

Lifeway research

Hispanic American Church Study

A SURVEY OF PASTORS OF HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE U.S.

Sponsored by Lifeway Recursos, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA),
and Samaritan's Purse

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INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

Methodology

- The online survey of 554 pastors of Hispanic Congregations in the U.S. was conducted September 12 – November 1, 2023
- Respondents were invited by individual denominations and networks (see following slide). Invitations were primarily made by email providing pastors with a link to the online survey
- Each respondent was screened to ensure they were the senior pastor or the pastor of the Hispanic campus or Spanish-speaking congregation
- Respondents were screened to ensure the congregation was a Hispanic or multiethnic church or a Spanish-speaking worship service or campus within a non-Hispanic church (Pastors of a campus or Spanish-speaking worship service were instructed to only answer for that campus/service)
- Only congregations that are at least 50% Hispanic were included
- Slight weights were used to adjust for varying response rates across denominations
- The completed sample is 554 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 5.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Samaritan's Purse, and Lifeway Recursos for sponsoring this study.

Many thanks go to each member of the **Advisory Group** who gave guidance to the survey design:

- Dennis Rivera (Assemblies of God)
- Angel Jordan (BGEA)
- Lori Tapia (Christian Church Disciples of Christ)
- Carlos Moran (Church of God Cleveland)
- Carlos Astorga (Lifeway Recursos)
- Gabriel Salguero (NaLEC)
- Paco Garcia and Abraham Hernandez (NHCLC)
- Luis Lopez (SBC)

Lifeway Research is grateful for the help of two research partners: David Parla and Lizette Dillinger.

The Lifeway Research project team: Kevin Walker, Daniel Price, and Scott McConnell

Survey Invitations

This project would not have been possible without the survey invitations extended by the following groups to their Hispanic congregations:

- Assemblies of God, Baptist Missionary Association of America, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church North America, Church of God (Cleveland), Church of the Nazarene, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Converge, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Free Church of America, Foursquare, Free Methodists, New Thing, North American Baptists Conference (Hispanics for Christ), Presbyterian Church in America (MNA), Reformed Church in America, Southern Baptist Convention, United Pentecostal Church International, Vineyard, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
- Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Coalition (NHCLC), and National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC).
- In addition to invites from the groups above, Lifeway Research sent invitations to churches in the Lifeway Research panel.

Who the Study Includes

Completed surveys from pastors of Protestant Hispanic congregations in the U.S. from the following groups are included in this study:

- American Baptist Churches USA
- Assemblies of God
- Baptist Missionary Association of America
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Christian & Missionary Alliance
- Christian Reformed Church North America
- Church of Christ
- Church of God (Anderson, IN)
- Church of God (Cleveland, TN)
- Church of God Pentecostal M.I.
- Church of the Nazarene
- Converge
- Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Free Church of America
- Foursquare
- Free Methodists
- New Thing
- Non-denominational churches
- North American Baptists Conference
- Presbyterian Church in America (MNA)
- Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Reformed Church in America
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Southern Baptist Convention
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church
- United Pentecostal Church International
- Vineyard
- Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Note: Groups listed here that are not on the Survey Invitations page are only partially represented.

Limitations

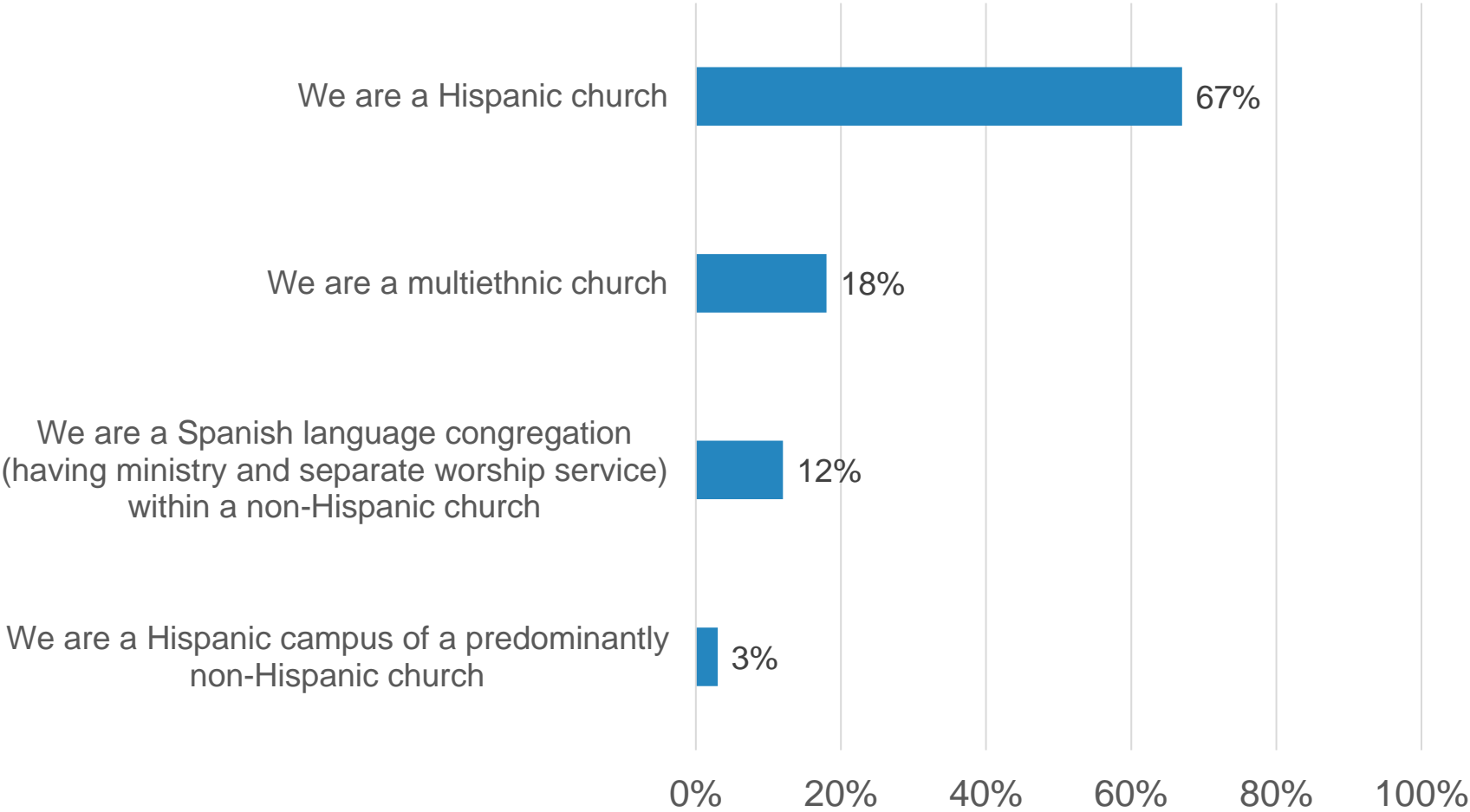
Even this robust sampling effort (554 completed surveys from more than 25 denominations) still has limitations.

Great efforts were made to connect with known groups of Hispanic congregations. Congregations in denominations and faith groups listed on the survey invitations page were invited in the most comprehensive manner. Some denominations were not able to participate during the timeframe of this study.

The full number of non-denominational Hispanic congregations in the U.S. is not known. The large networks who were invited should represent above average sampling but may not match the coverage of invitations within denominations.

Hispanic congregations that exist as a Spanish-speaking service within a non-Hispanic church may be under-represented. While all known congregations were invited by cooperating groups, it is likely that some Spanish-speaking services have not yet identified themselves to their denomination or networks since the entire church already has affiliations of its own.

85% of participating Hispanic congregations are Hispanic or multiethnic churches

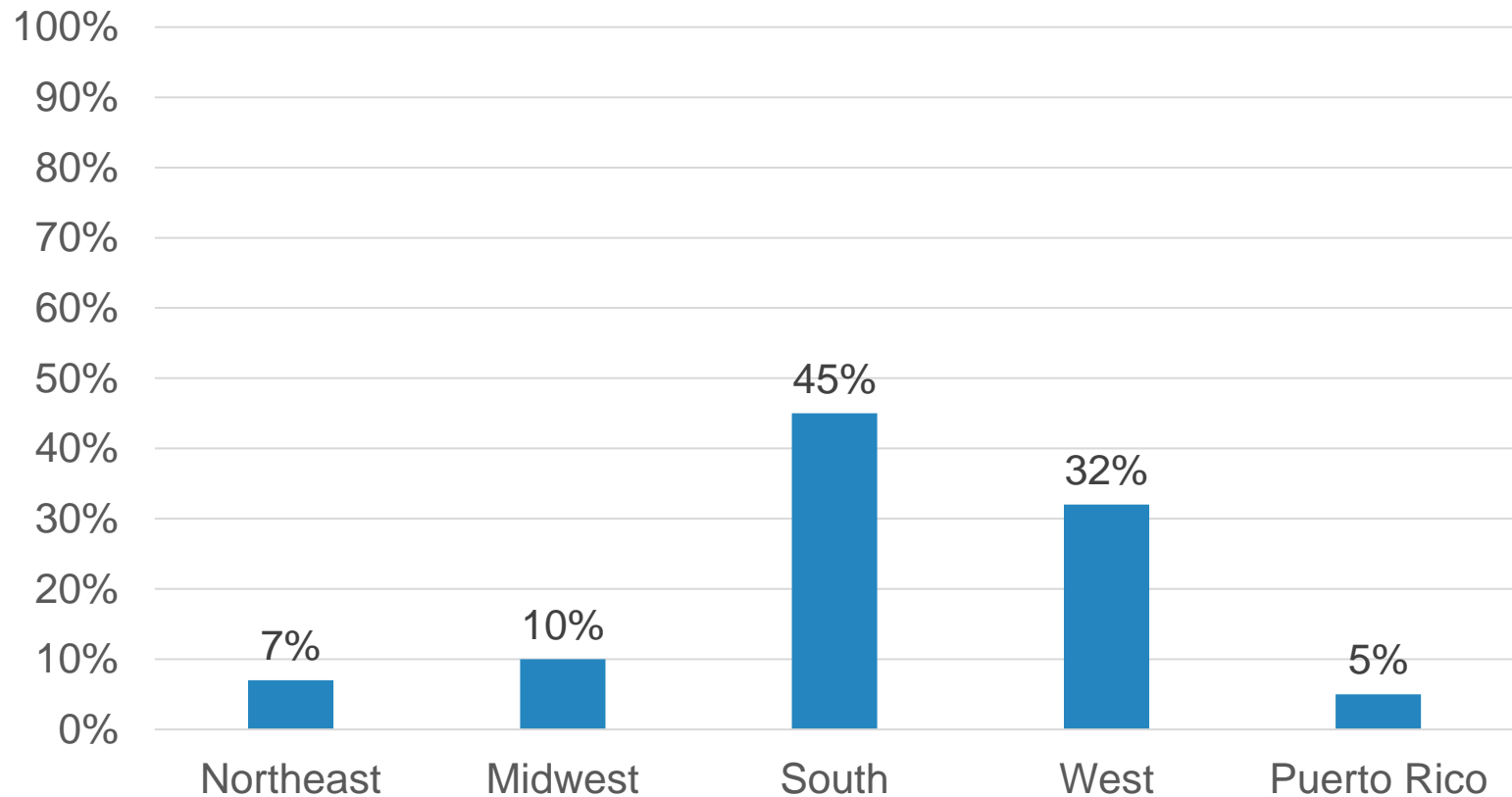


Current ethnic make-up of participating congregations (Means)

Hispanic	95.6%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0.1%
Black/African American/ Afro-Latino	1.3%
Native-American/ Alaska Native	0.2%
White/Caucasian	2.5%
Other	0.3%

To be included in the study, a congregation had to answer that they were at least 50% Hispanic

The largest number of Hispanic congregations participating are in the South and West regions

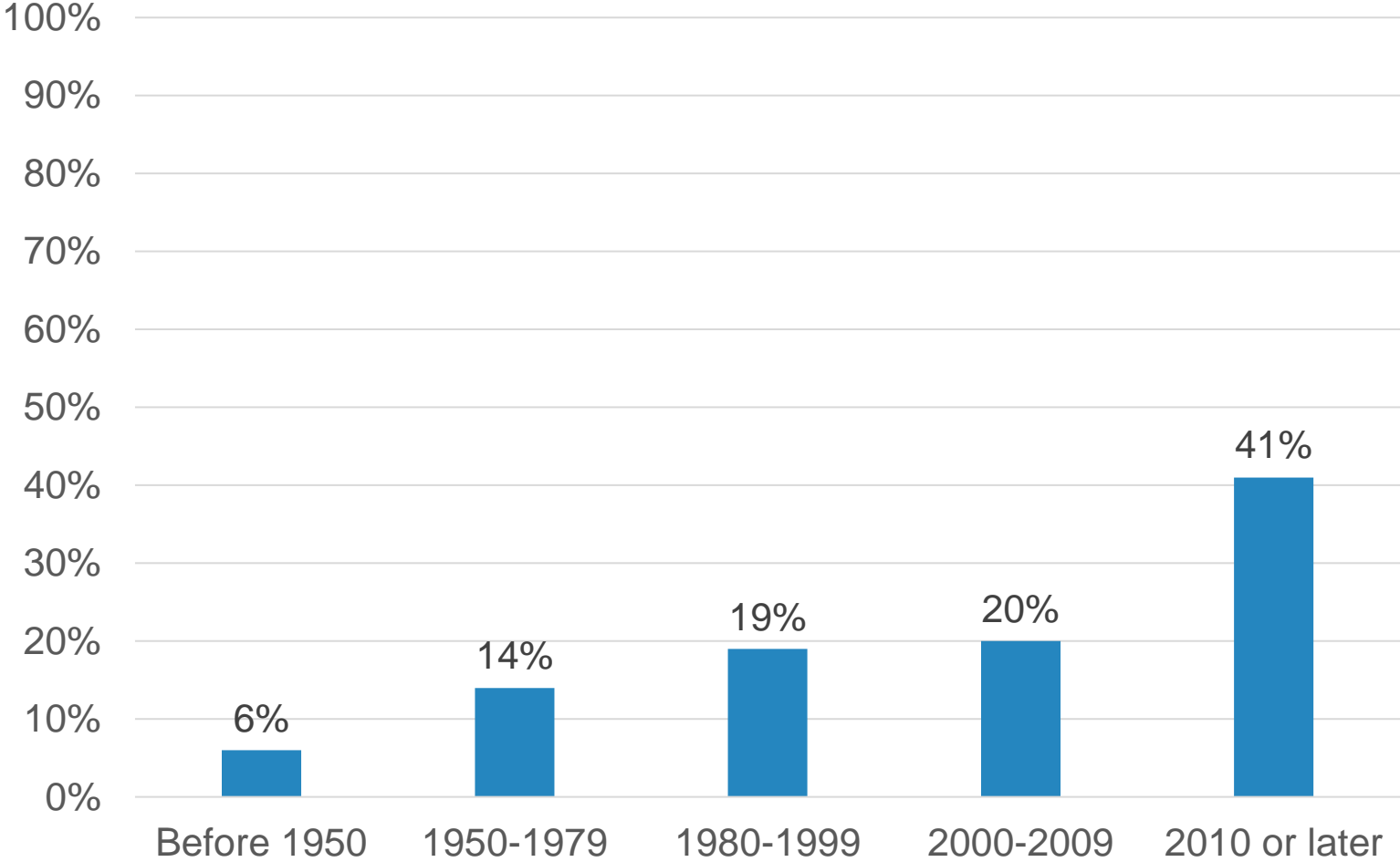


Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

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Q5: "In what State does your church meet?" n=554

62% of participating congregations were established in 2000 or later



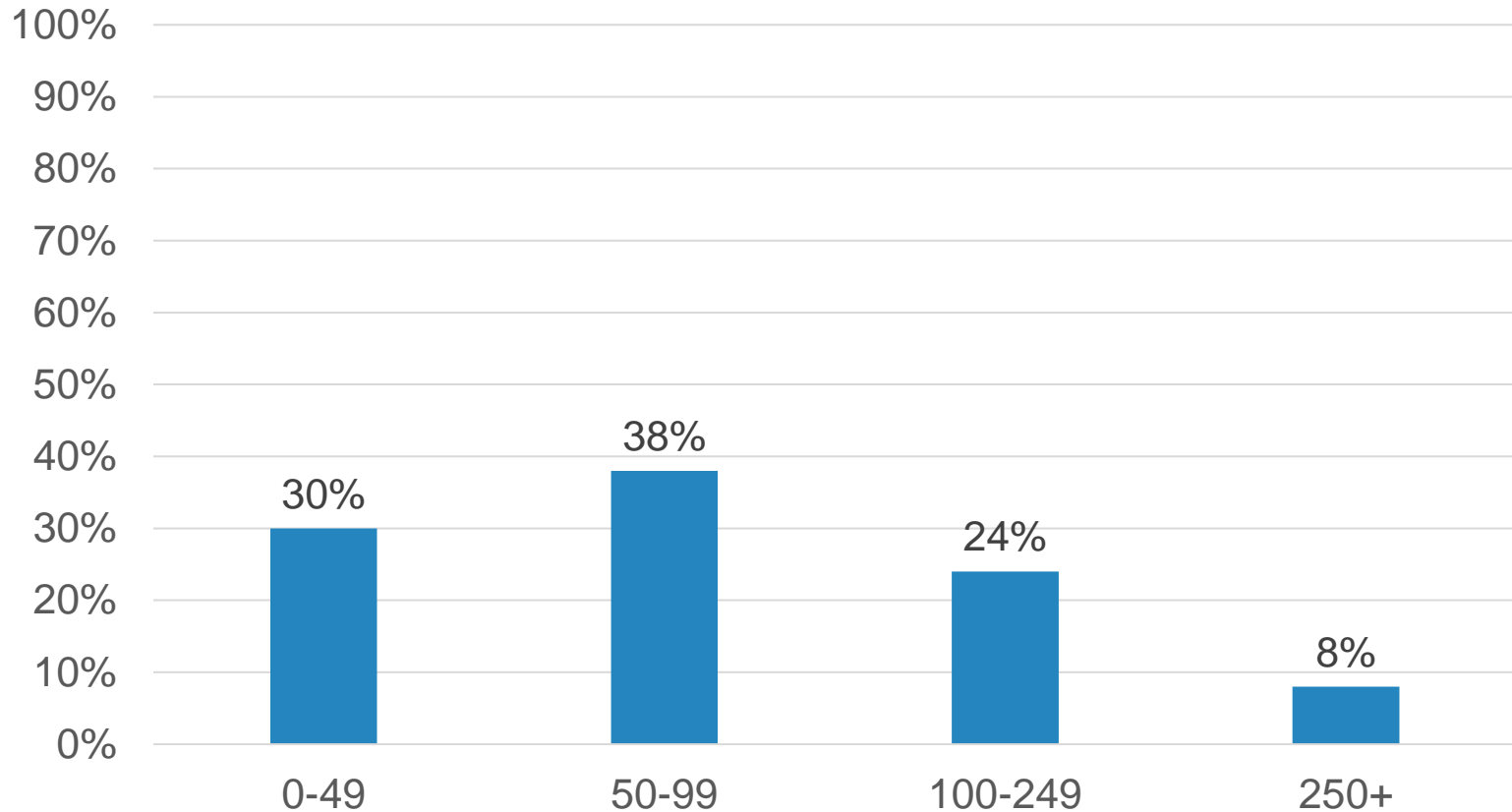
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Q11: "In what year was your church established? (If you are not sure, please give your best estimate.)" n=554

Current immigrant breakdown of participating congregations (Means)

1 st Gen	Born outside of the United States	62%
2 nd Gen	Were born in the United States, but have parents who were born outside of the United States	25%
3 rd Gen+	Were born in the United States and so were their parents	13%

Current average attendance



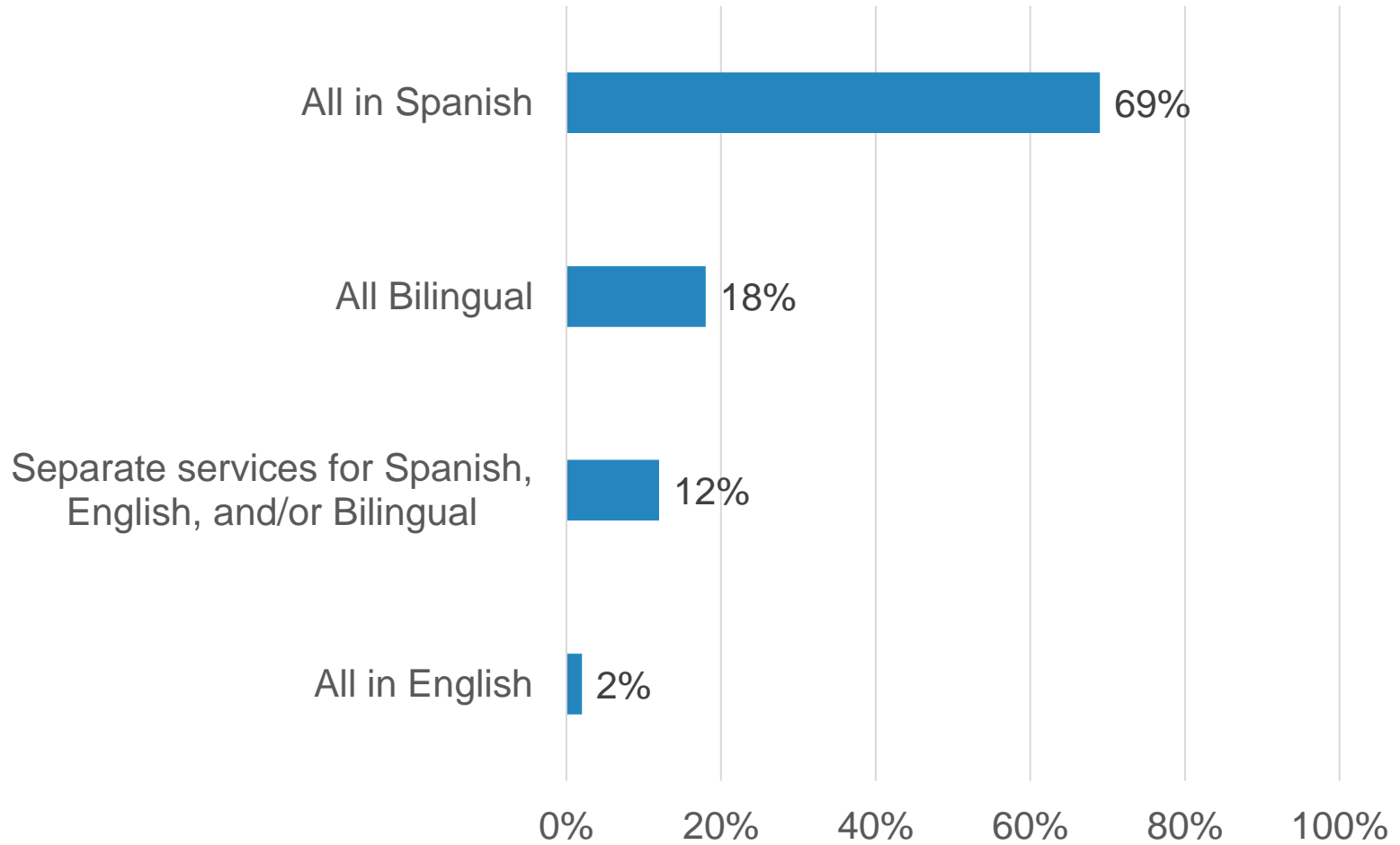
Mean attendance: 103

Median attendance: 65

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Q13: "What is your congregation's average worship attendance **in-person** on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" n=554

