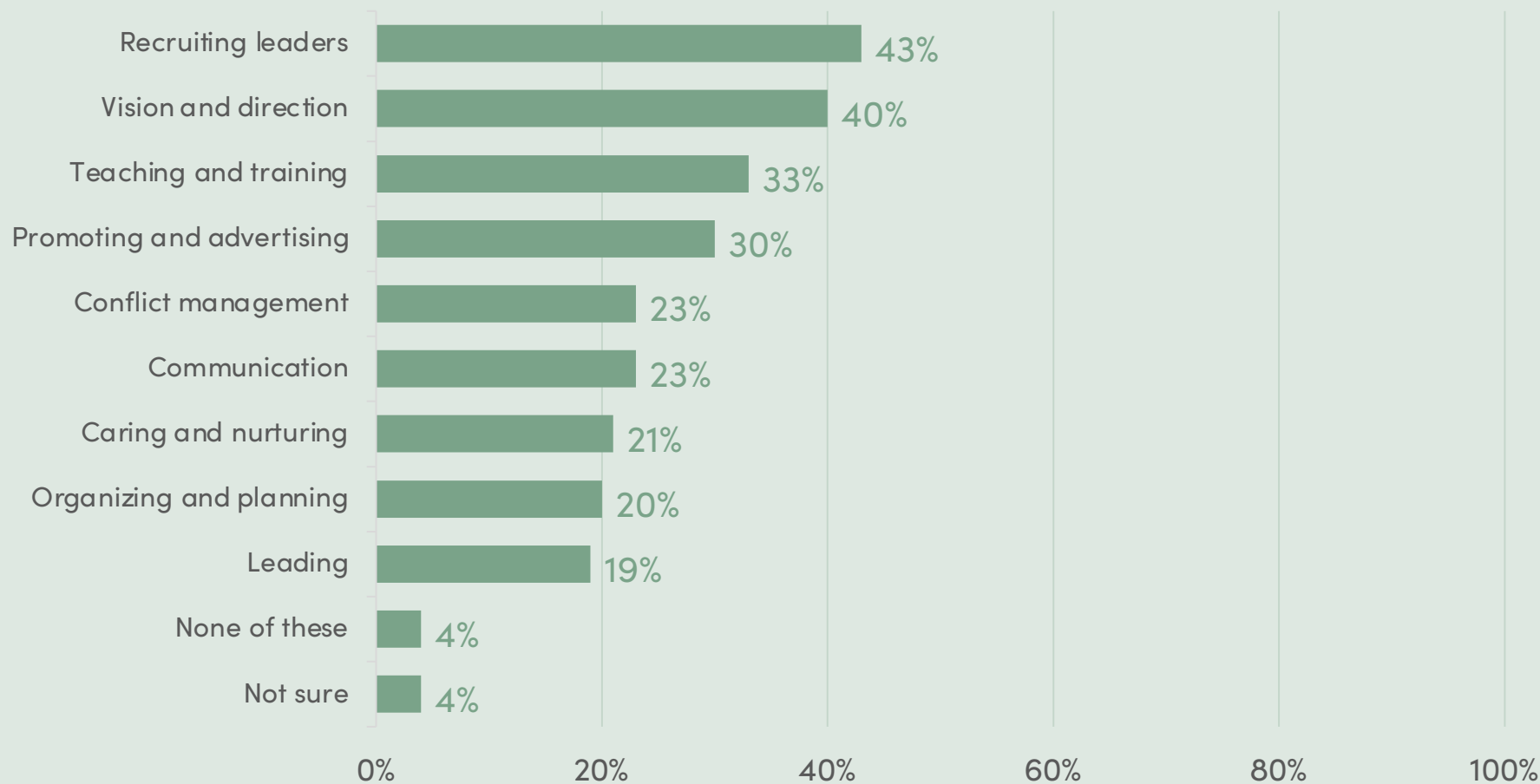
Q47: "In which of the following areas do you feel you need to develop the most as a women's ministry leader?" n=736

TWO changes that would make the biggest positive impact on your women's ministry over the next year