69% conduct worship services in Spanish; 18% conduct bilingual services

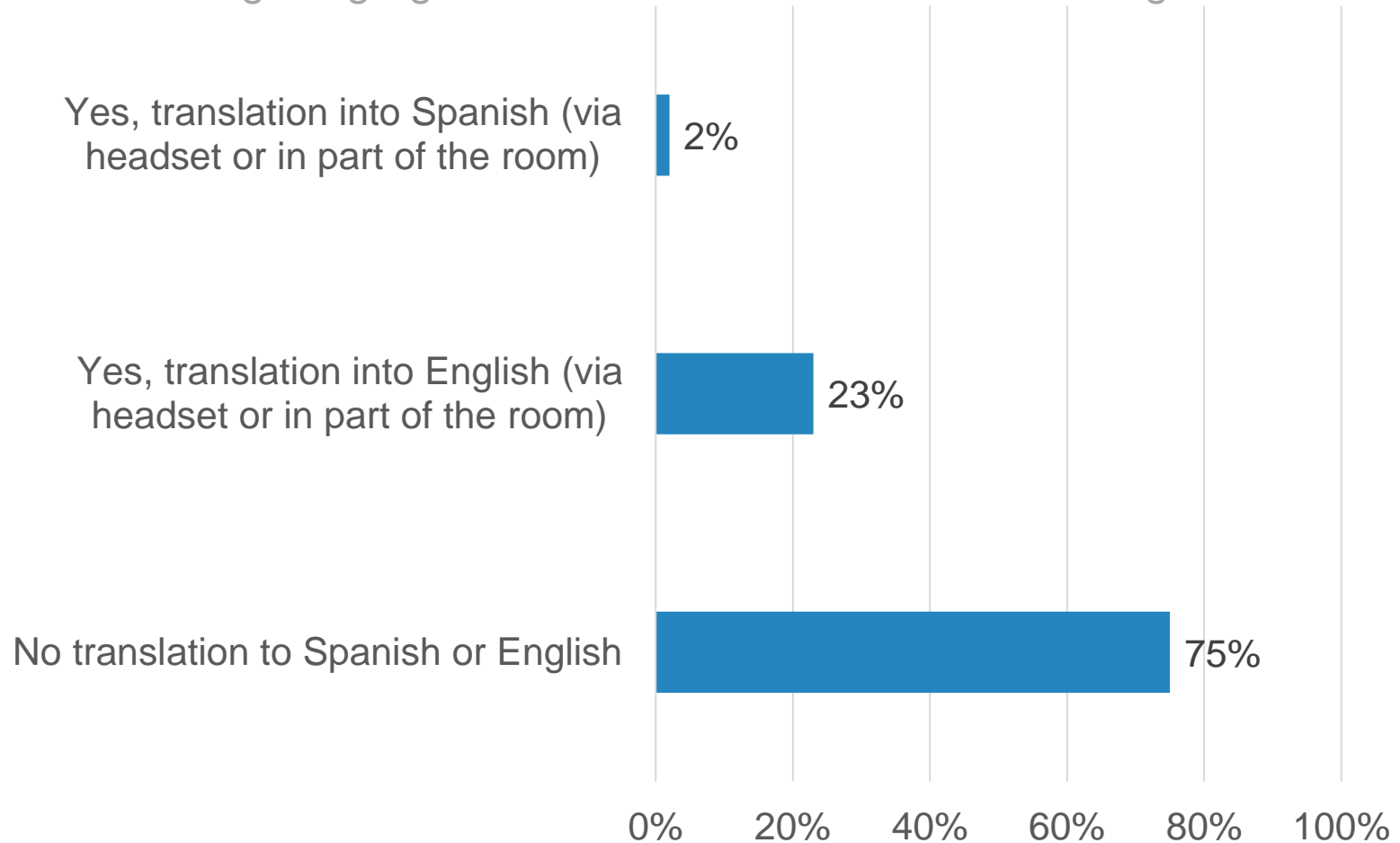


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Q14: "What language(s) are used to lead your worship services? (Select one)" n=554

75% do not offer translations for the single language used in worship

Among congregations whose services are not all bilingual



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More Acculturated ≥ 5 Less Acculturated < 5

Acculturation Score = Immigration Score + Language Score

Immigration Score

Congregation % Born Outside US *1

Congregation % Born in US but parent(s) born outside US*2.5

Congregation % Born in US and both parents born in US*5

SUM of the above divided by 100

Language Score

Worship service(s) All in Spanish and not translation to English= 1

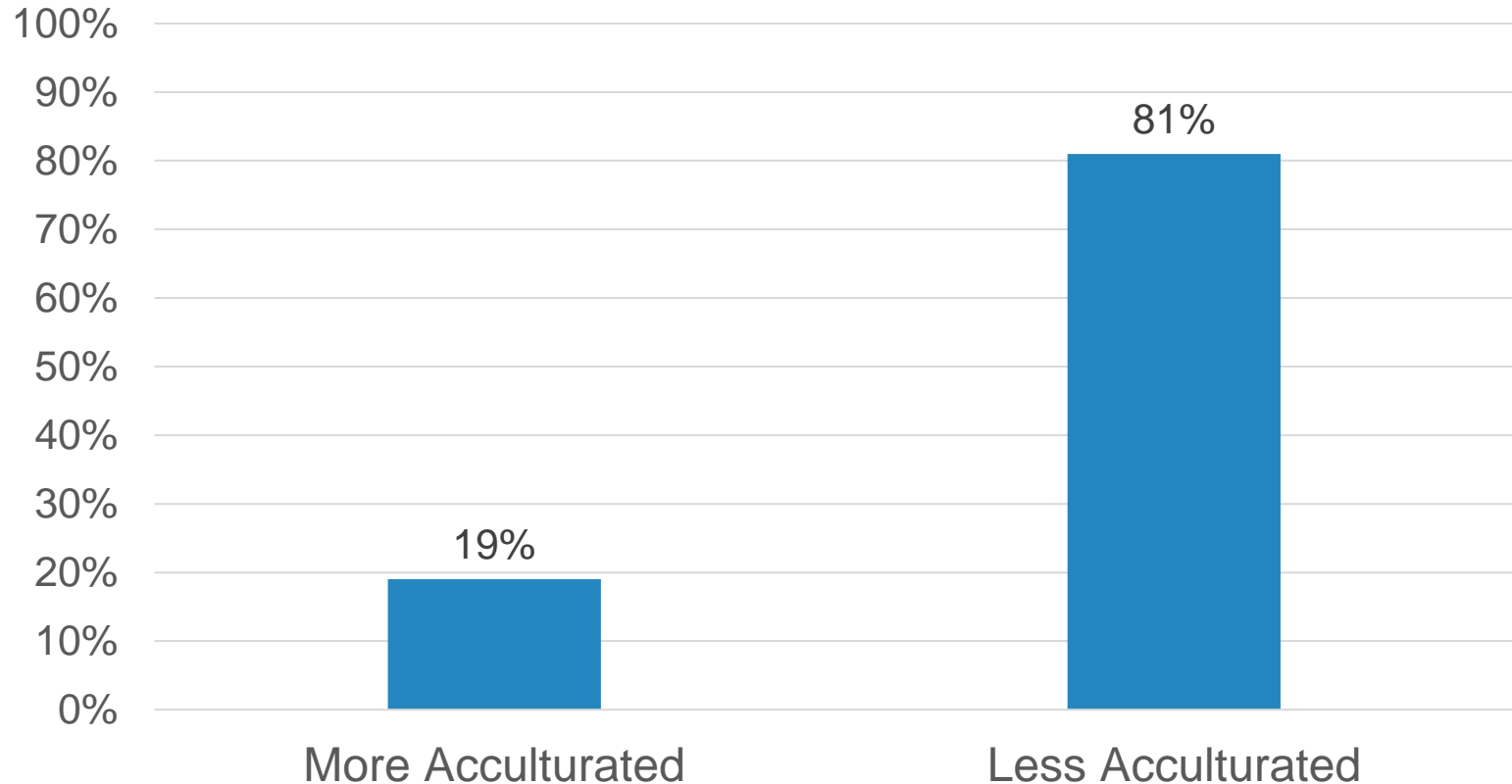
Worship service(s) All in Spanish or Separate services And with translation to English =2

All Bilingual or Separate services with no translation= 3

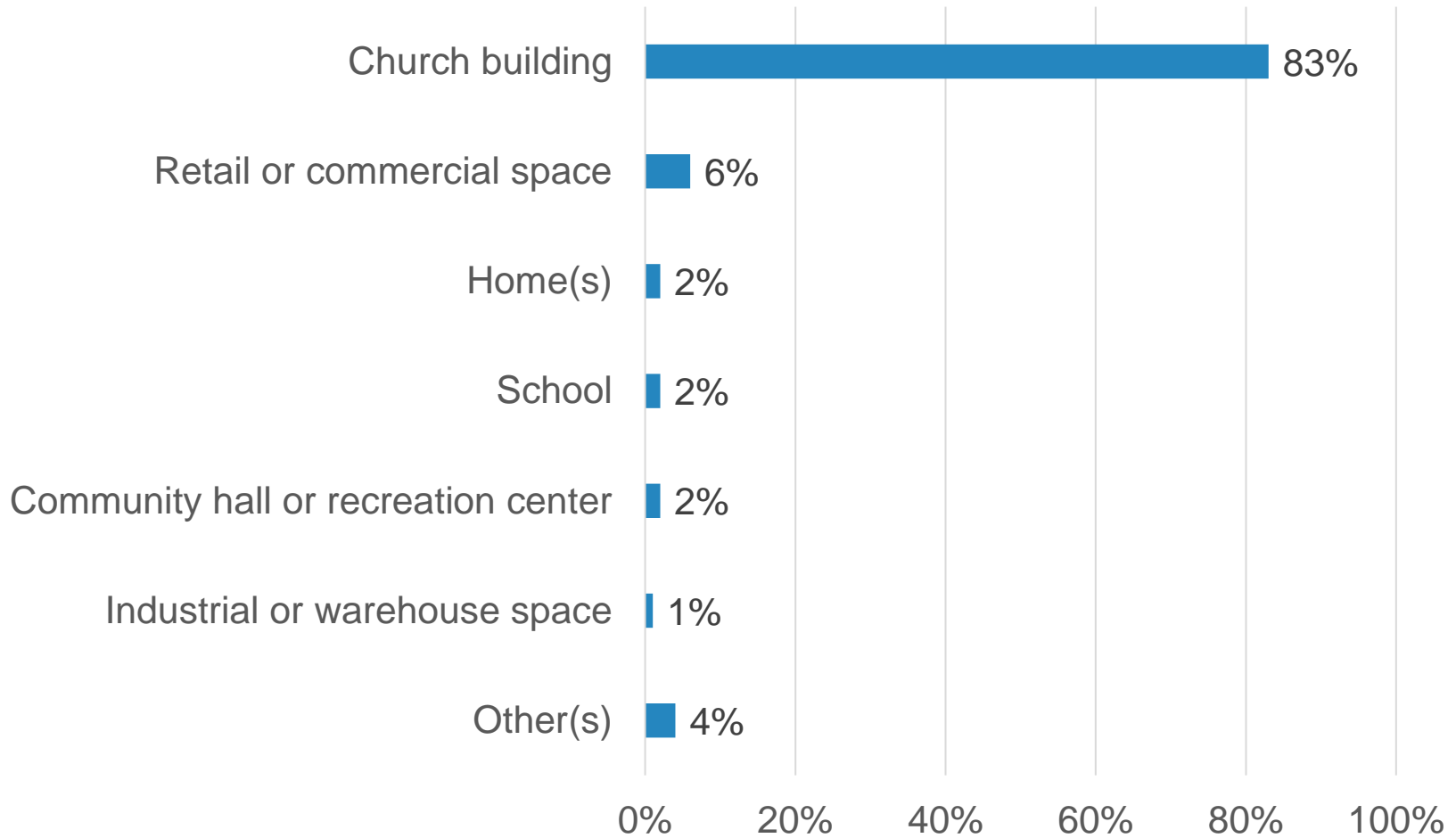
Worship service(s) All in English or Separate services And with translation to Spanish =4

Worship service(s) All in English with no Spanish translation =5

Hispanic congregations are 4 times as likely to be Less Acculturated than More Acculturated



83% use a church building as a primary facility for worship services; 6% use a retail or commercial space



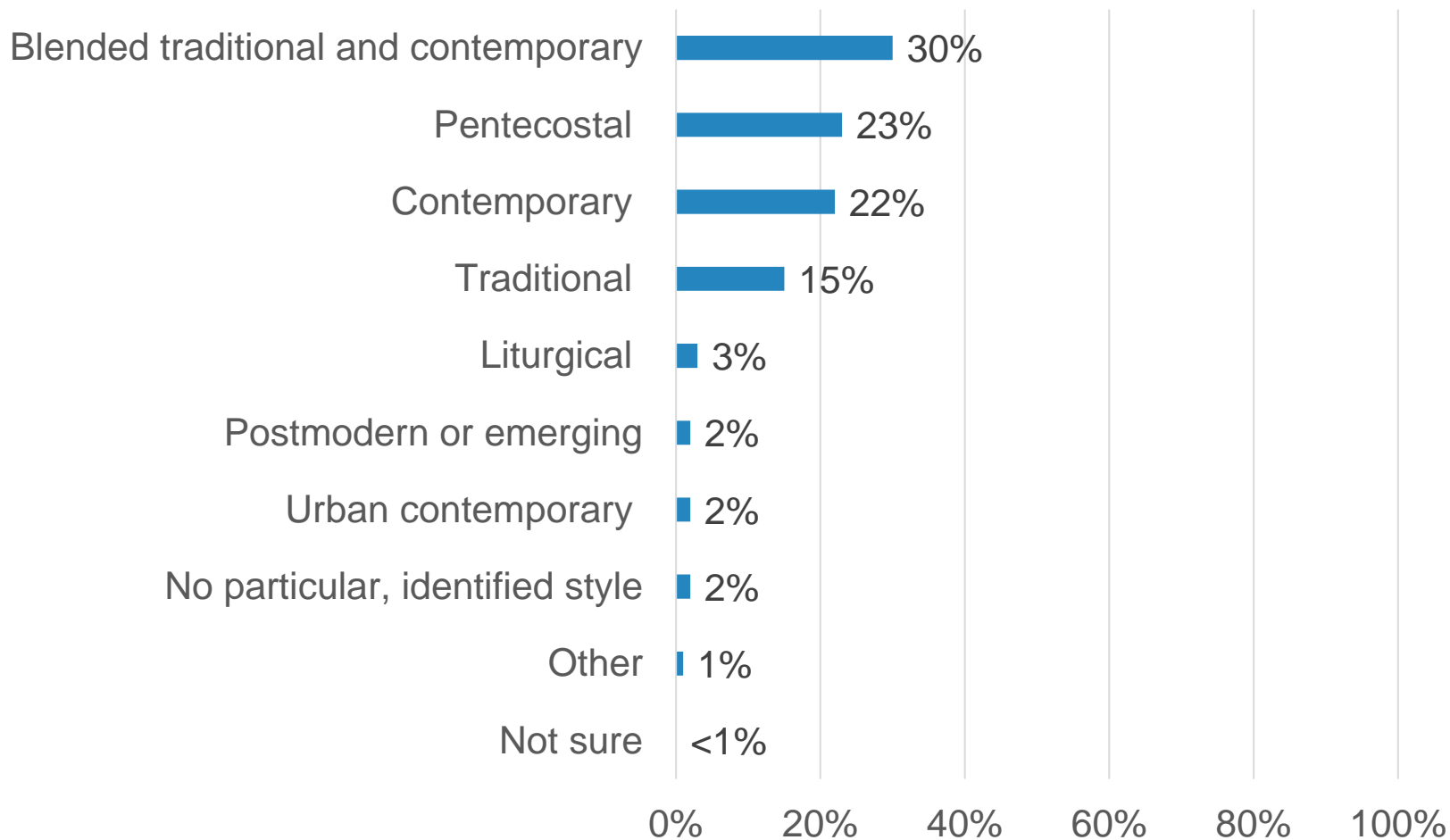
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Q16: "What is the primary facility where your church currently conducts worship services? (Select one)" n=554

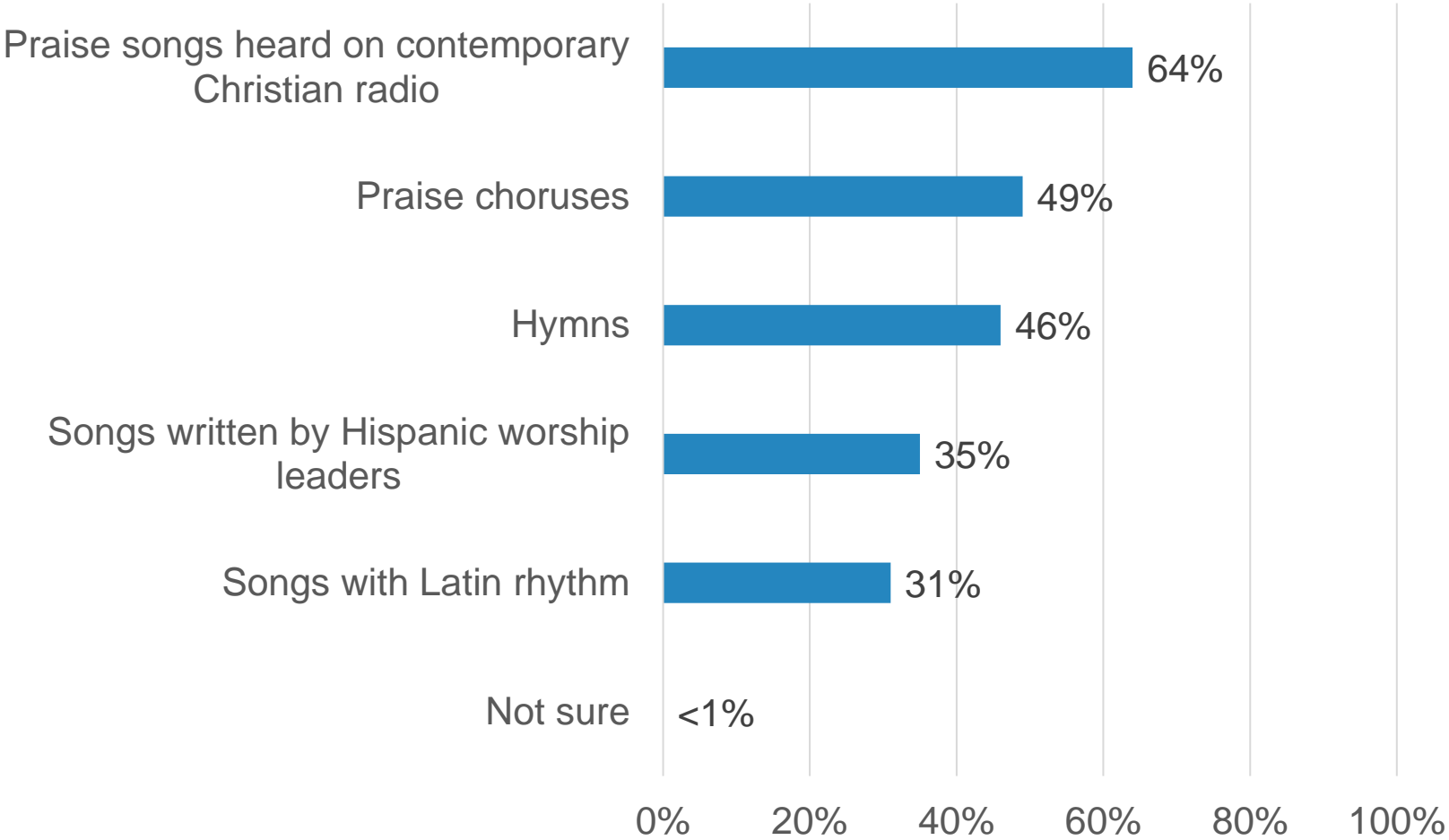
How would you best describe the worship style of your church? *Full Question Text*

- **Traditional** (formal, orderly, majestic, reflective)
- **Contemporary** (expressive, celebrative, informal)
- **Pentecostal** (spontaneous, participatory praying out loud, speaking in tongues, healing, signs, highly expressive)
- **Postmodern or emerging** (ancient reverence, multisensory, experiential, use of technology, visual art)
- **Urban contemporary** (use of technology, spoken word, informal)
- **Liturgical** (people participating in readings, reciting prayers, rituals)
- **Blended traditional and contemporary**
- **No particular, identified style**
- **Other**
- **Not sure**

Top worship styles: Blended (30%), Pentecostal (23%), Contemporary (22%), and Traditional (15%)



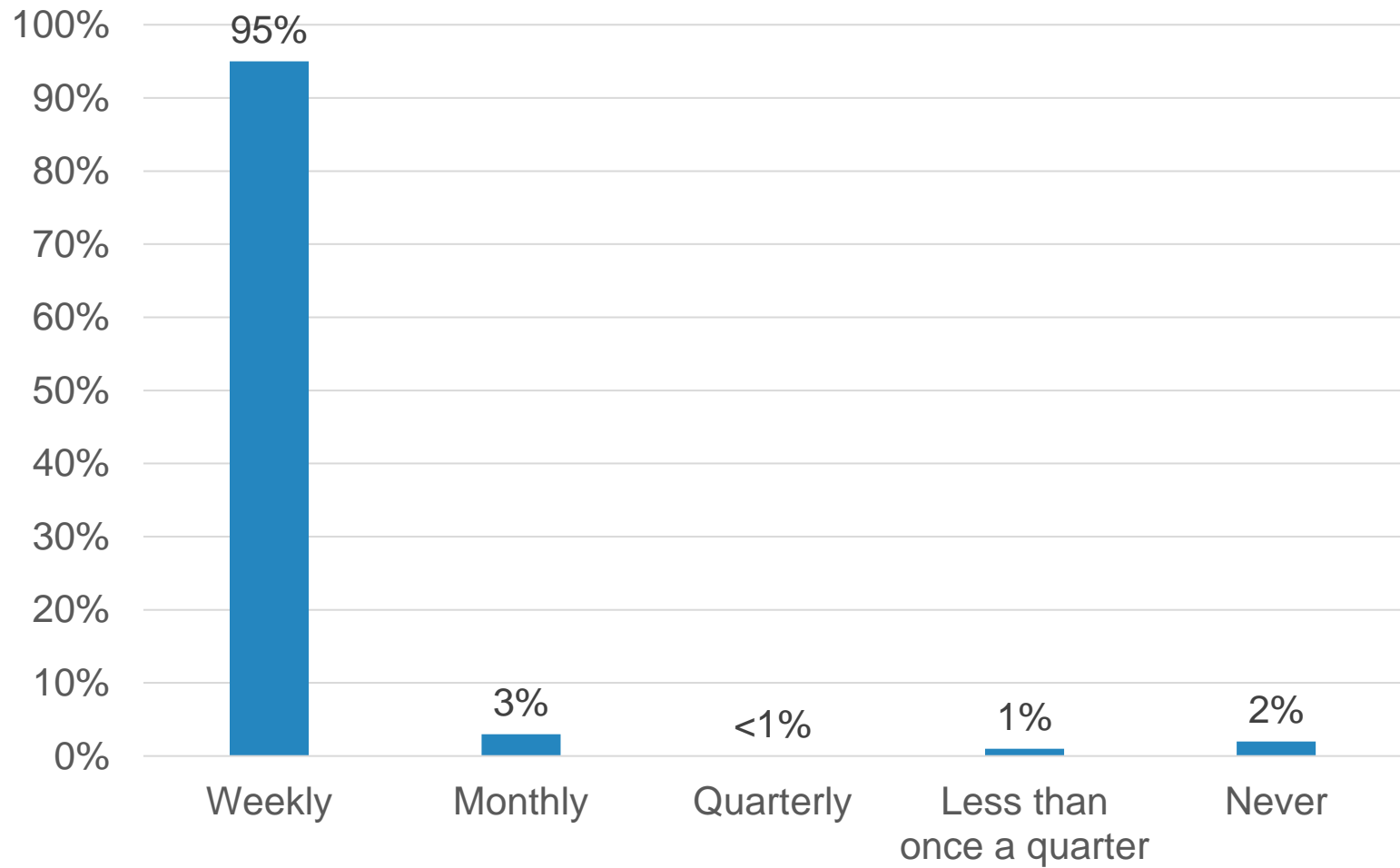
“Which of the following types of songs are sung regularly in your worship services?”



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Q18: “Which of the following types of songs are sung regularly in your worship services? (Select all that apply)” n=554

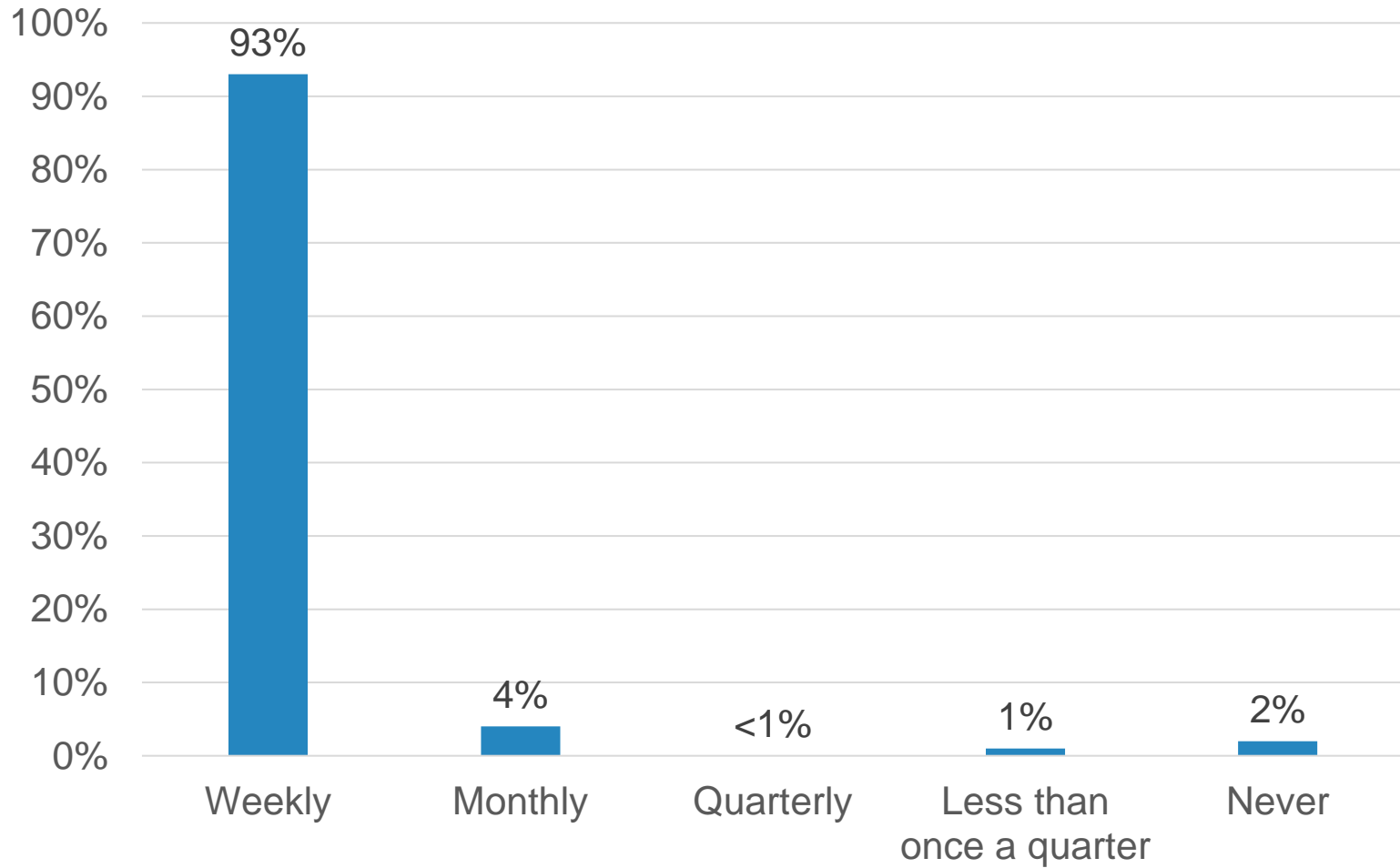
Congregational Singing used in worship gatherings



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Q19_1: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Congregational Singing" n=554

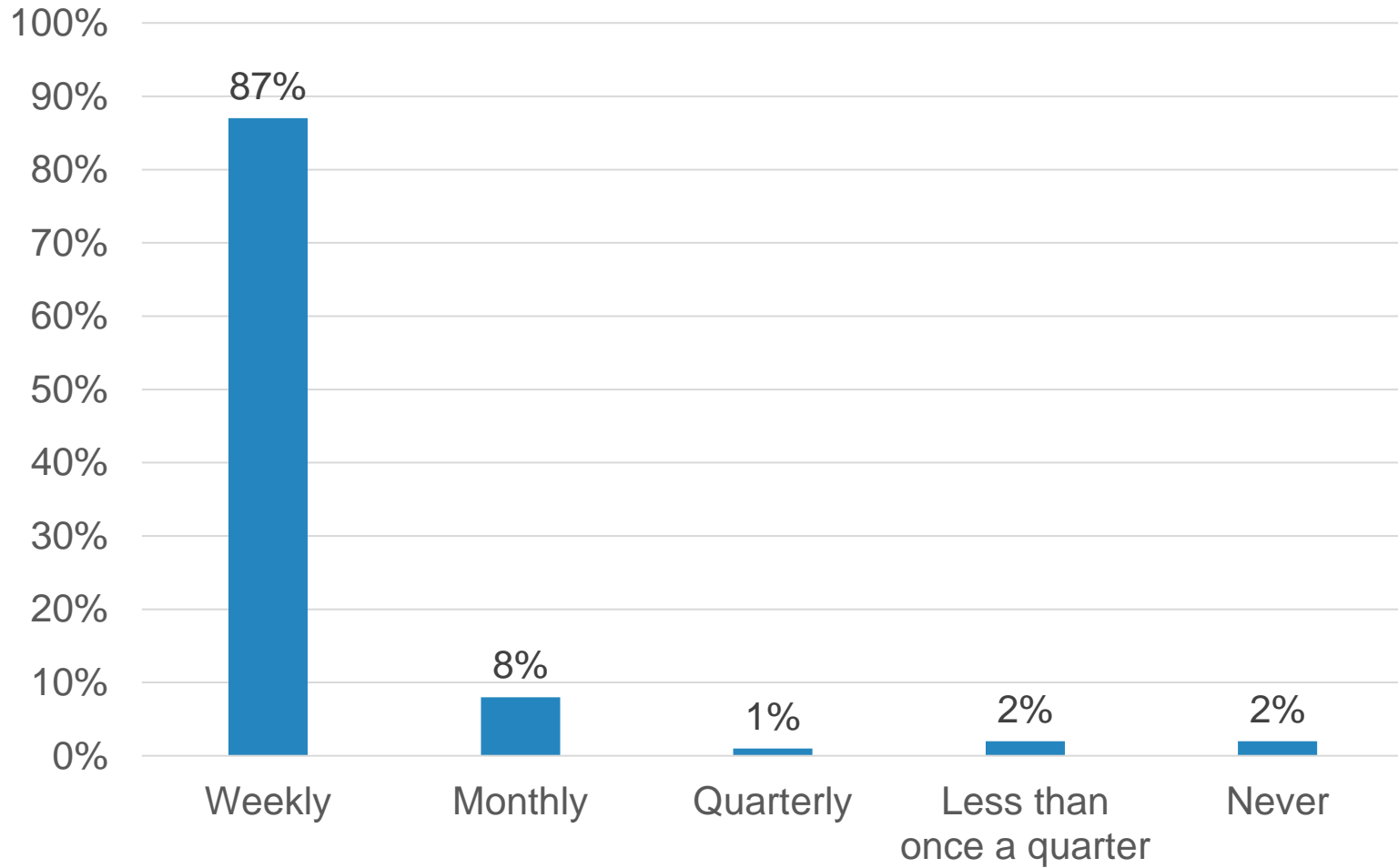
Pastoral prayer in worship gatherings



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Q19_2: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Pastoral prayer" n=554

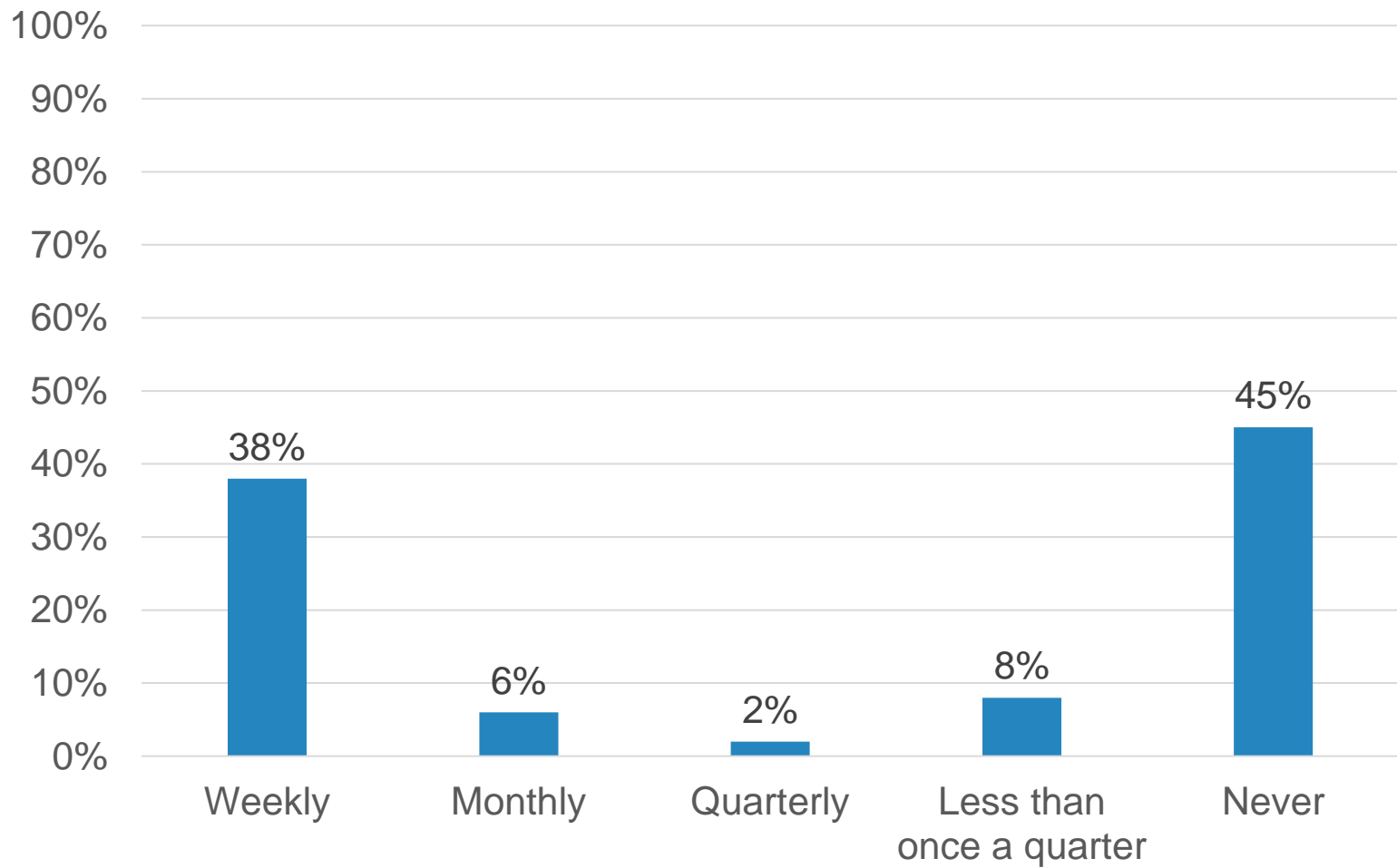
Prayers of intercession for the sick and needy in worship gatherings



Lifeway research

Q19_3: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element) Prayers of intercession for the sick and needy" n=554

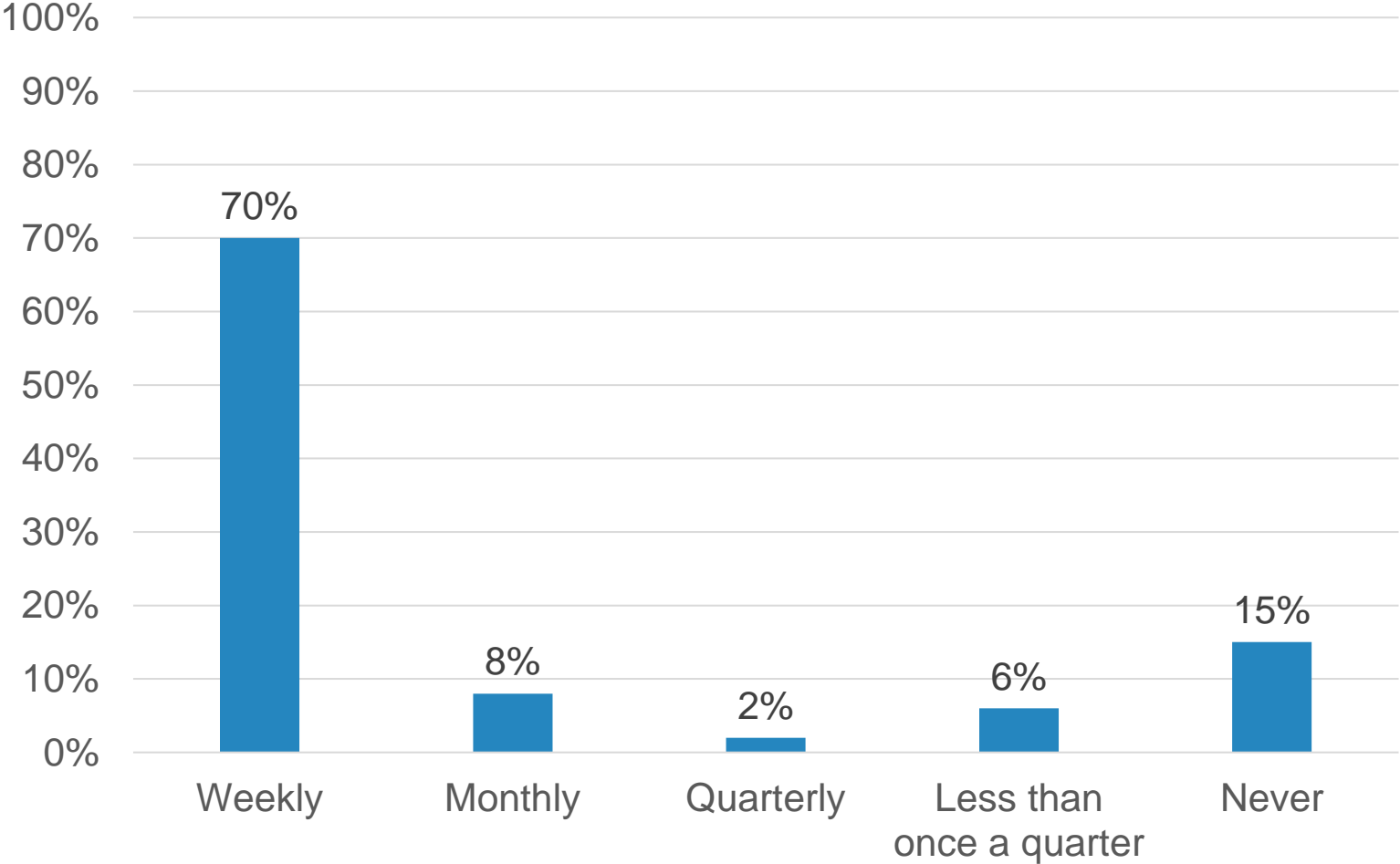
Congregation reciting a prayer in worship gatherings



Lifeway research

Q19_4: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Congregation reciting a prayer" n=554

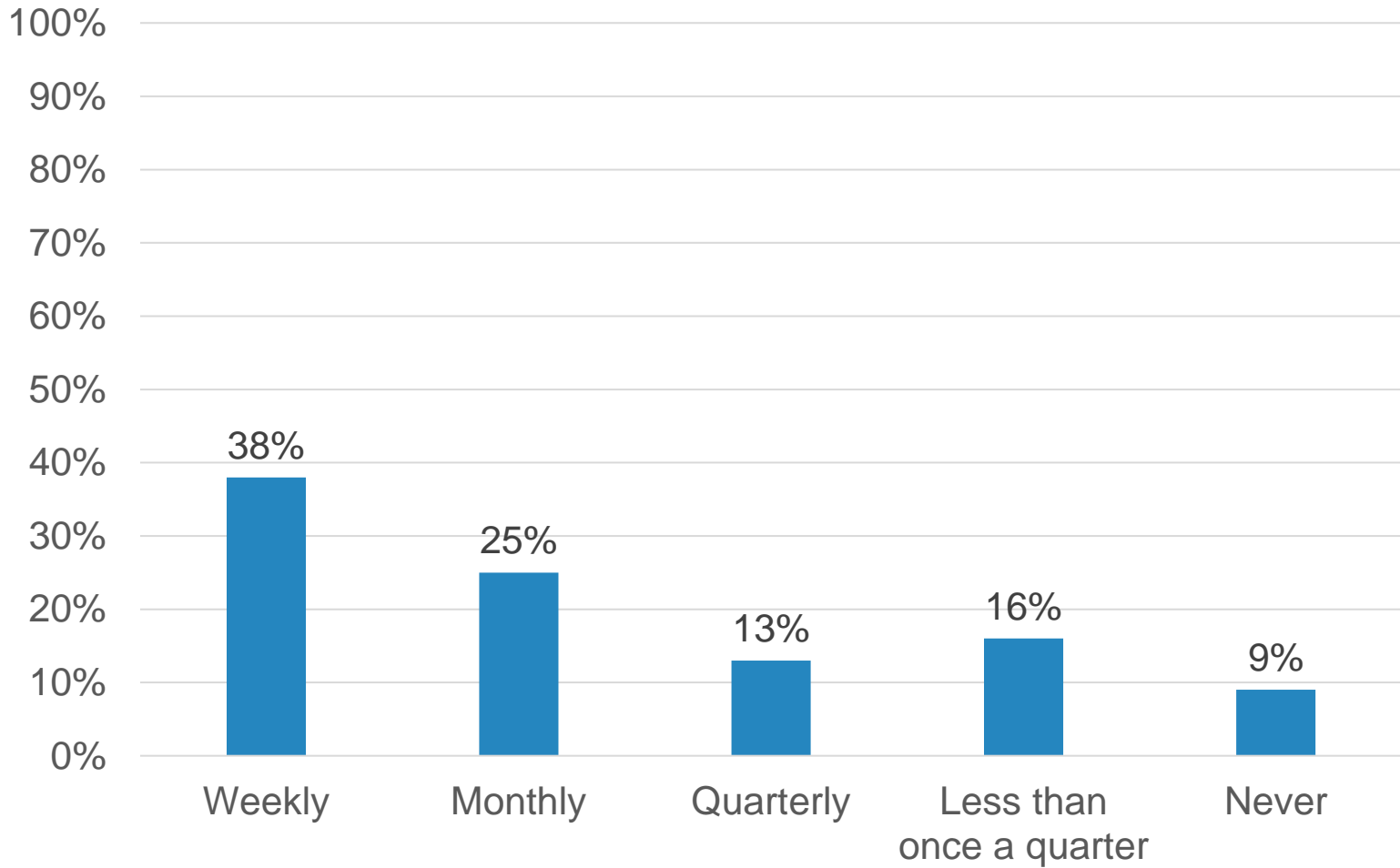
Congregational reading used in worship gatherings



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Q19_5: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Congregational reading" n=554

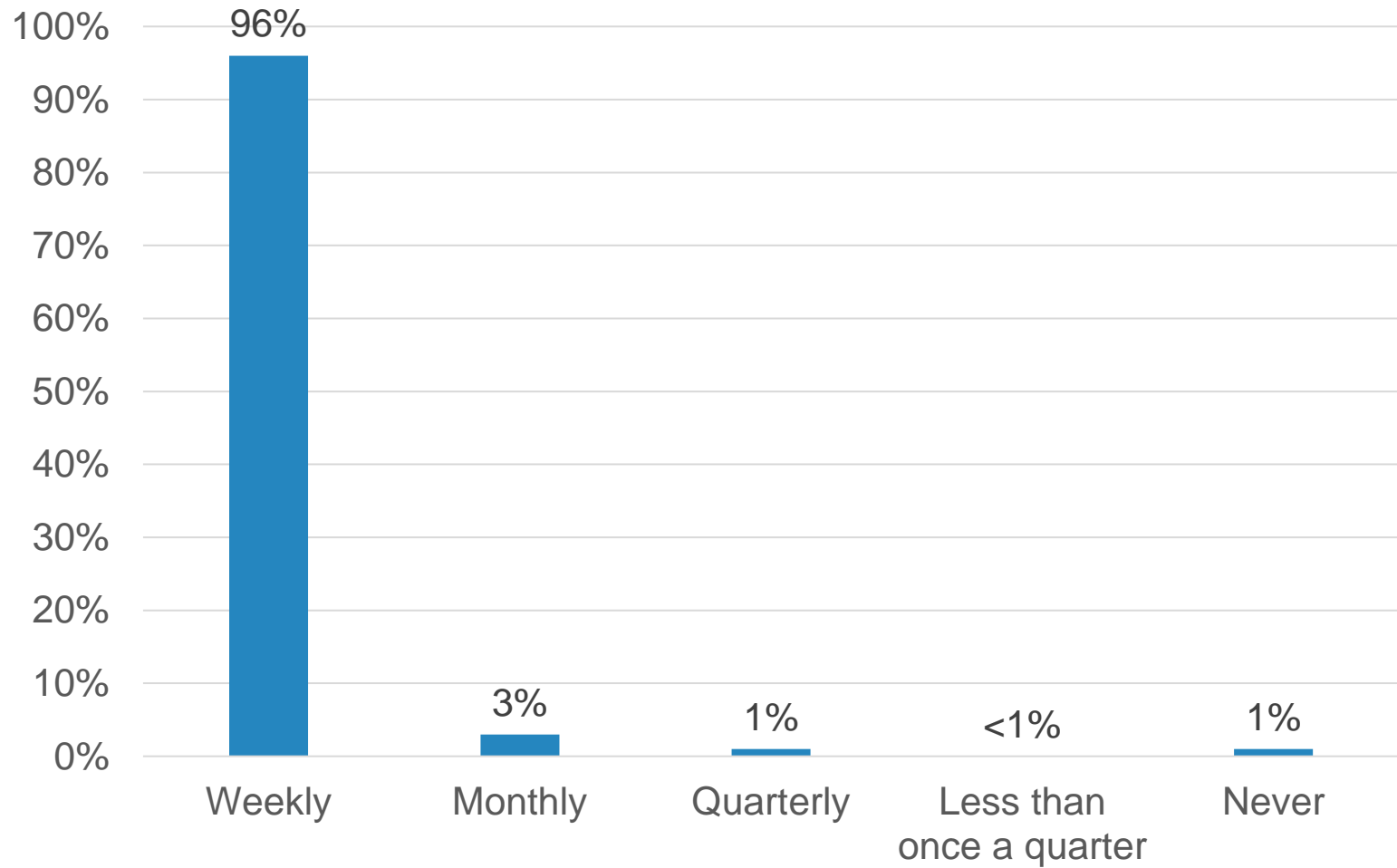
Testimonies used in worship gatherings



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Q19_6: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Testimonies" n=554

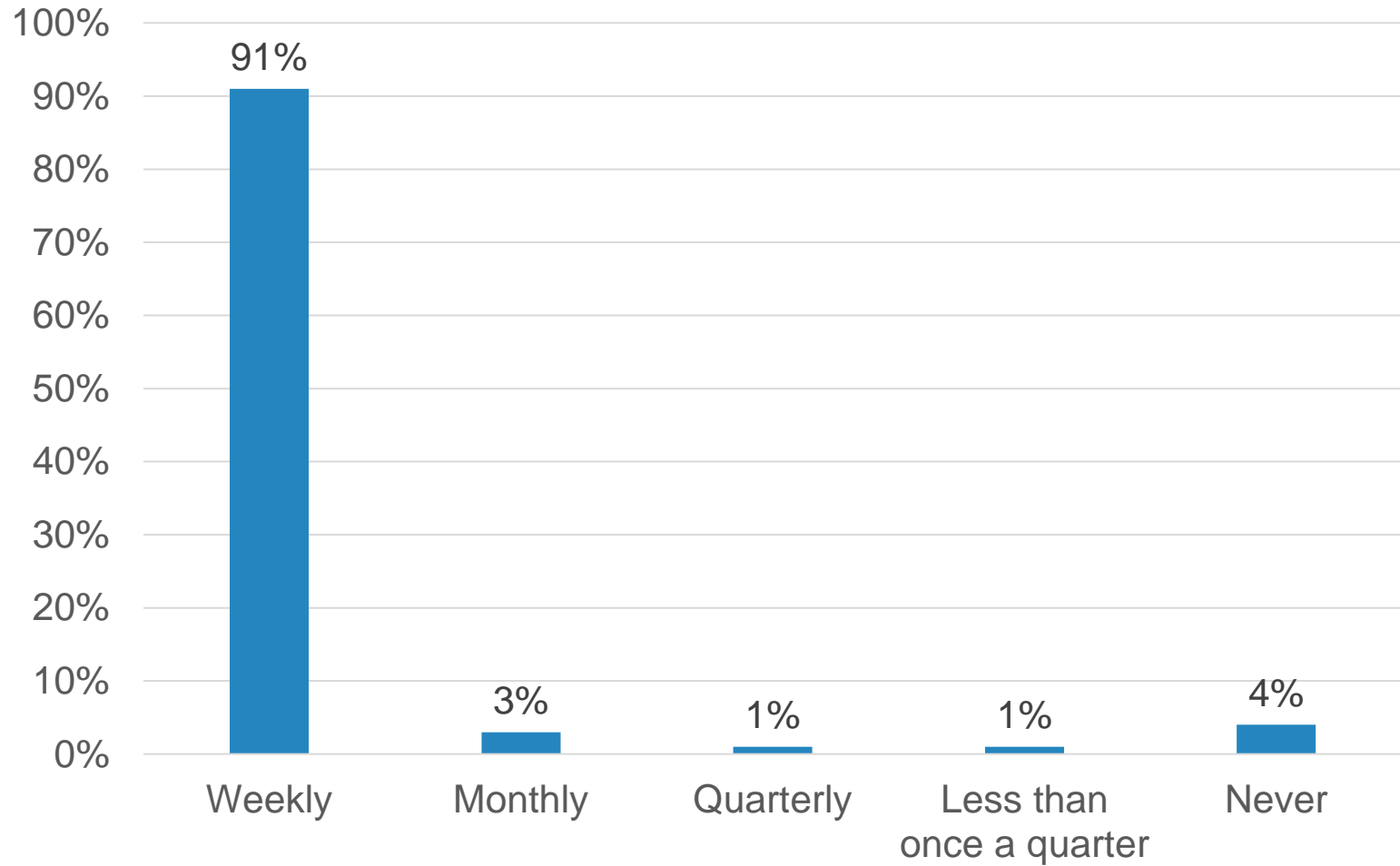
Scripture reading used in worship gatherings