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

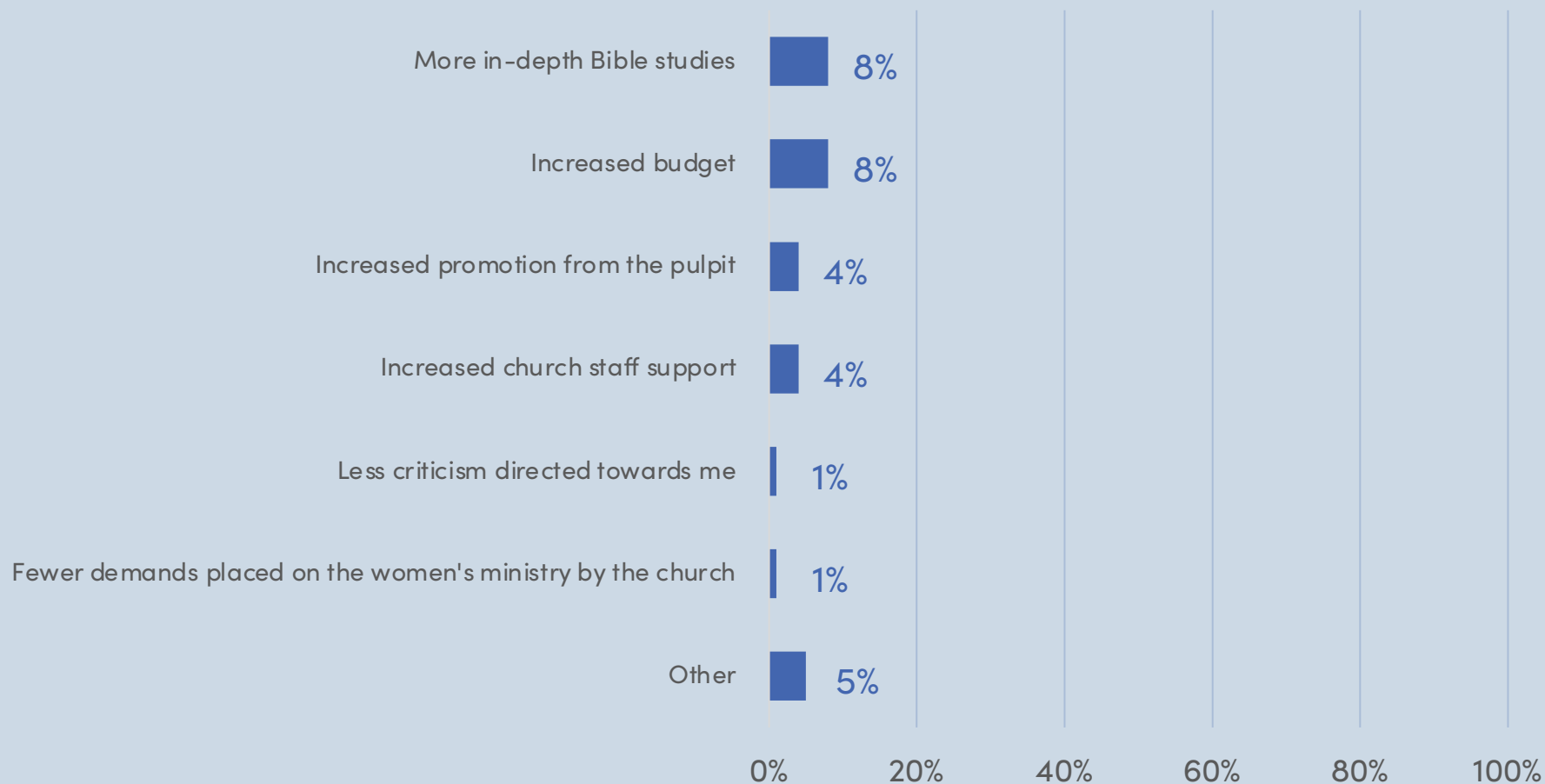| Category	Percentage
More women participating in general	40%
More women willing to grow deeper	36%
Improved connection with women in our church across generations	36%
More women taking on leadership responsibilities	28%
Easier access to childcare for events	17%
More fun and fellowship gatherings	12%

Q48: "Select the two changes that would make the biggest positive impact on your women's ministry over the next year? (Select 2)" n=734

Lifeway research

TWO changes that would make the biggest positive impact on your women's ministry over the next year *cont'd*

Among Women's Ministry Leaders

More in-depth Bible studies	8%
Increased budget	8%
Increased promotion from the pulpit	4%
Increased church staff support	4%
Less criticism directed towards me	1%
Fewer demands placed on the women's ministry by the church	1%
Other	5%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Q48: "Select the two changes that would make the biggest positive impact on your women's ministry over the next year? (Select 2)" n=734

Lifeway research

STATE *of* MINISTRY TO WOMEN

LEADERS REPORT

A survey of evangelical and Black Protestant
women's ministry leaders

Lifeway research