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Q19_7: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Scripture reading" n=554

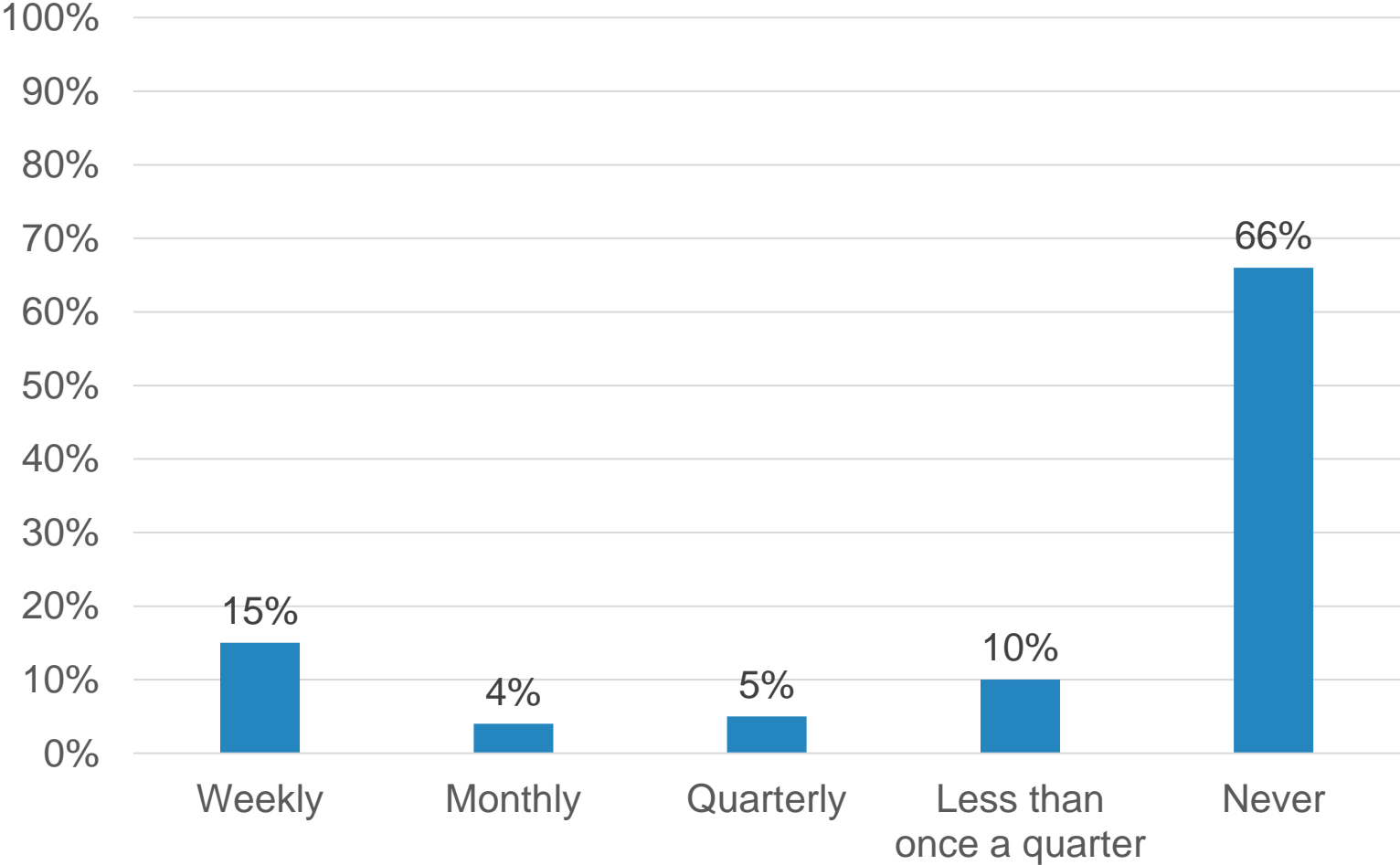
Greeting one another in worship gatherings



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Q19_8: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Greeting one another" n=554

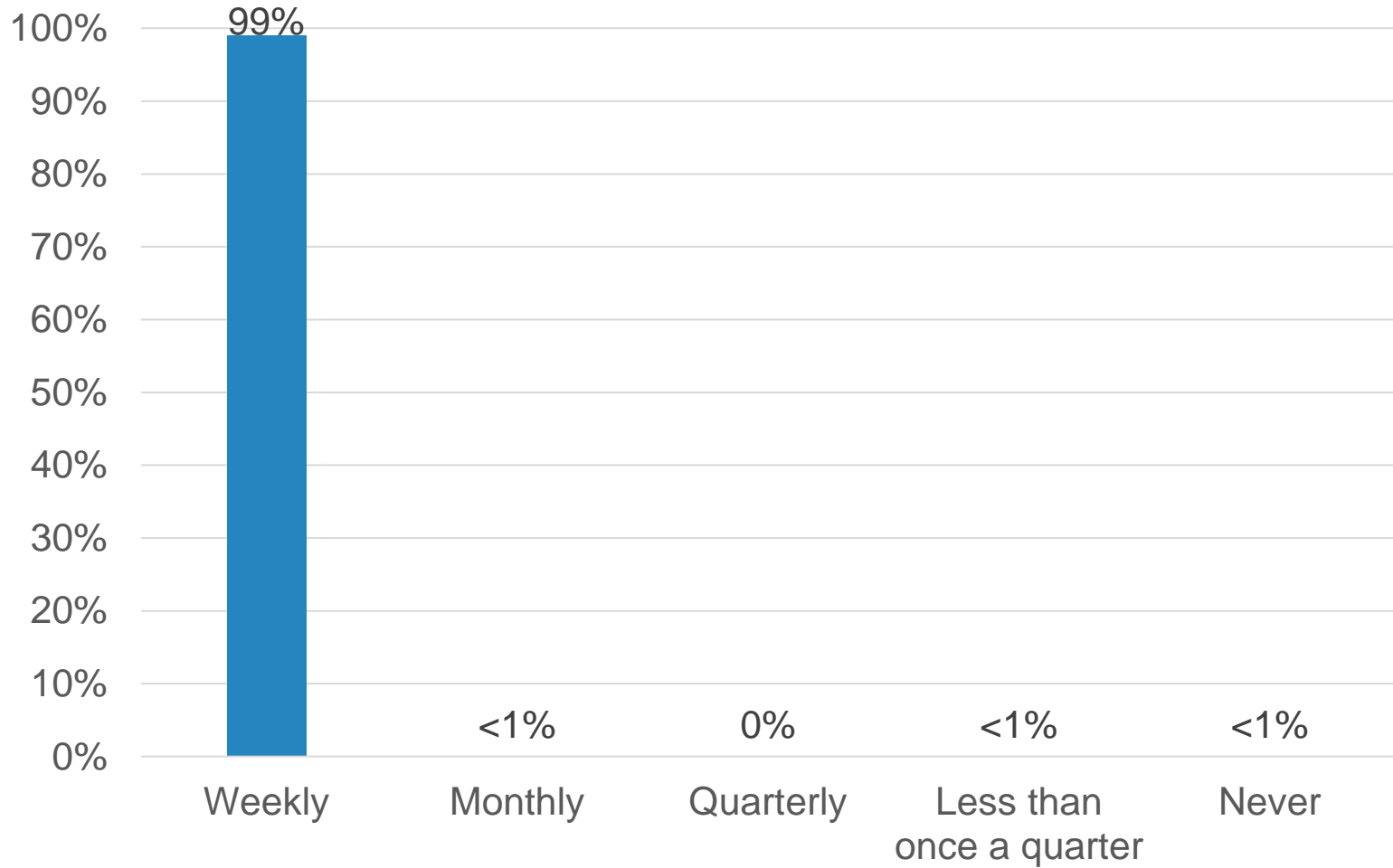
Reciting creed(s) used in worship gatherings



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Q19_9: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Reciting creed(s)" n=554

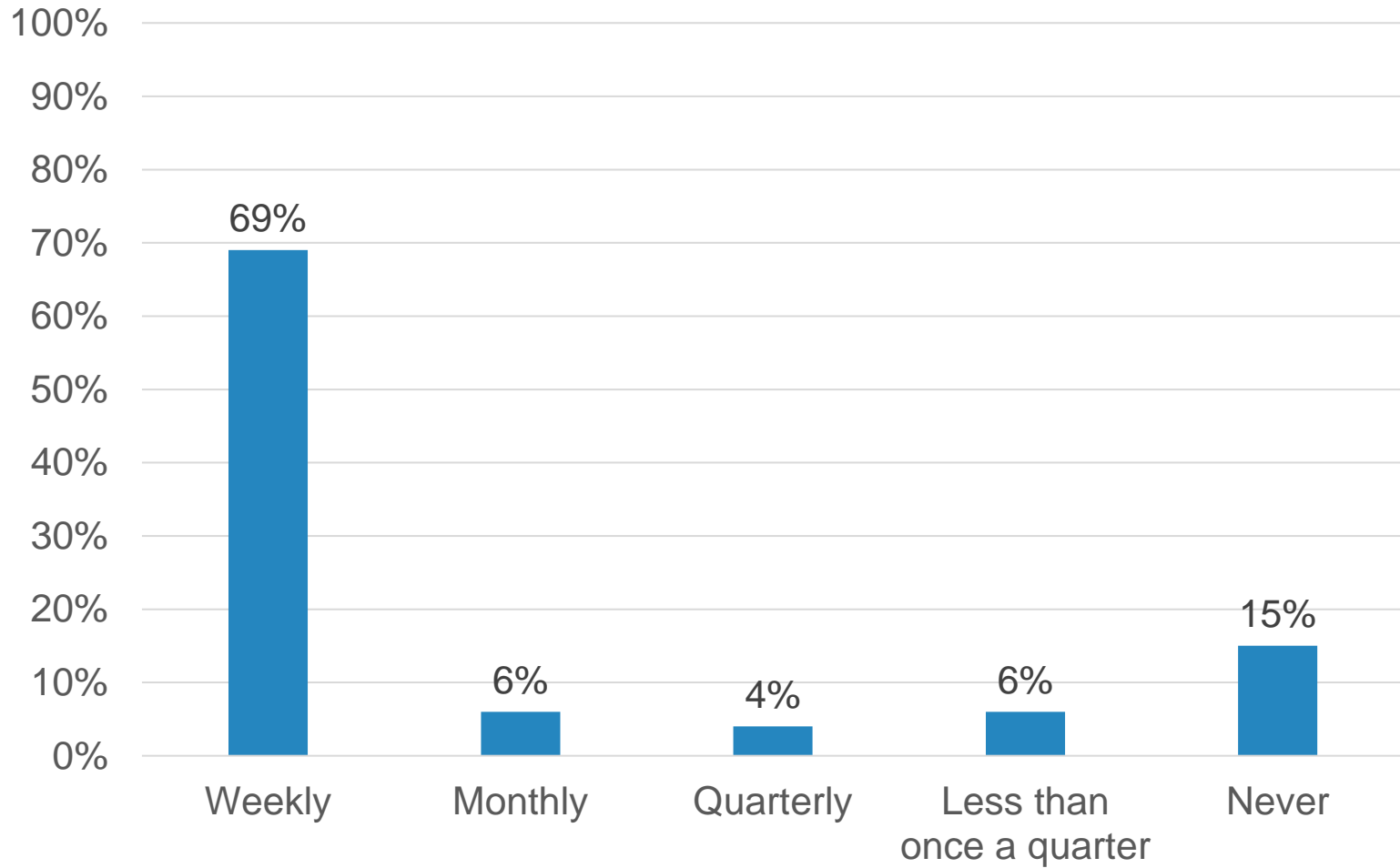
Sermon in worship gatherings



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Q19_10: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Sermon" n=554

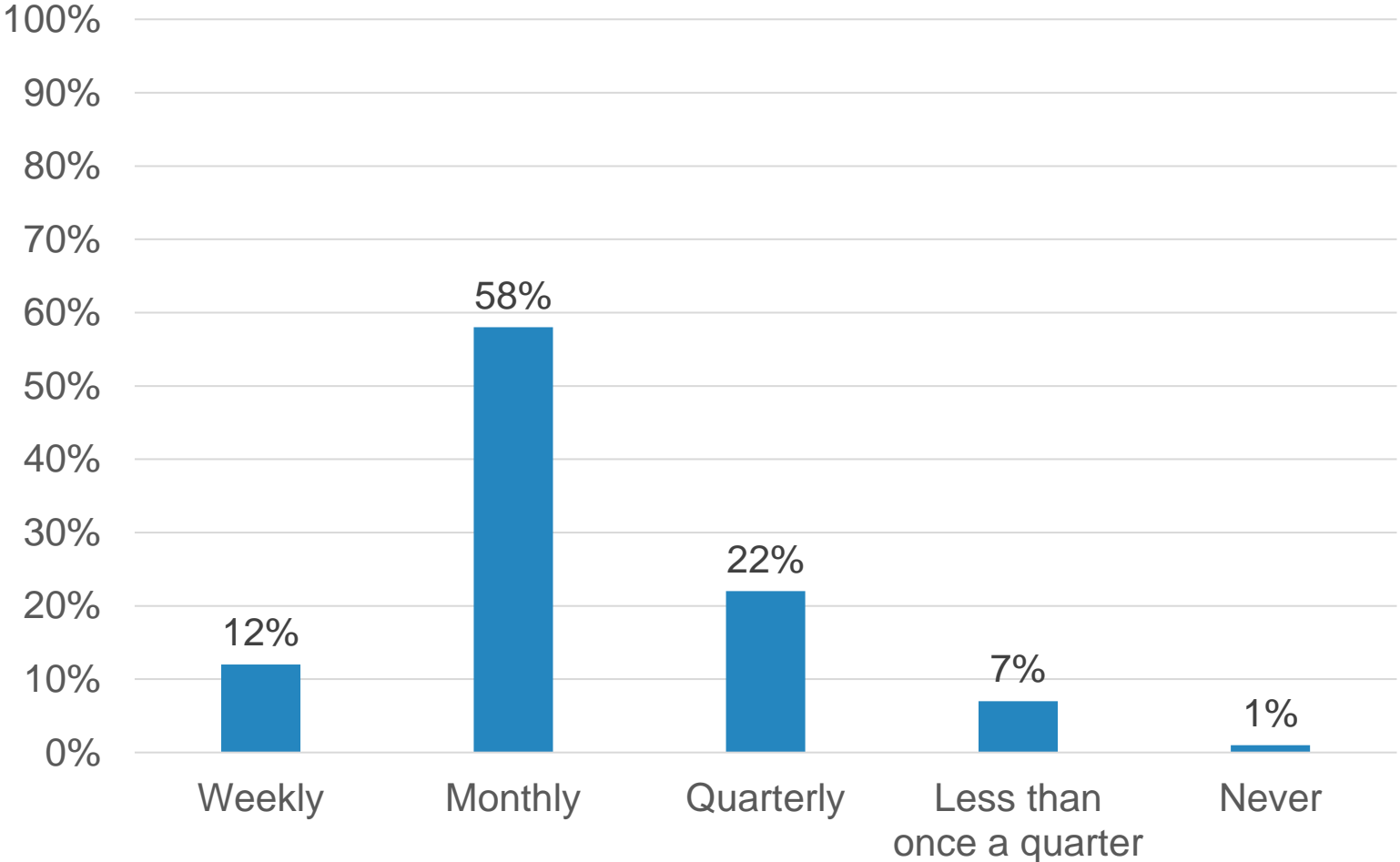
Children's stories used in worship gatherings



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Q19_11: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Children's stories" n=554

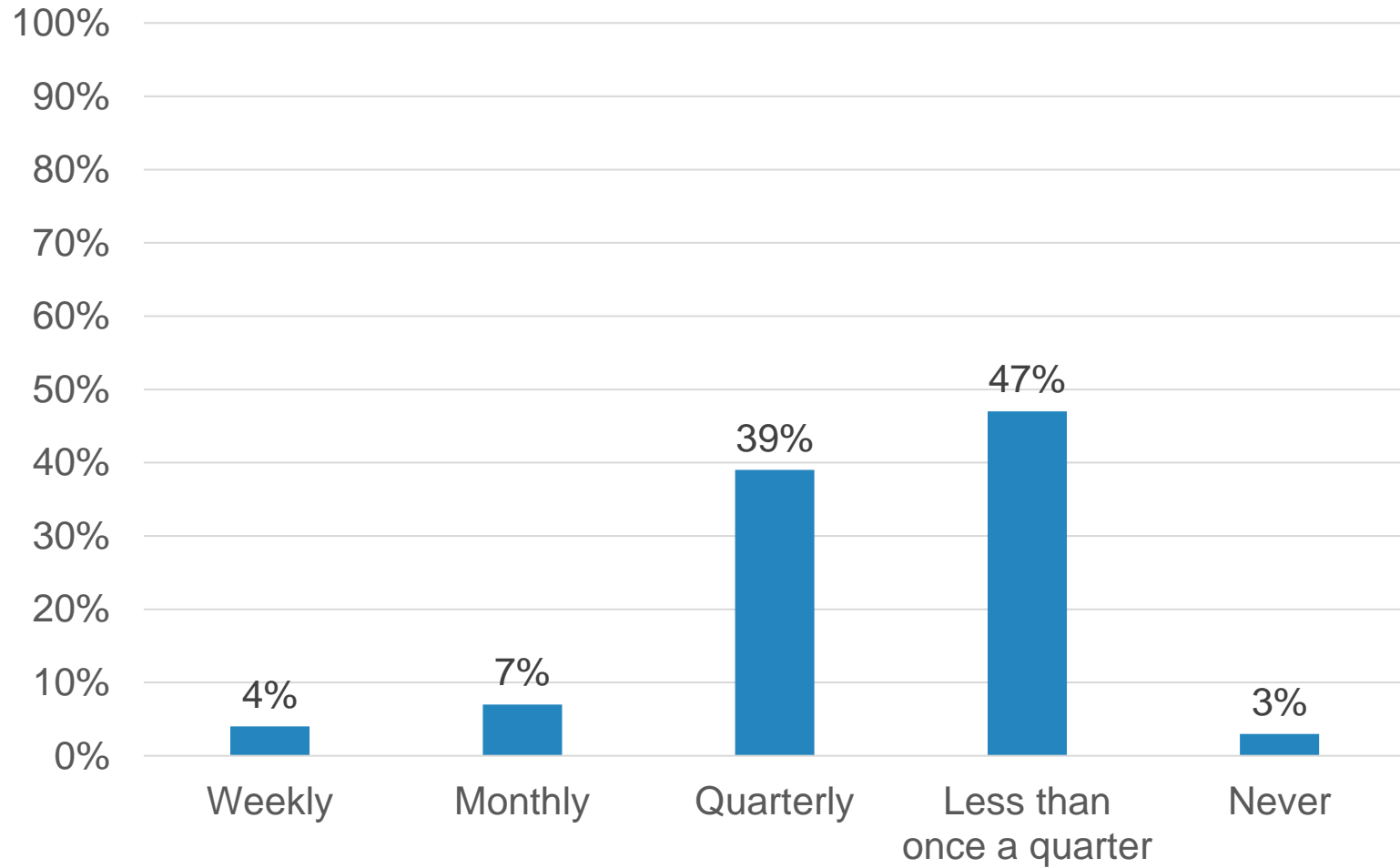
Lord's Supper observed in worship gatherings



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Q19_12: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element) Lord's Supper" n=554

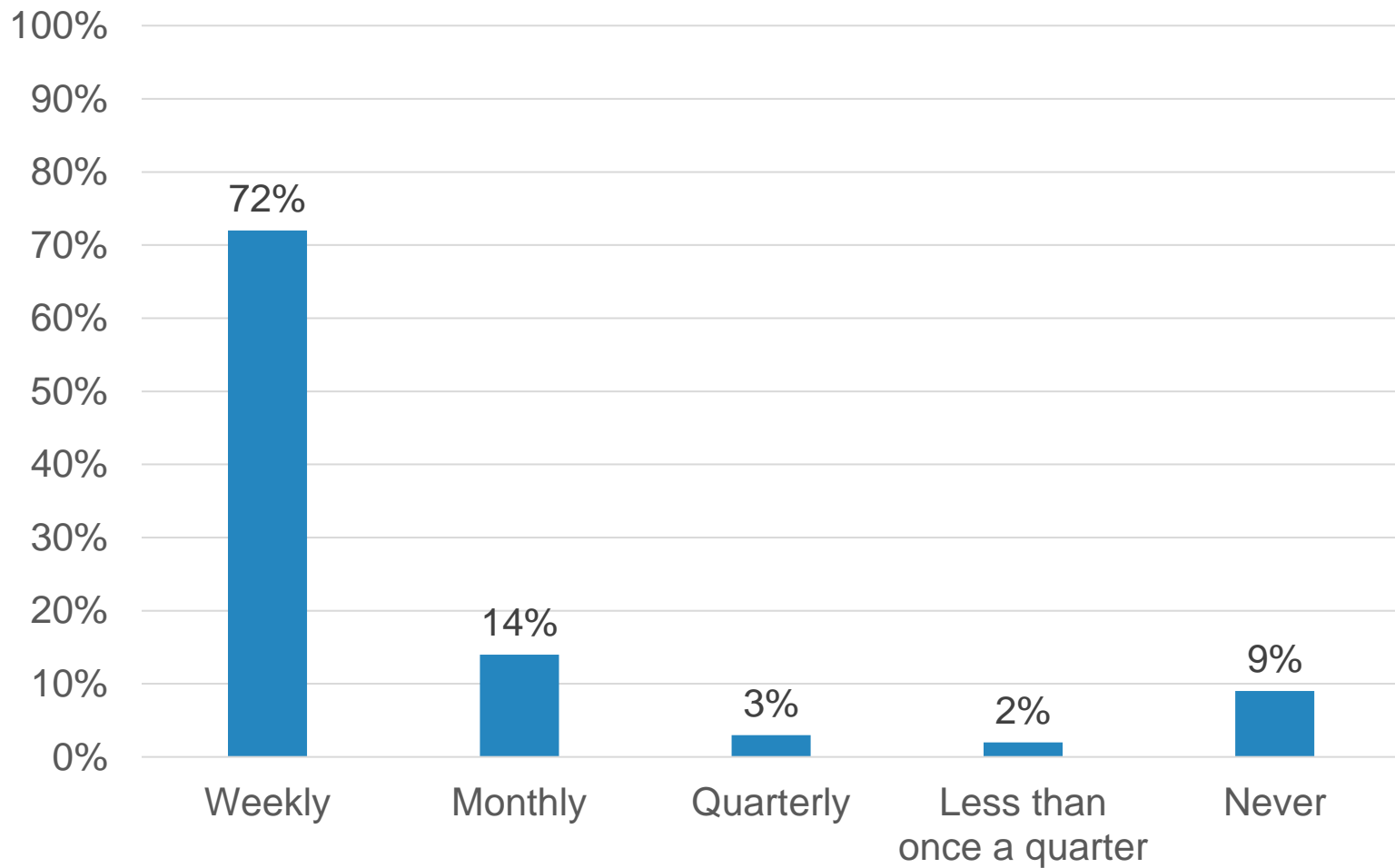
Baptism in worship gatherings



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Q19_13: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Baptism" n=554

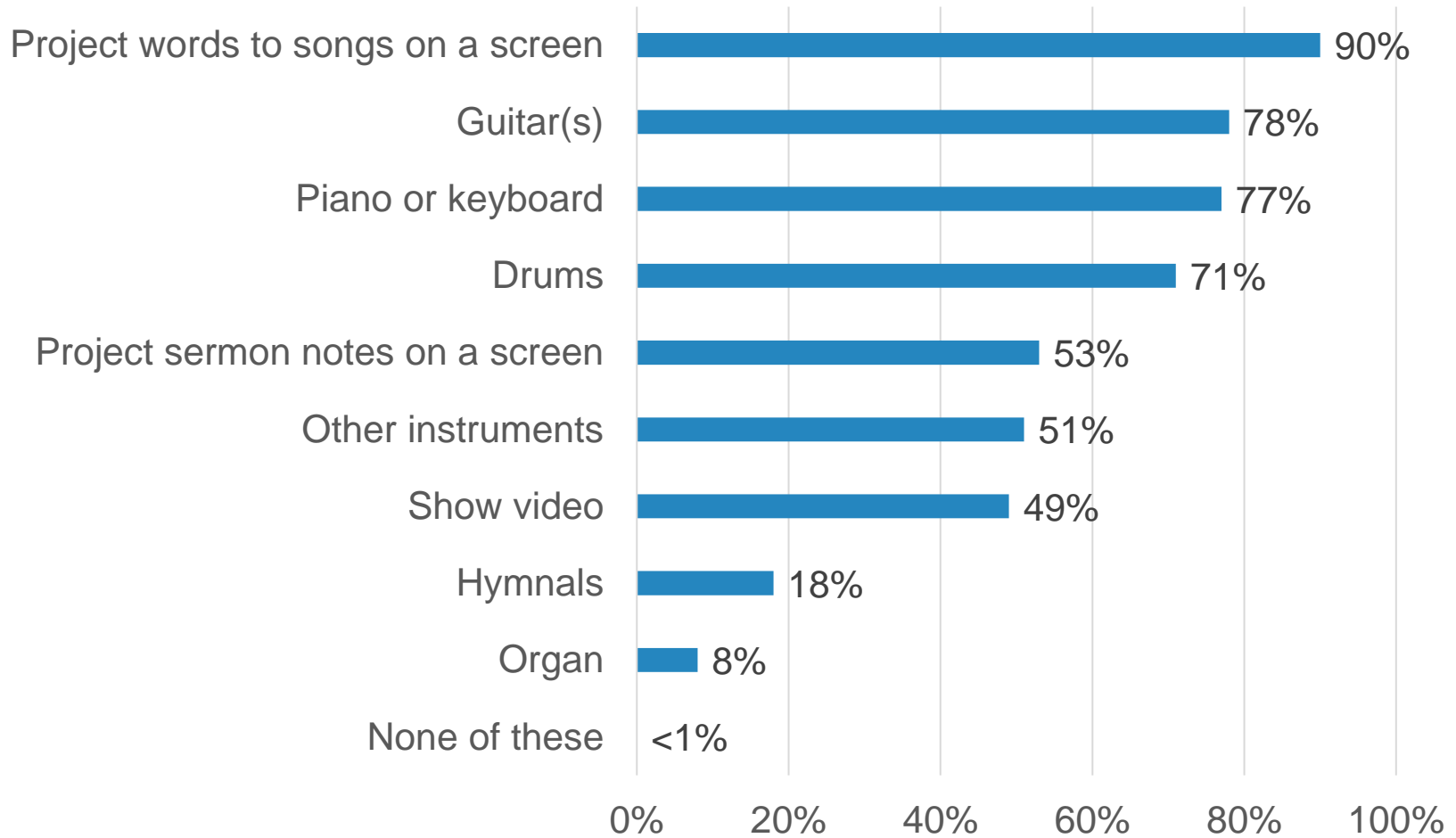
Invitation to respond or altar call used in worship gatherings



Lifeway research

Q19_14: "How often do you include each of the following elements in your worship gatherings? (Select one response for each element)
Invitation to respond or altar call" n=554

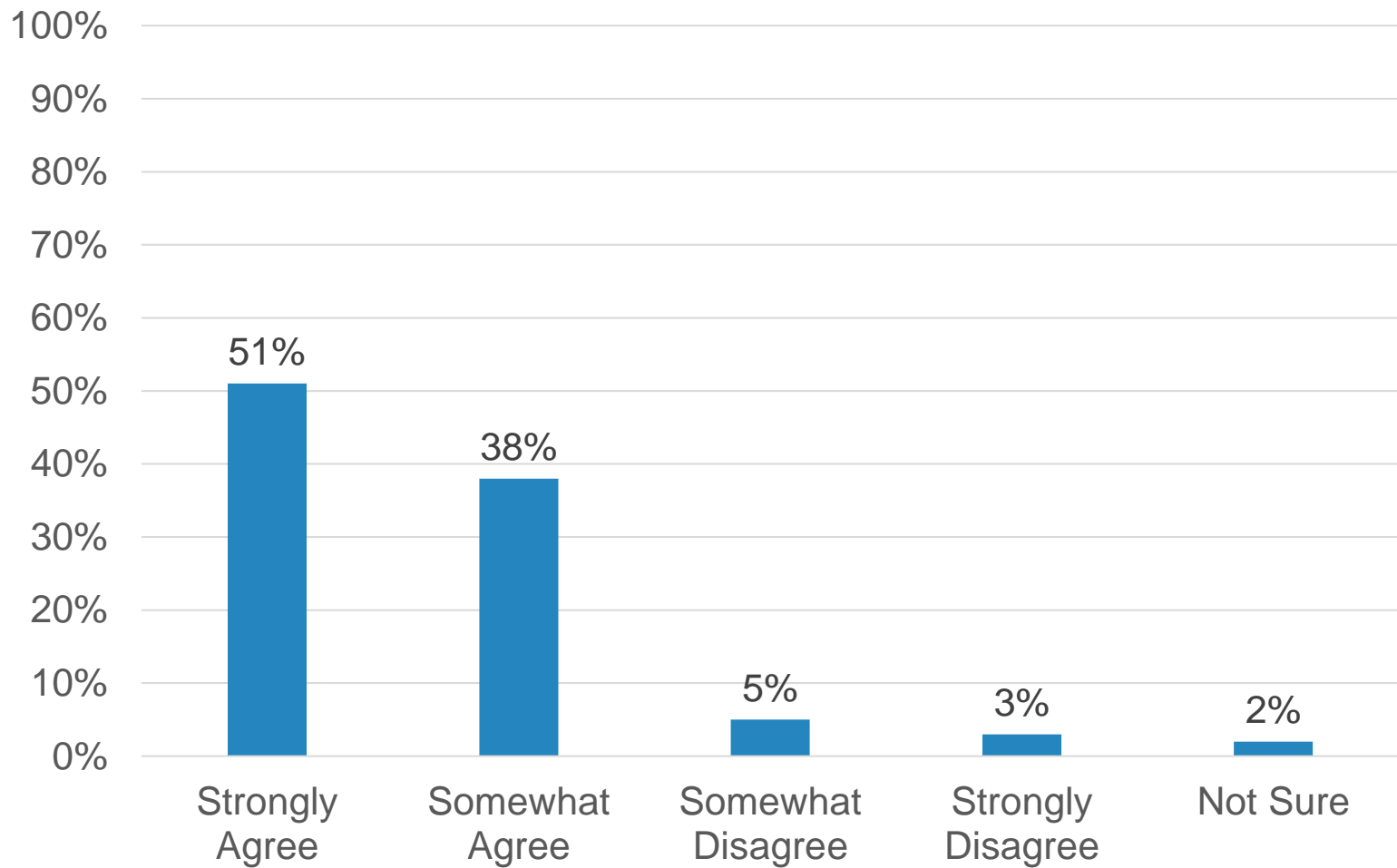
“Which of the following tools or instruments does your church use at least once a month in your worship gatherings?”



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Q20: “Which of the following tools or instruments does your church use at least once a month in your worship gatherings? (Select all that apply)” n=554

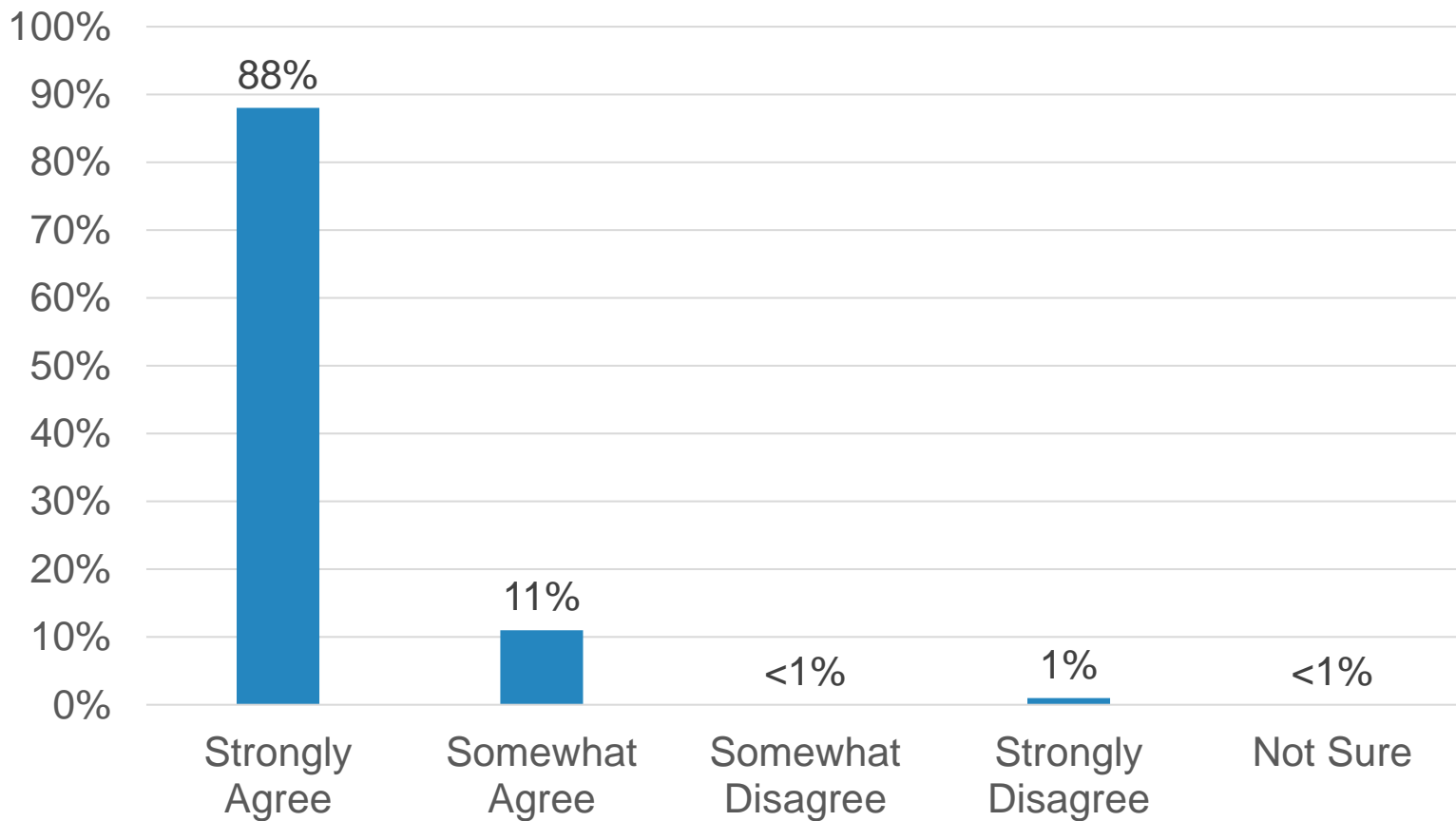
89% agree their church is equipped to serve new immigrants in their community



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Q21: "Our church is equipped to serve new immigrants in our community." n=554

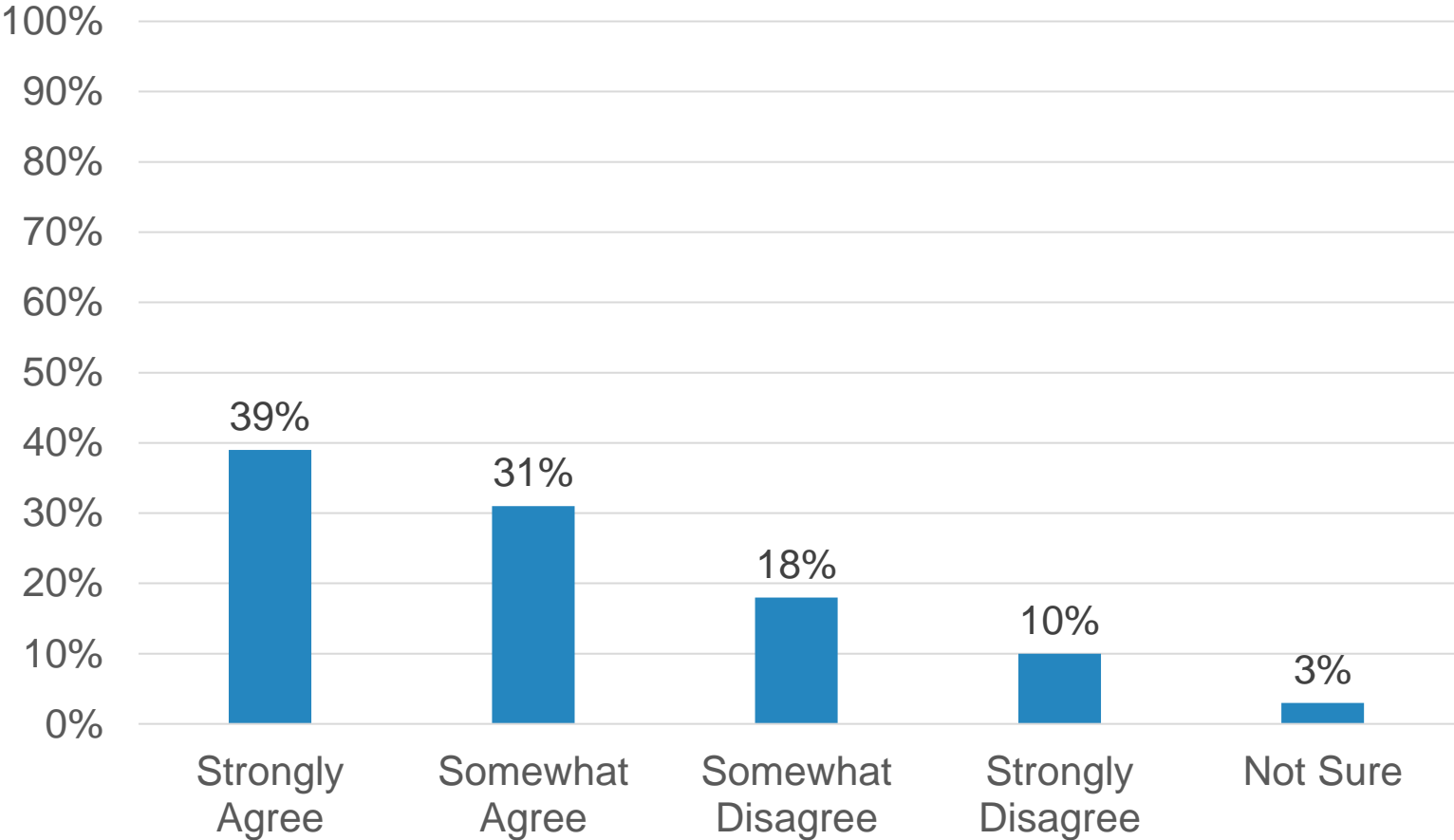
99% agree it is important for our church to show the love of God to our community in ways that meet people's tangible needs



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Q22: "It is important for our church to show the love of God to our community in ways that meet people's tangible needs." n=554

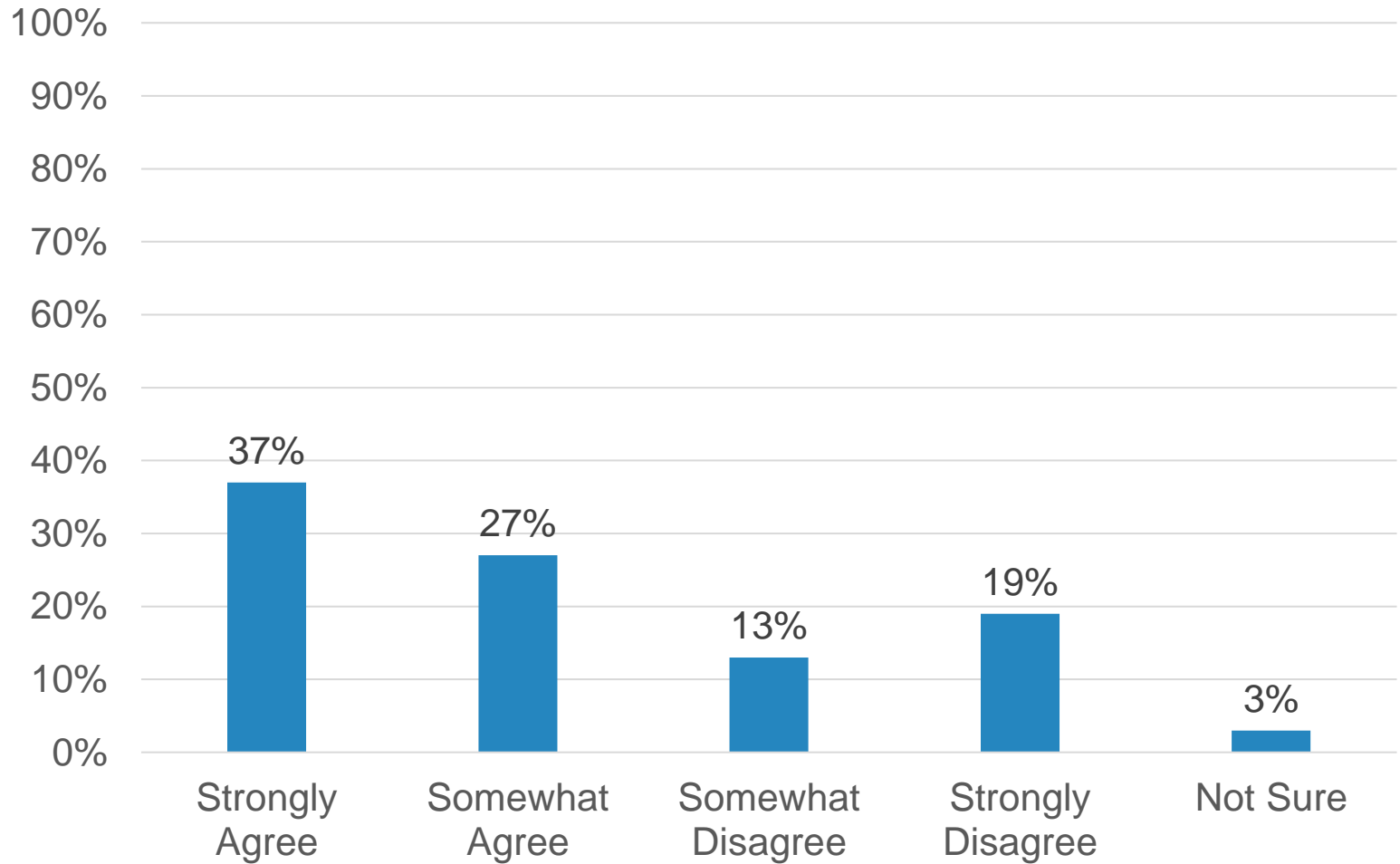
70% agree they always have the financial resources they need to support the ministries they consider essential



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Q23: "Our congregation always has the financial resources we need to support the ministries we consider essential." n=554

65% agree having the money to meet their family's needs is a constant concern



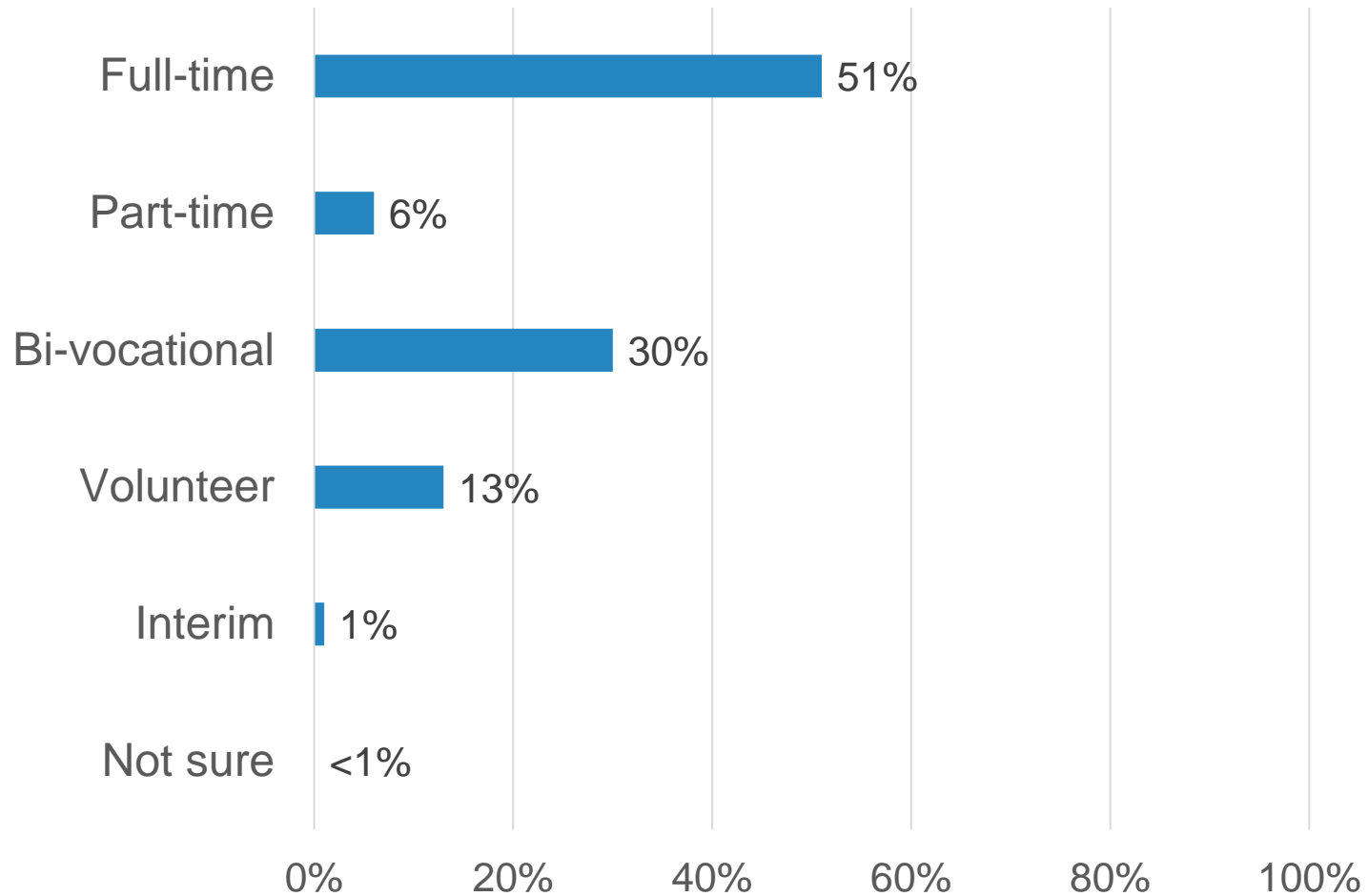
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Q24: "Having the money to meet my family's basic needs is a constant concern for me." n=554

Which of the following best describes your employment status in your church *Full Question Text*

- **Full-time** -- earning income only from your church with no other non-ministerial employment
- **Part-time** -- earning part-time income from your church and do not have other non-ministerial employment
- **Bi-vocational** -- earning income from your church and from other non-ministerial employment
- **Volunteer** -- earning no income from your church
- **Interim** – temporarily serving as the pastor until a new one is named
- **Not sure**

Church employment status of participating pastors of Hispanic congregations

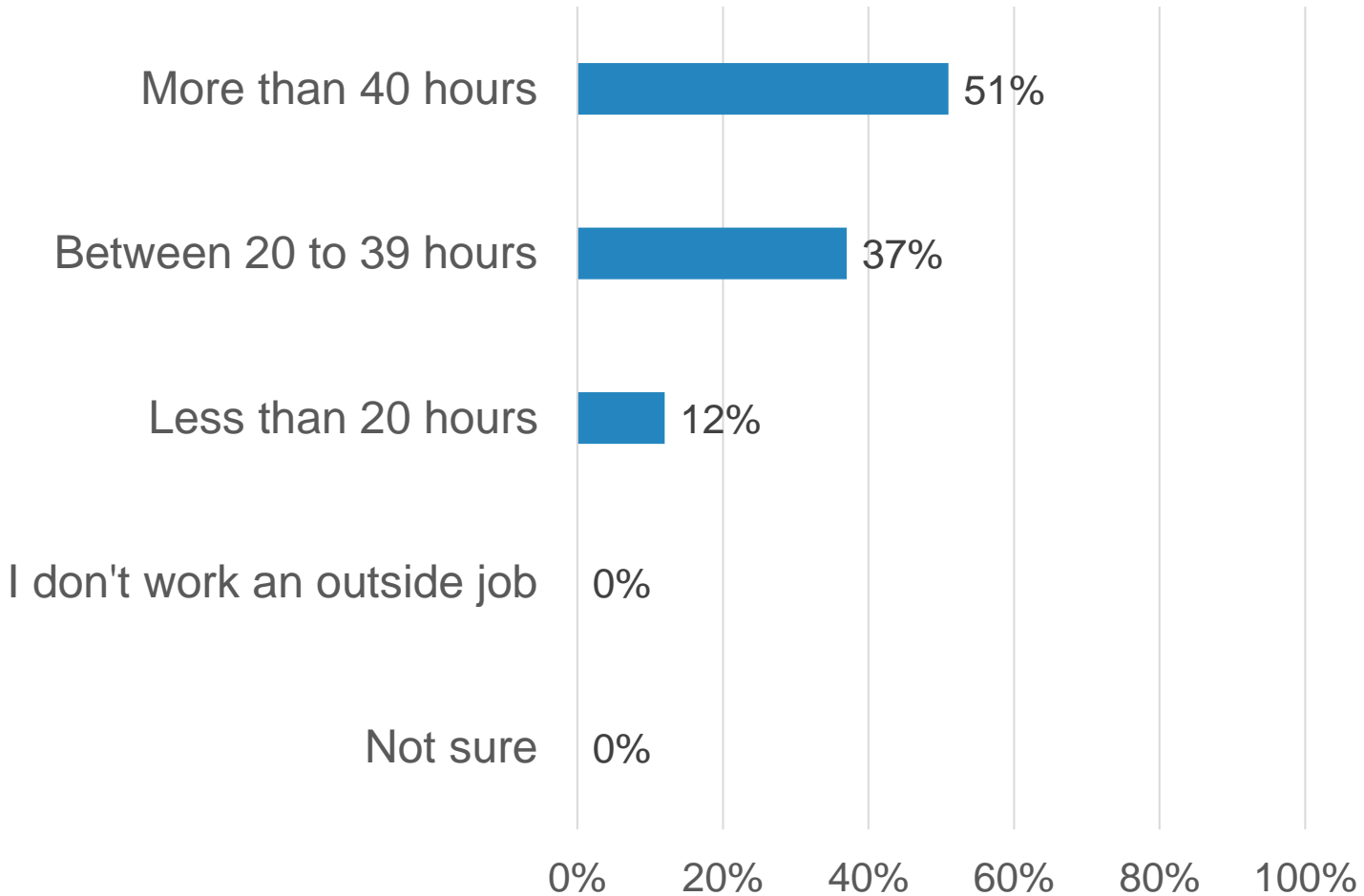


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Q25: "Which of the following best describes your employment status in your church? (Select One)" n=554

88% of bi-vocational pastors work 20 or more hours a week at an outside job

Among those who are bi-vocational

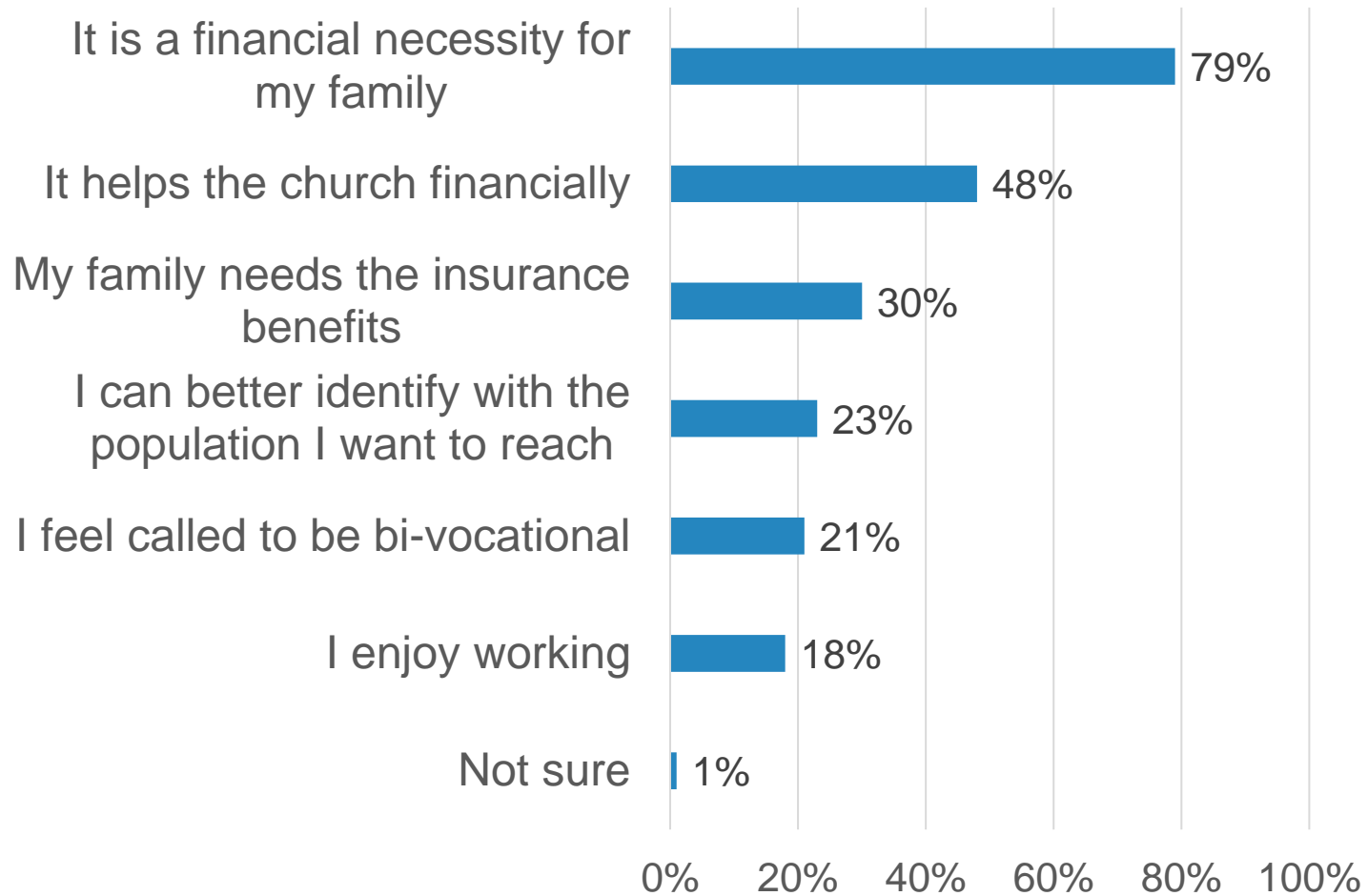


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Q26: "On average, how many hours do you work at an outside job each week in addition to working as a pastor? (Select one)" n=170

“What are the reason(s) you are working an outside job in addition to working as a pastor?”

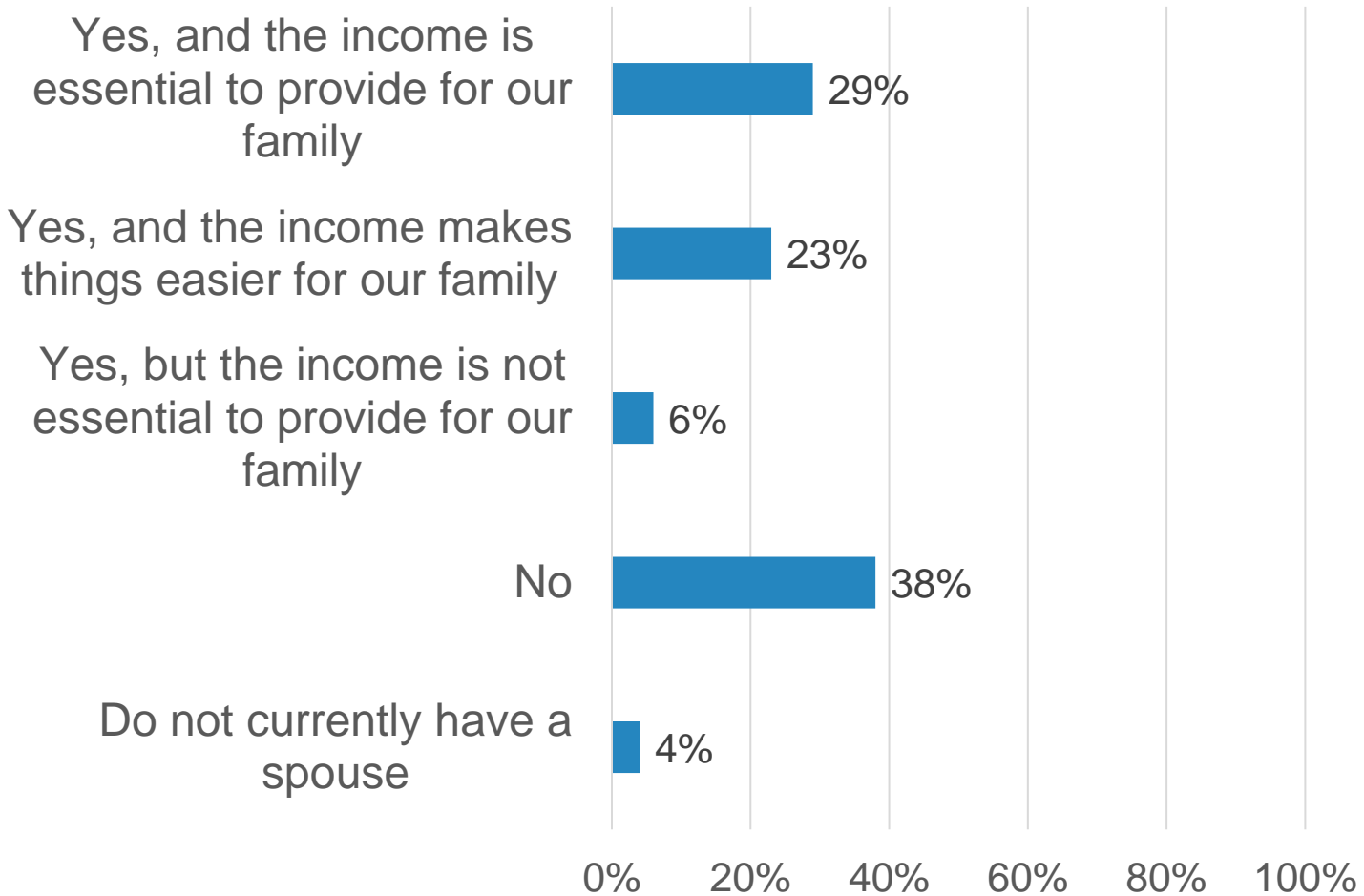
Among those who are bi-vocational



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Q27: “What are the reason(s) you are working an outside job in addition to working as a pastor? (Select all that apply)” n=170

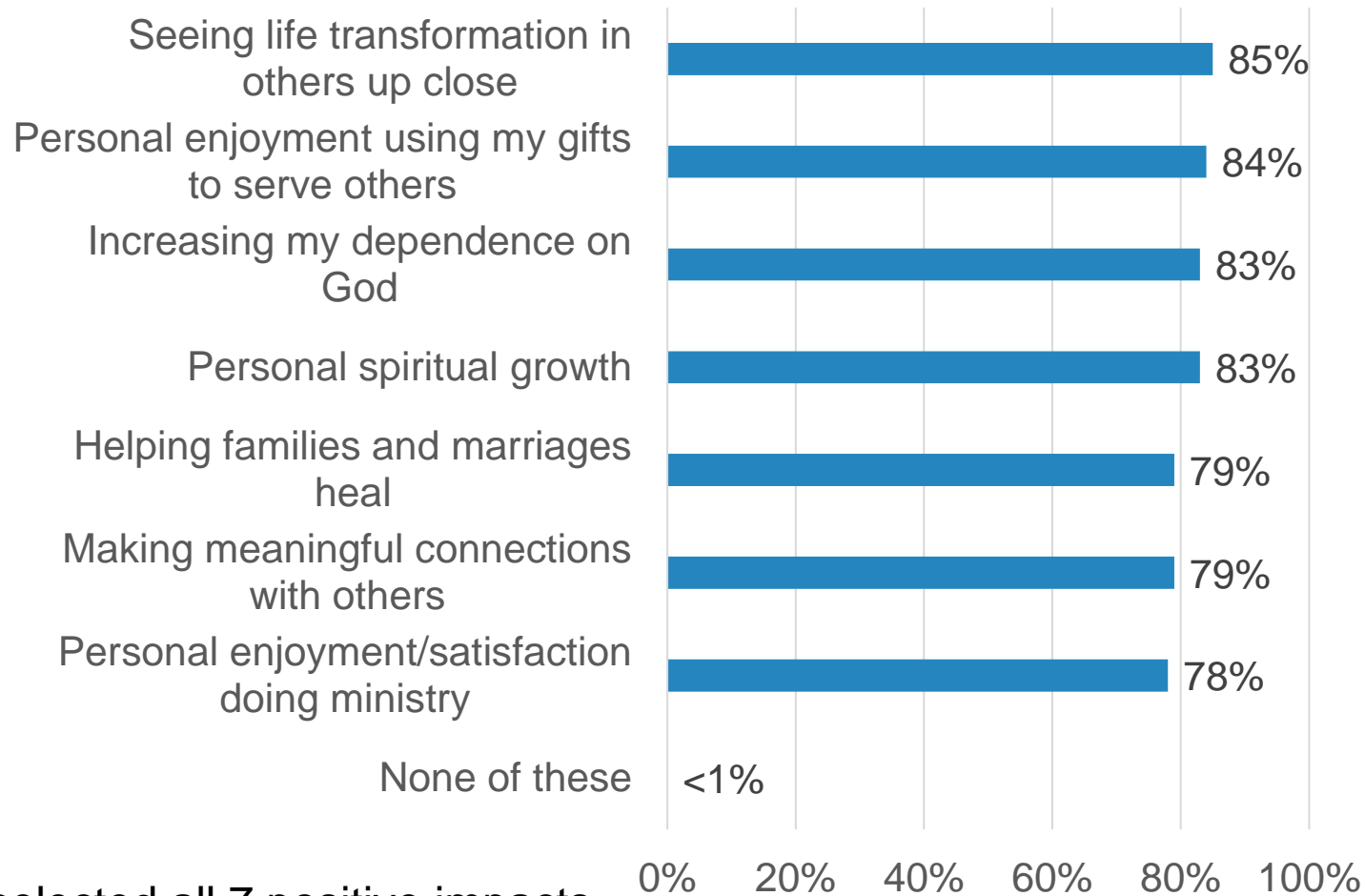
52% say that their spouse's job is essential or makes things easier for their family



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Q28: "Does your spouse have a paid job that is needed to help sustain your family's living expenses?" n=554

“In which of the following ways has being a pastor positively impacted your own life and wellbeing?”

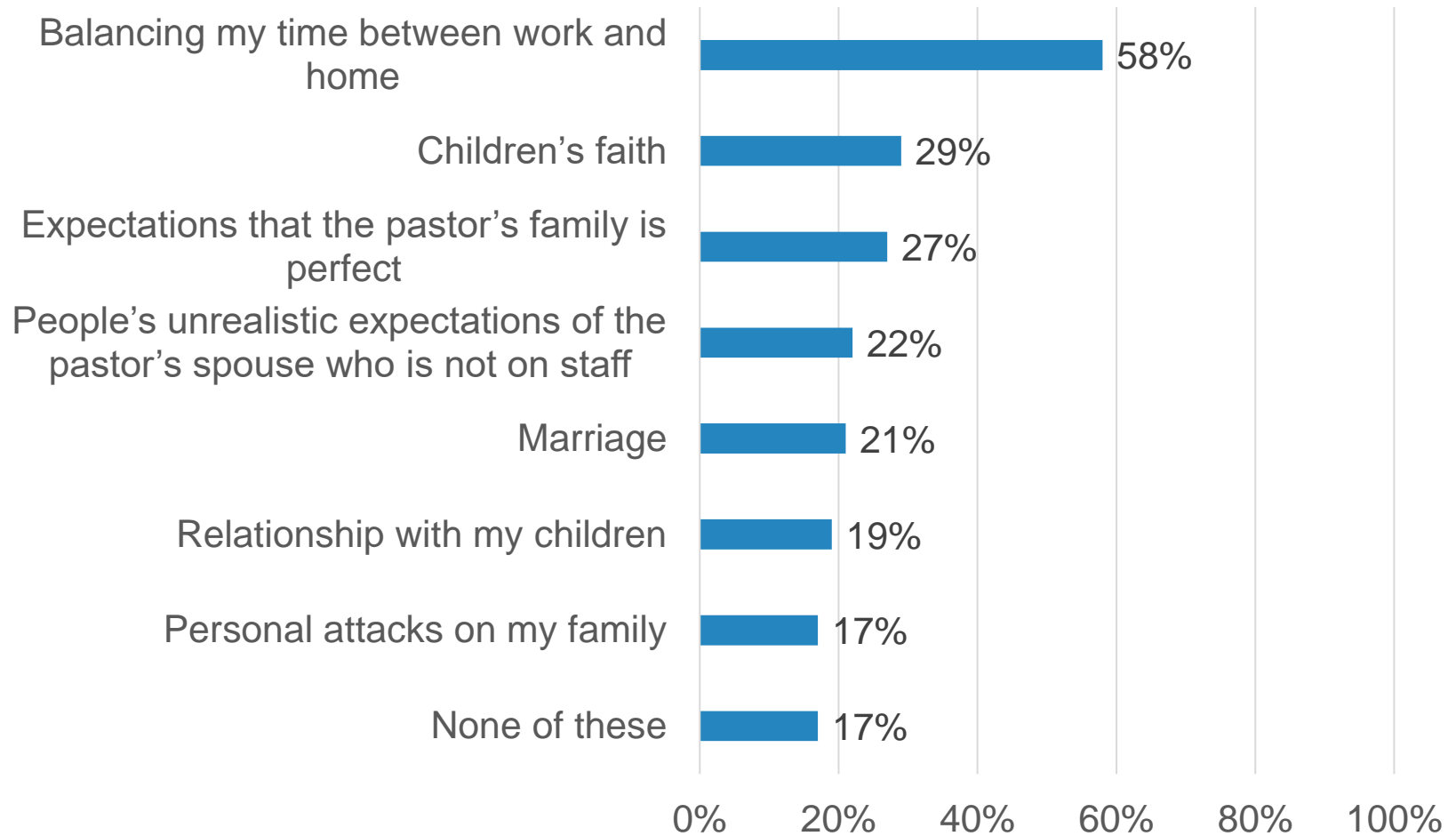


62% selected all 7 positive impacts

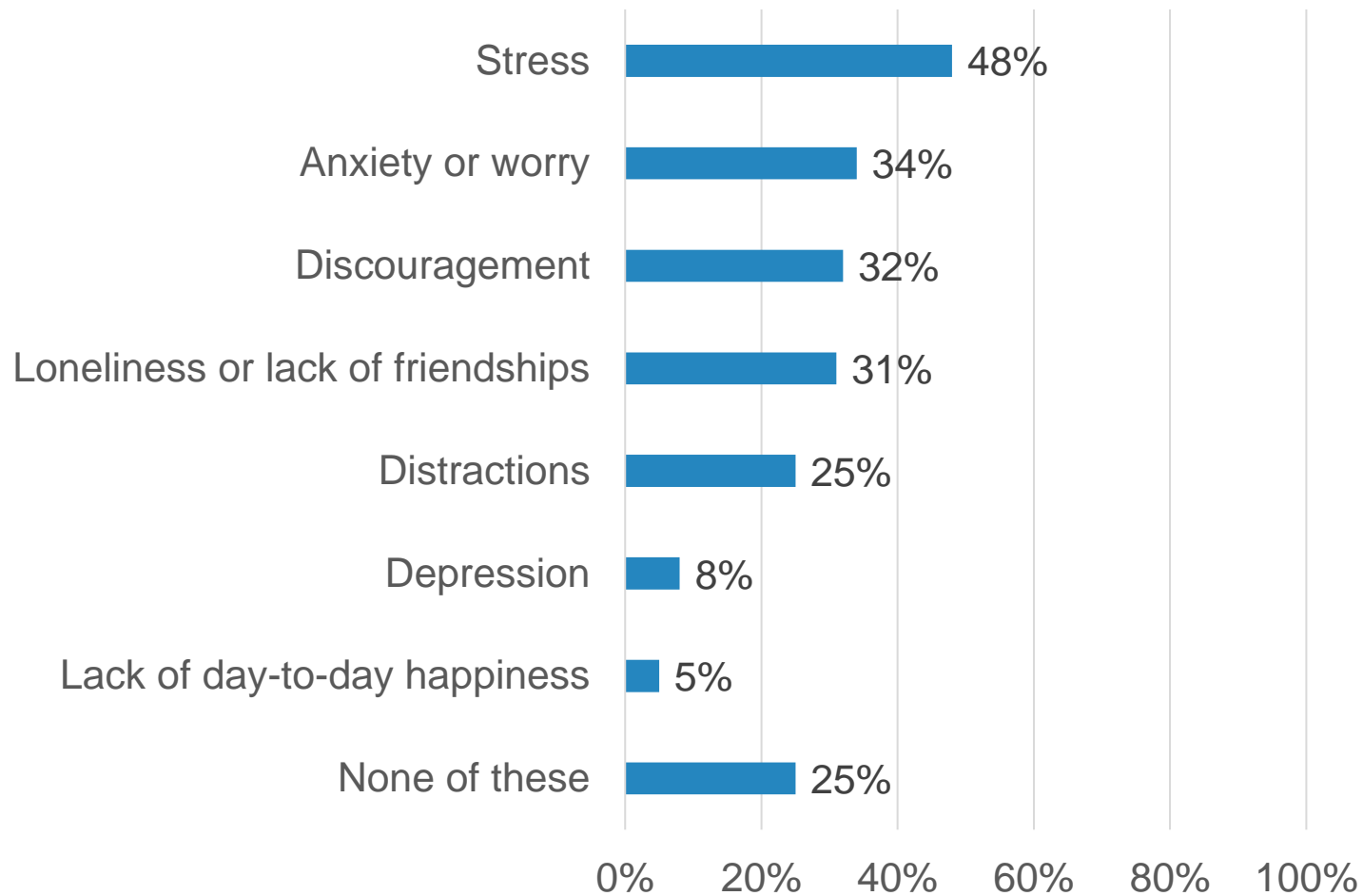
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Q29: “In which of the following ways has being a pastor positively impacted your own life and wellbeing?”
(Select all that apply)” n=554

“Which of the following aspects of your family’s life are challenges that need attention today?”



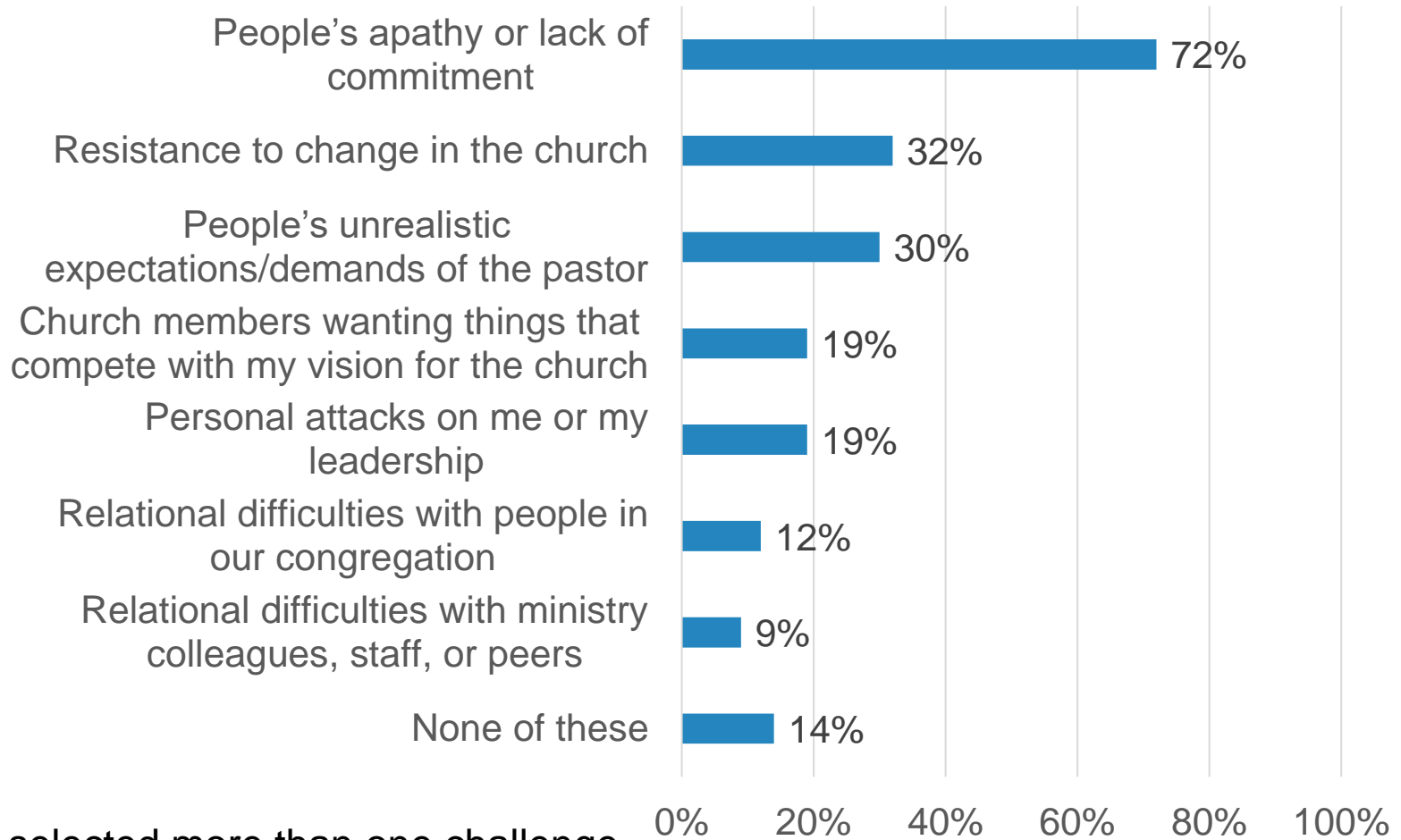
“Which of the following aspects of your emotional wellbeing are challenges you face in your ministry as a pastor?”



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Q31: “Which of the following aspects of your emotional wellbeing are challenges you face in your ministry as a pastor? (Select all that apply)” n=554

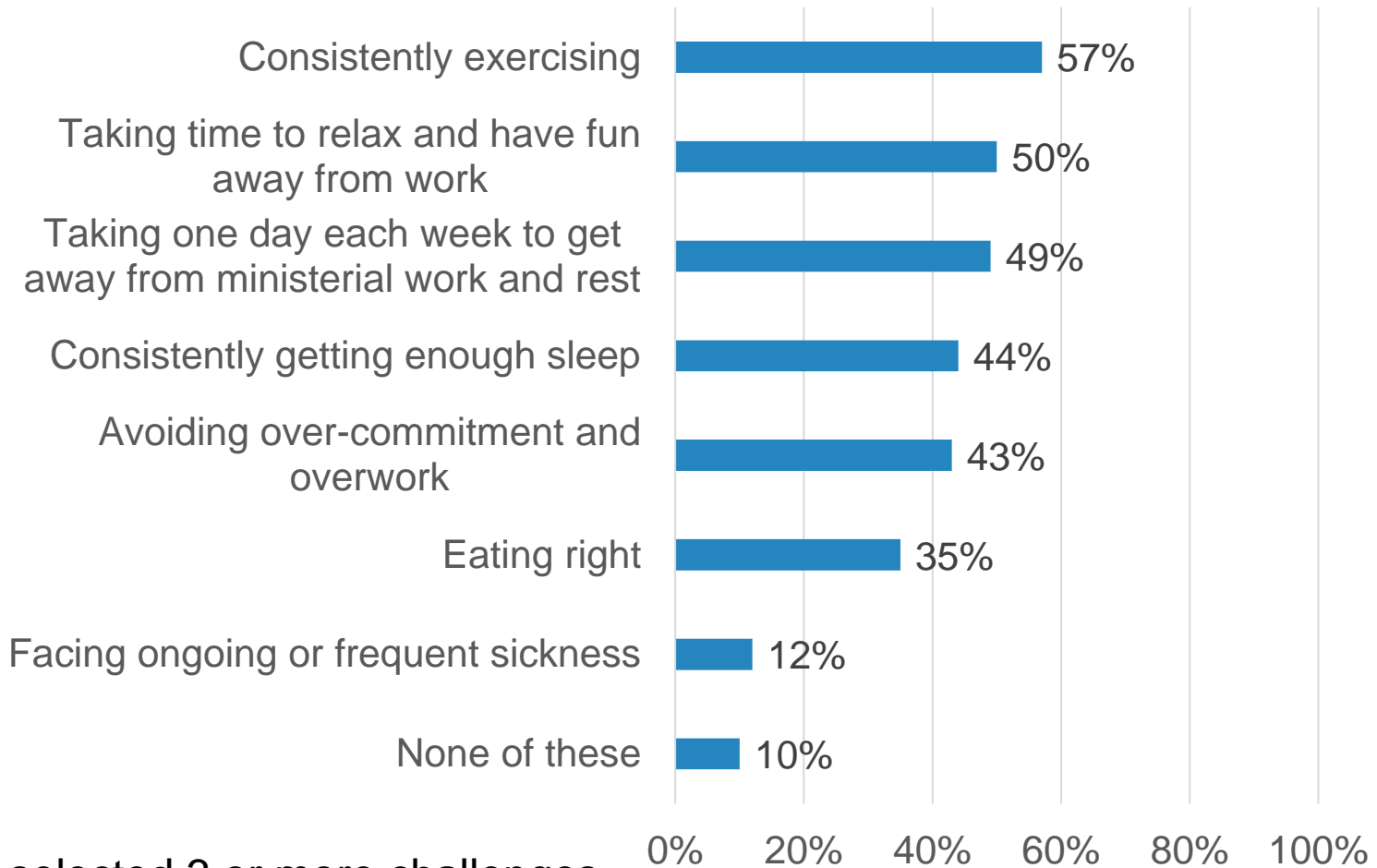
“Which of the following dynamics of your congregation do you find challenging in your ministry as a pastor?”



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Q32: “Which of the following dynamics of your congregation do you find challenging in your ministry as a pastor? (Select all that apply)” n=554

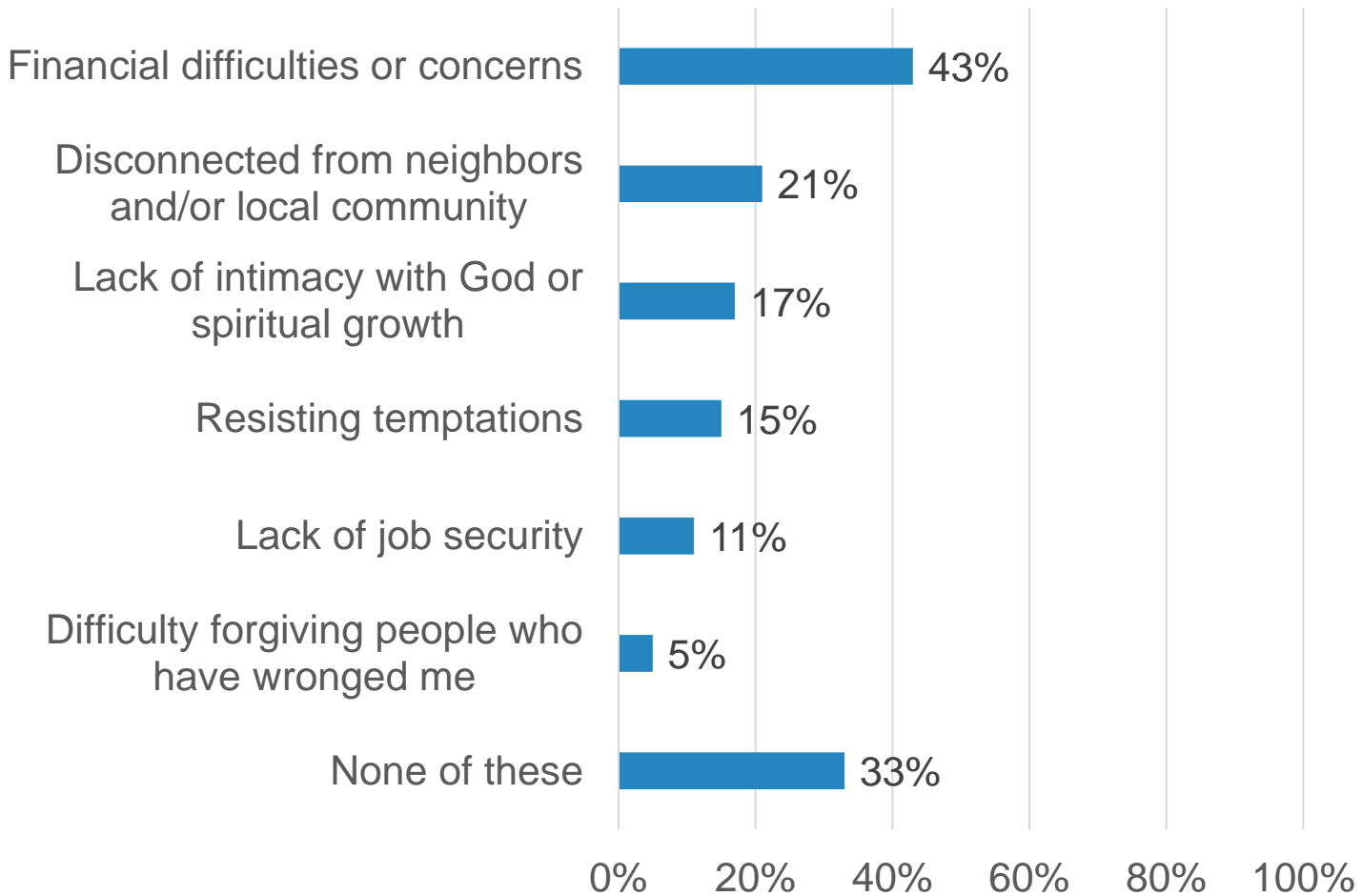
“Please select all the aspects of physical wellbeing that you find challenging in your ministry as a pastor.”



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Q33: “Please select all the aspects of physical wellbeing that you find challenging in your ministry as a pastor. (Select all that apply)” n=554

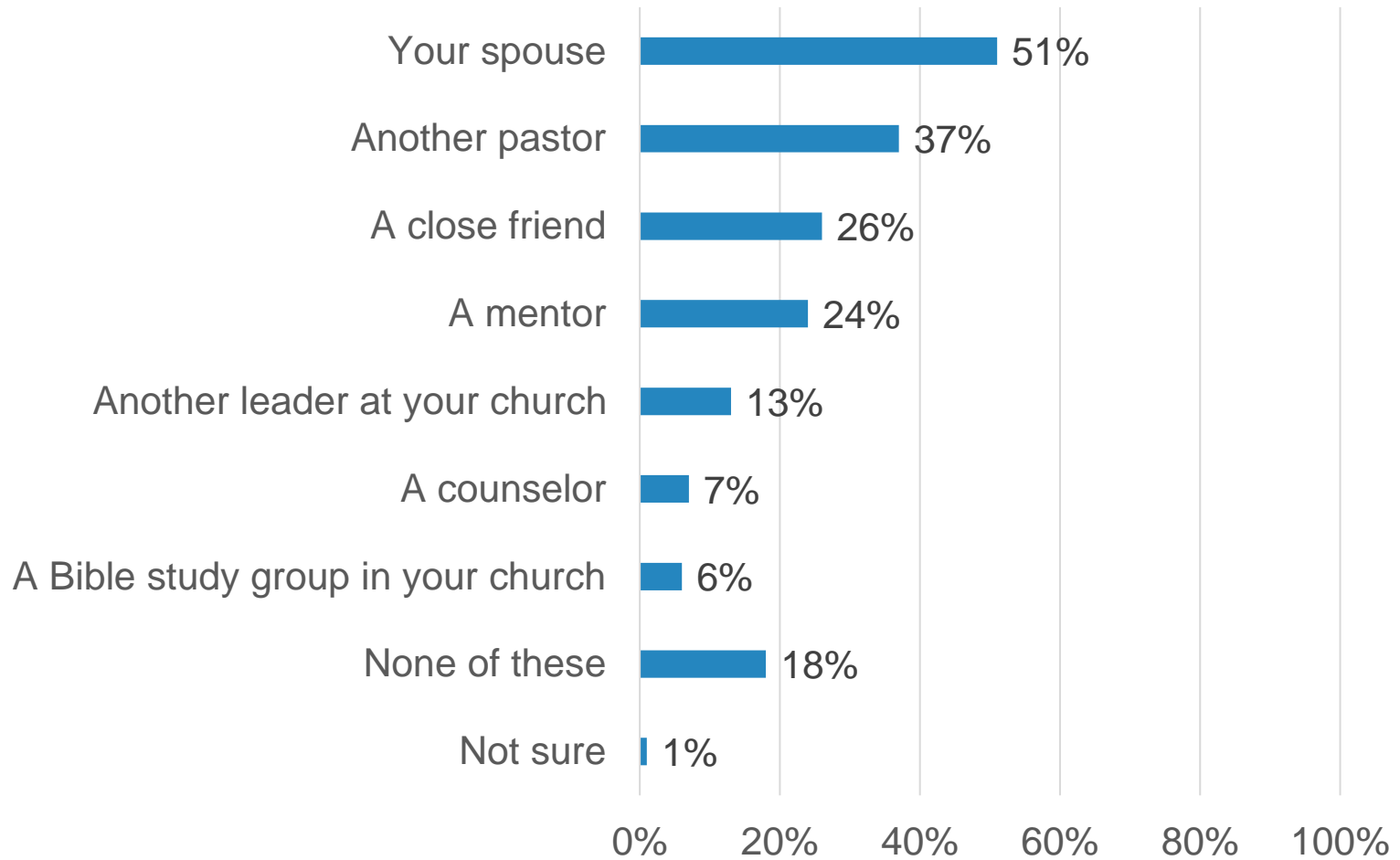
“Which of the following are personal areas that you find challenging today?”



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Q34: “Which of the following are personal areas that you find challenging today? (Select all that apply)” n=554

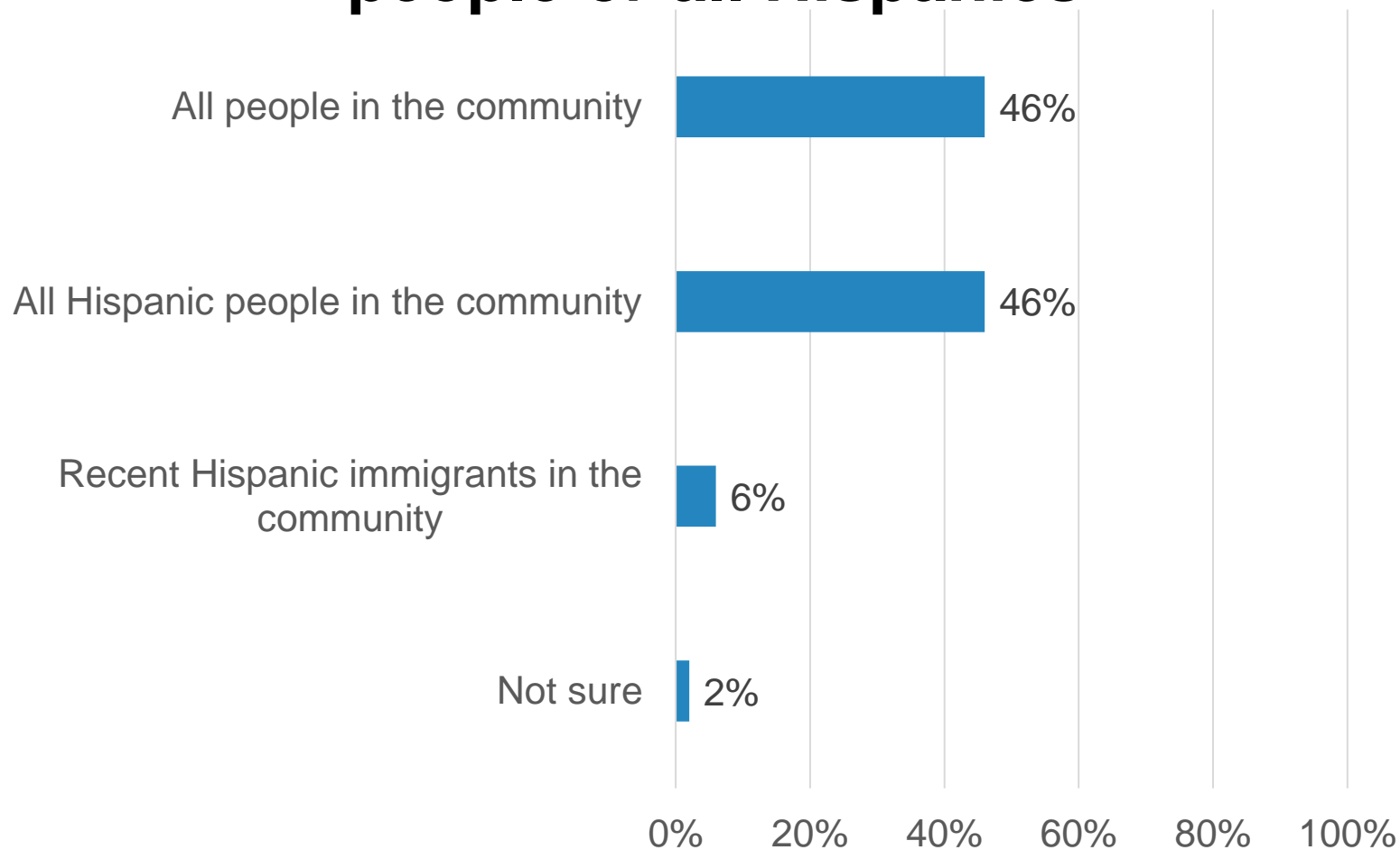
“Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?”



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Q35: “Do you meet at least once a month and openly share your struggles with any of the following?
(Select all that apply)” n=554

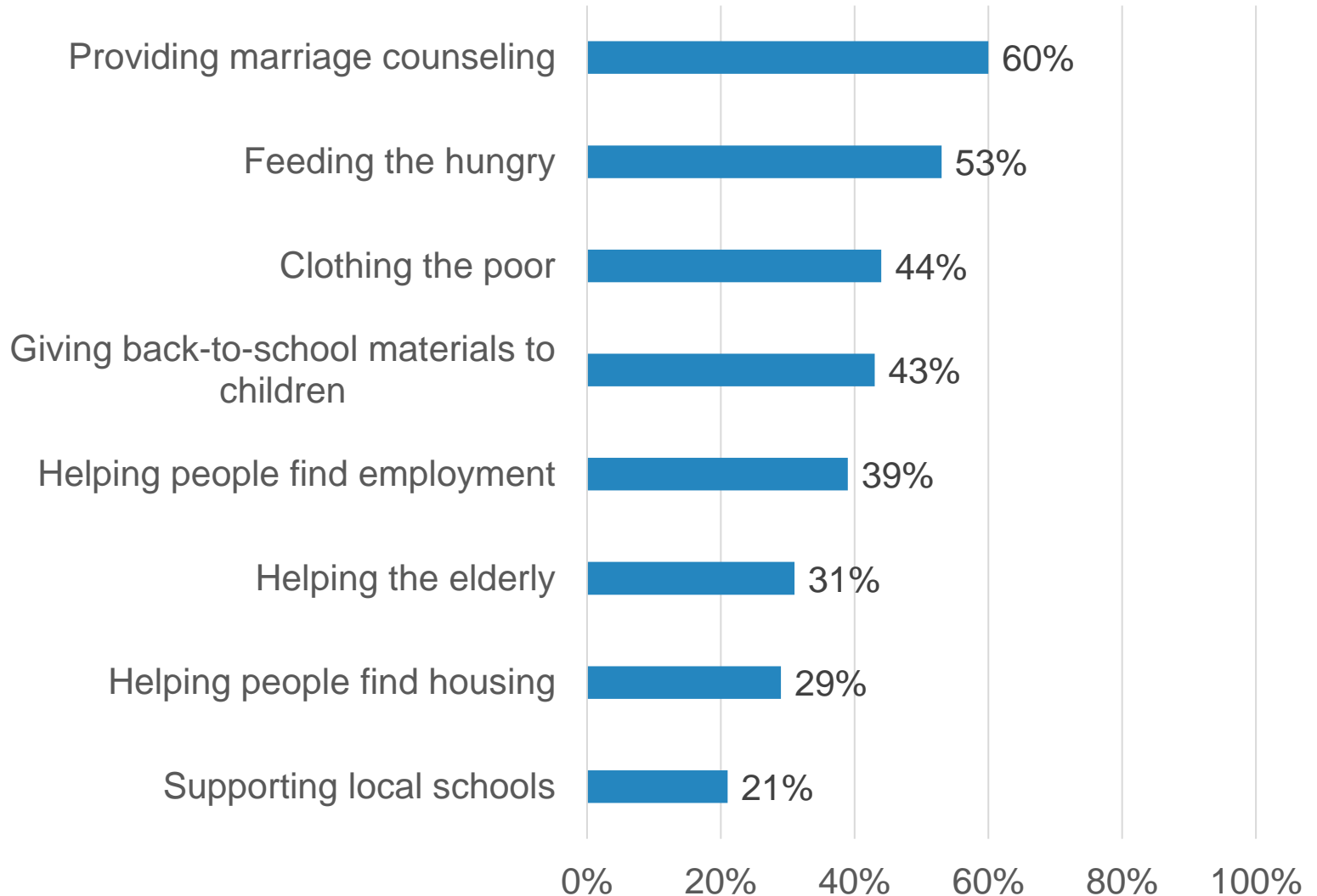
Churches, as they serve their community, are split on whether they seek to minister to all people or all Hispanics



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Q37: "Which of the following best describes the population your congregation seeks to minister to as you conduct service projects or ongoing service ministries?" n=554

“In which, if any, of the following ways has your church served your community in the last year?”

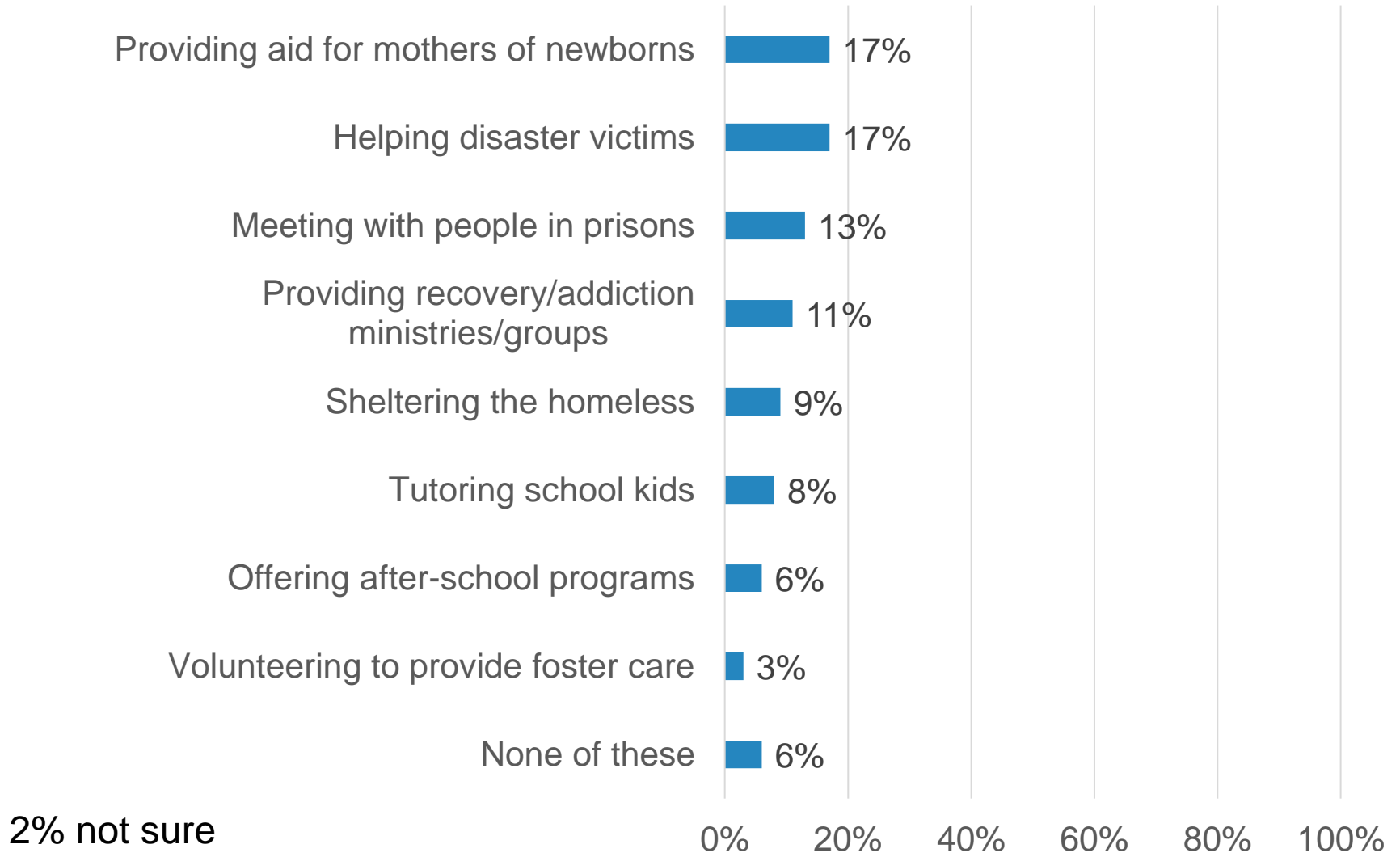


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Q38: “In which, if any, of the following ways has your church served your community in the last year? (Select all that apply)” n=554

“In which, if any, of the following ways has your church served your community in the last year?”

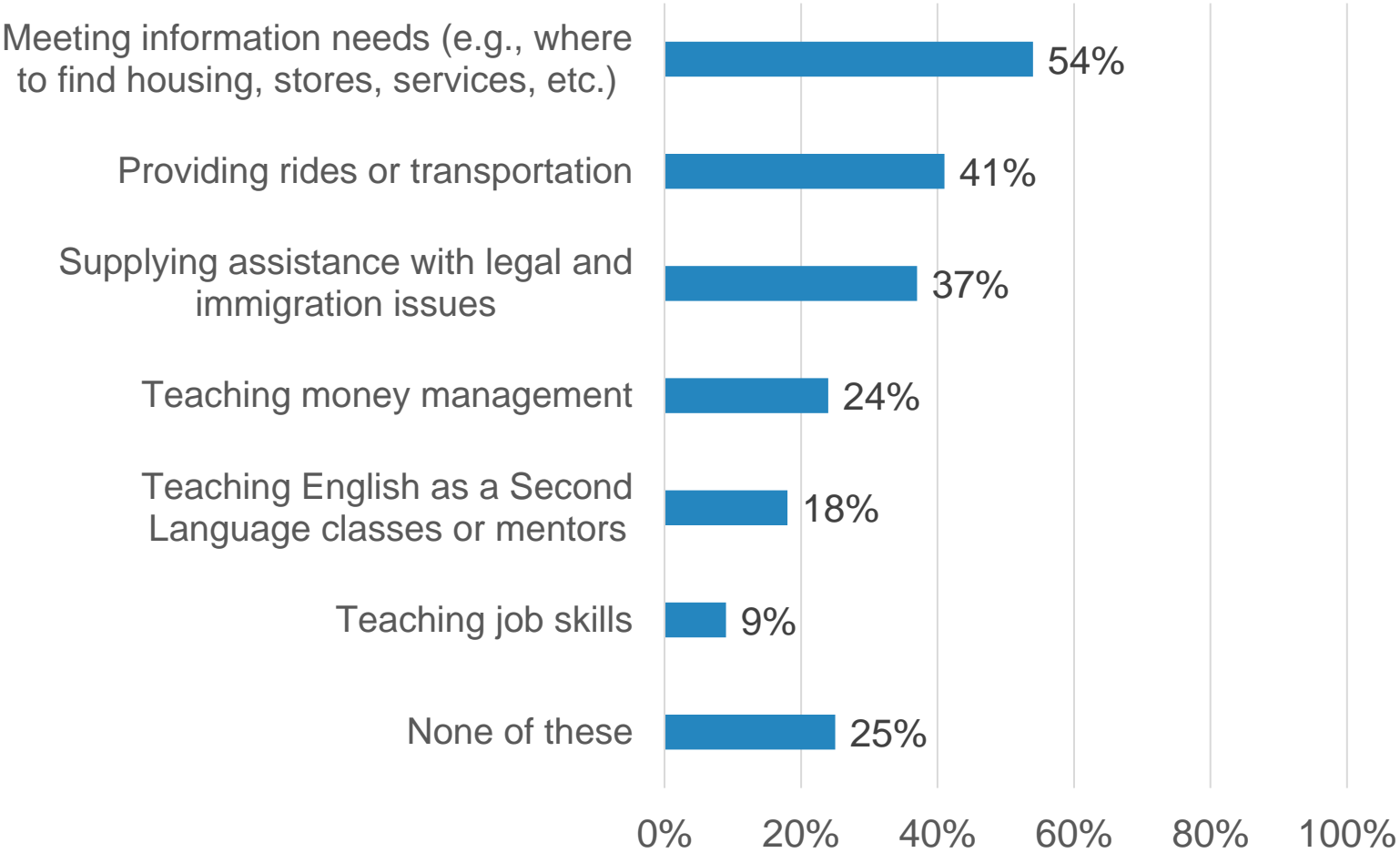
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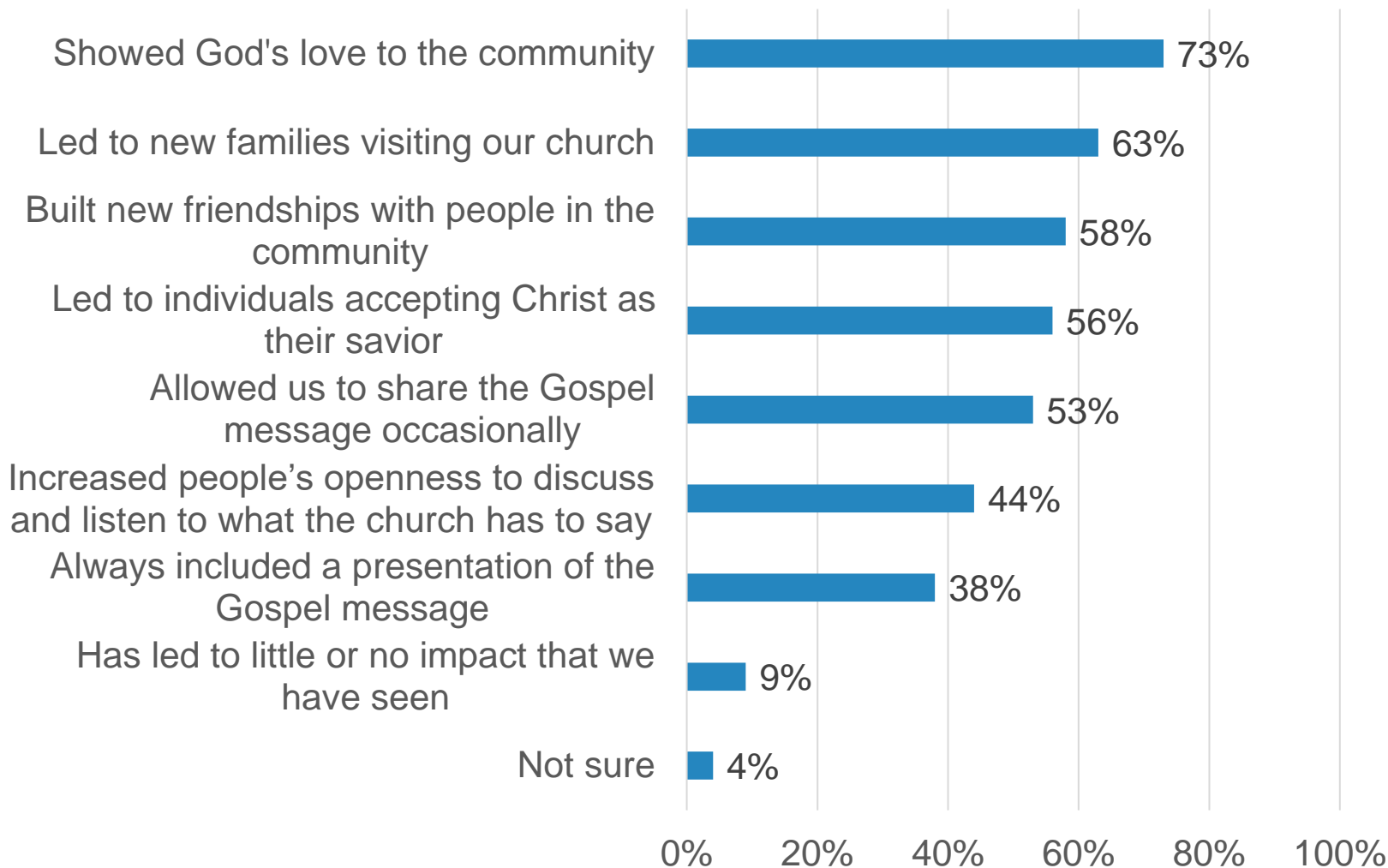
Lifewayresearch

Q38: “In which, if any, of the following ways has your church served your community in the last year? (Select all that apply)” n=554

“In which, if any, of the following ways has your church served immigrants in your community in the last year?”



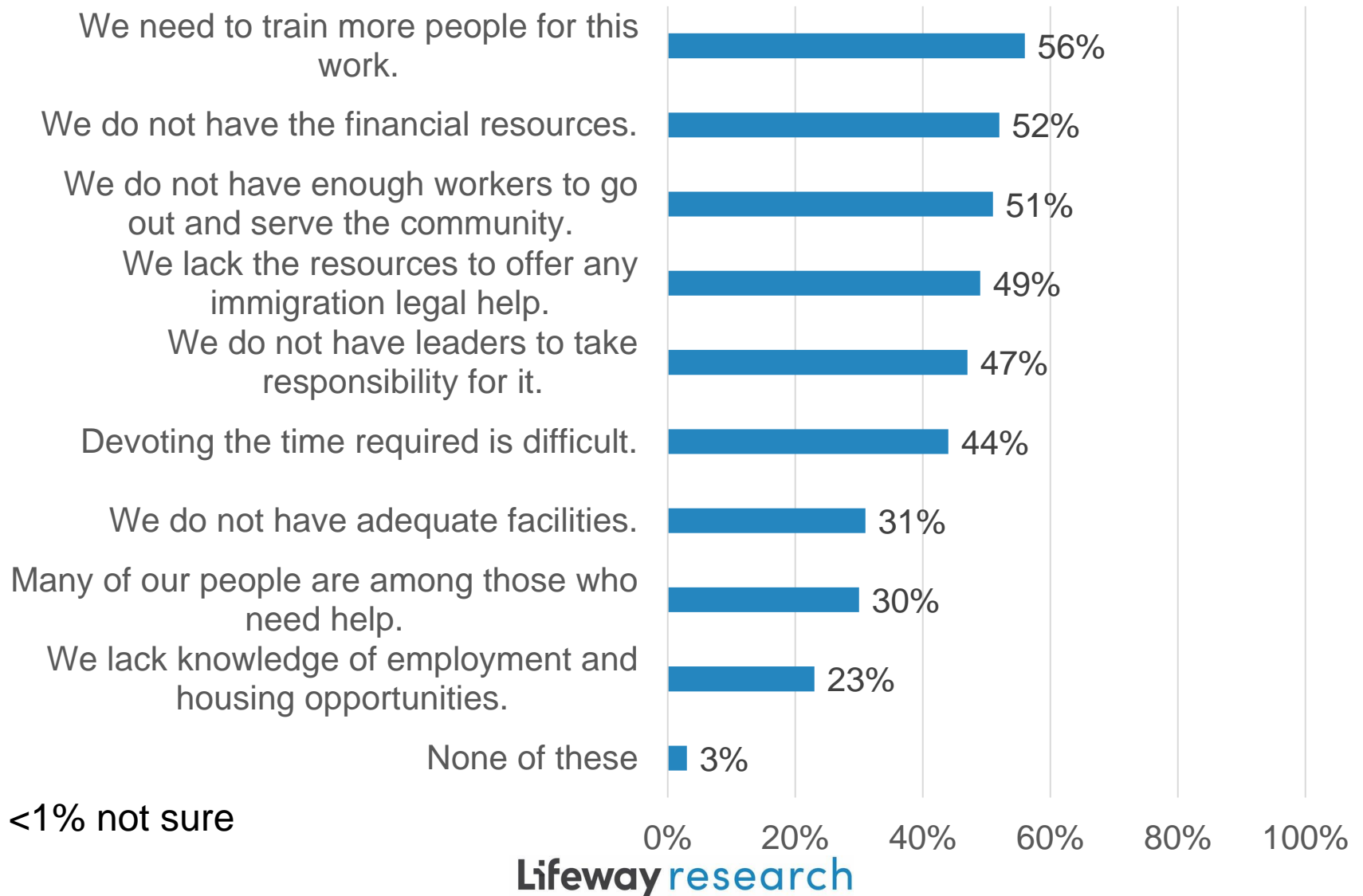
“How have these service activities impacted your church's teaching, evangelism, and discipleship efforts in the last year?”



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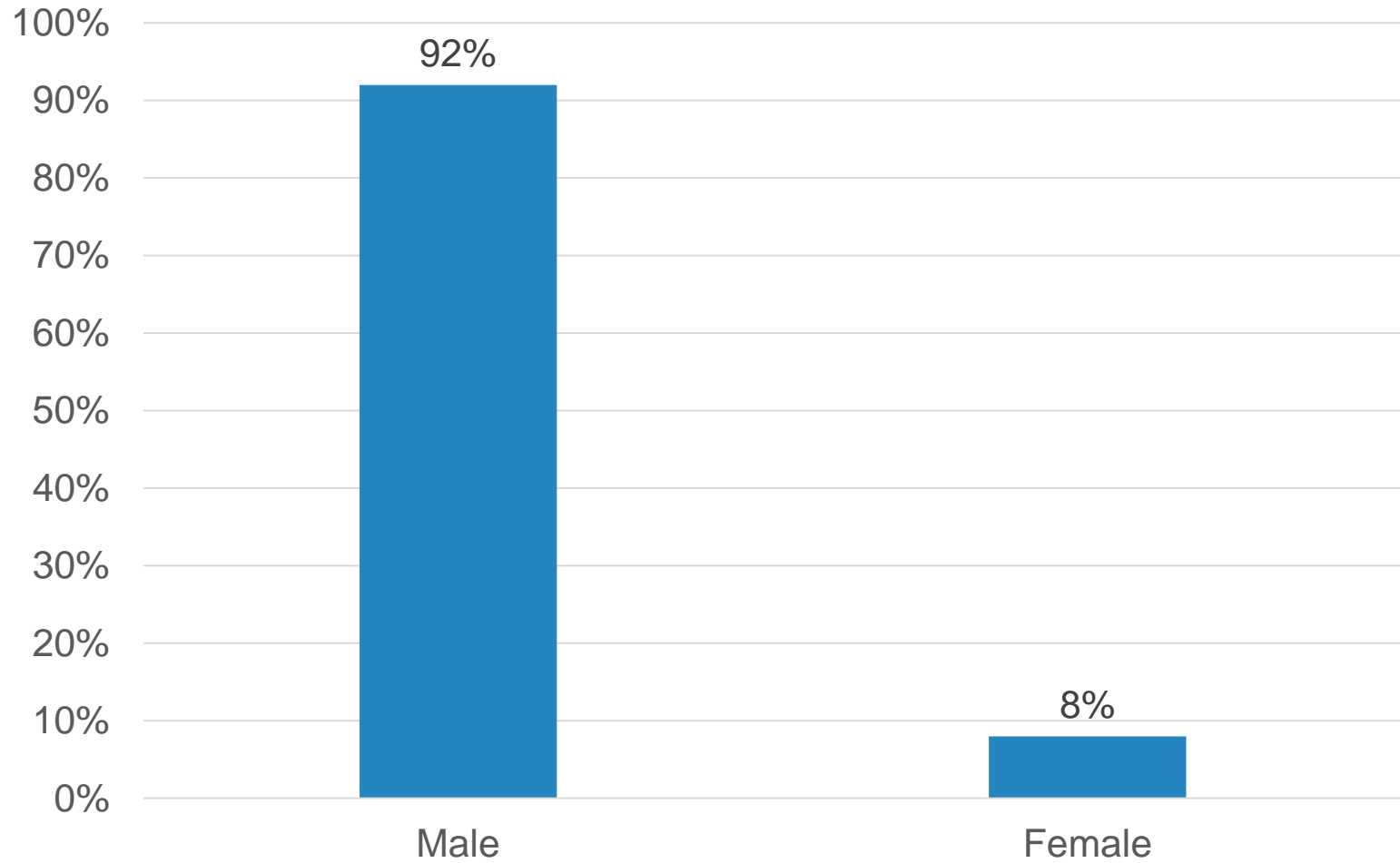
Q40: “How have these service activities impacted your church's teaching, evangelism, and discipleship efforts in the last year? (Select all that apply) Our service...” n=554

“What are the biggest challenges your church faces in serving your local community?”

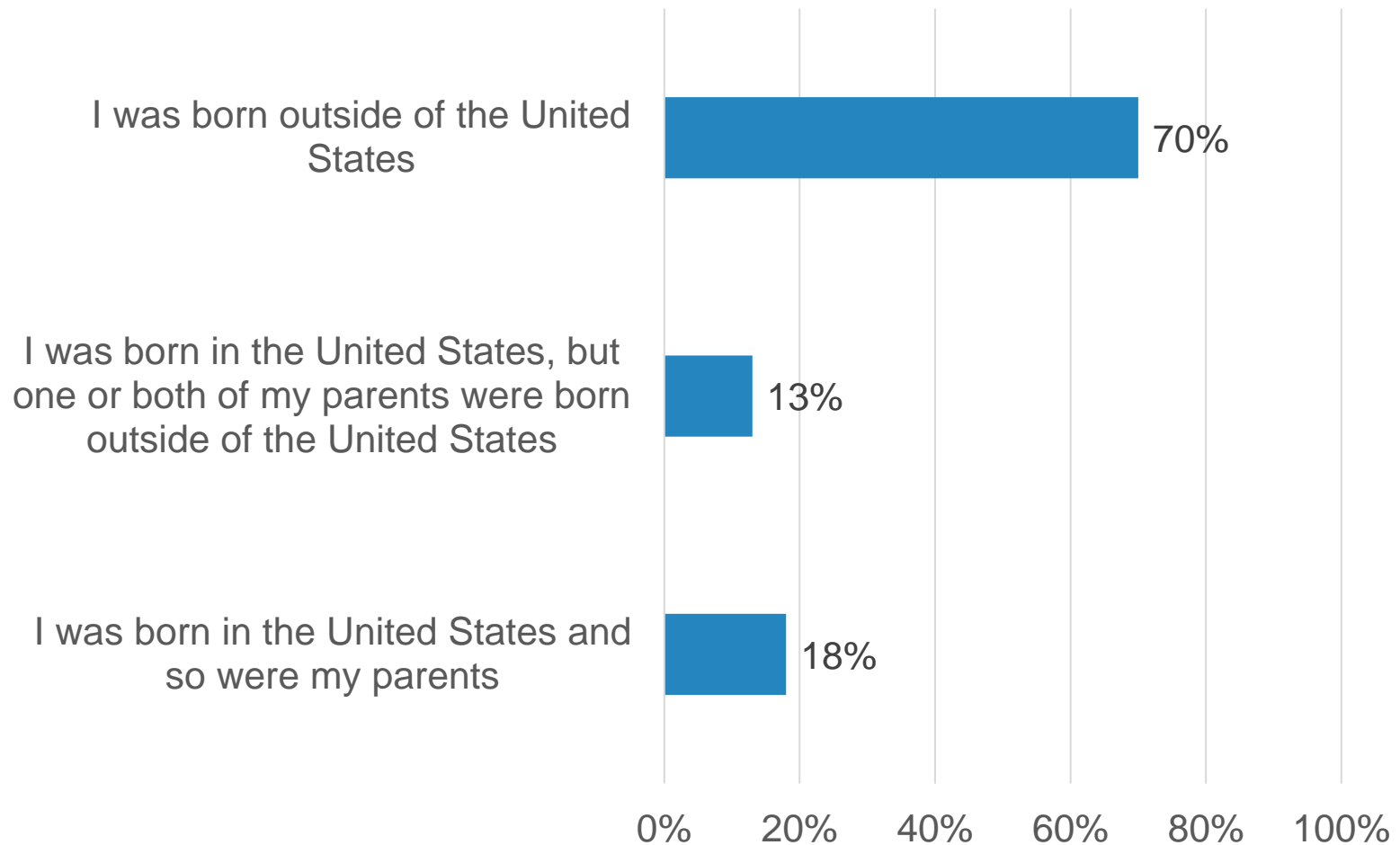


Q41: “What are the biggest challenges your church faces in serving your local community? (Select all that apply)” n=554

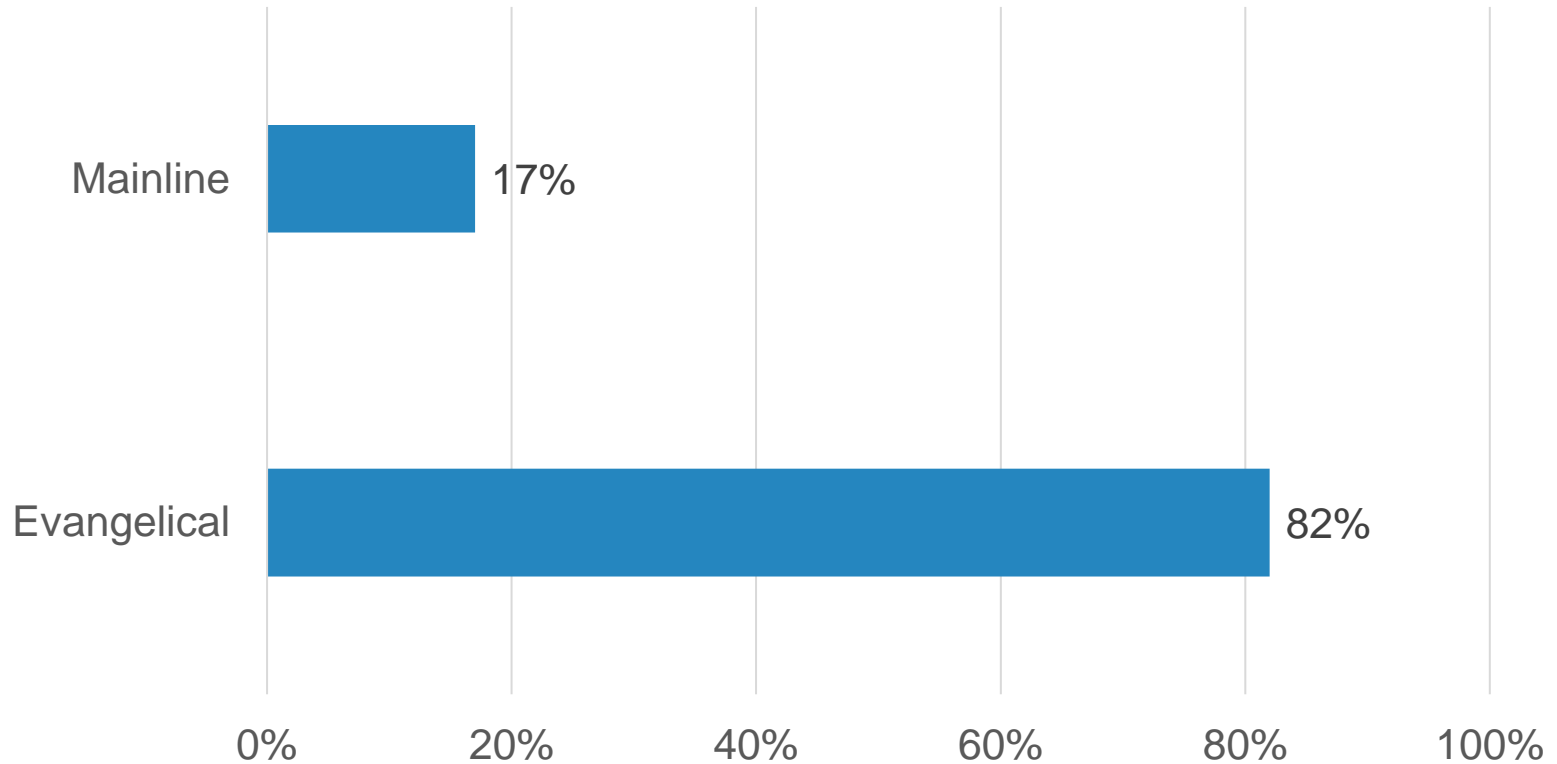
Gender of participating pastors



70% of pastors of Hispanic congregations are first generation immigrants



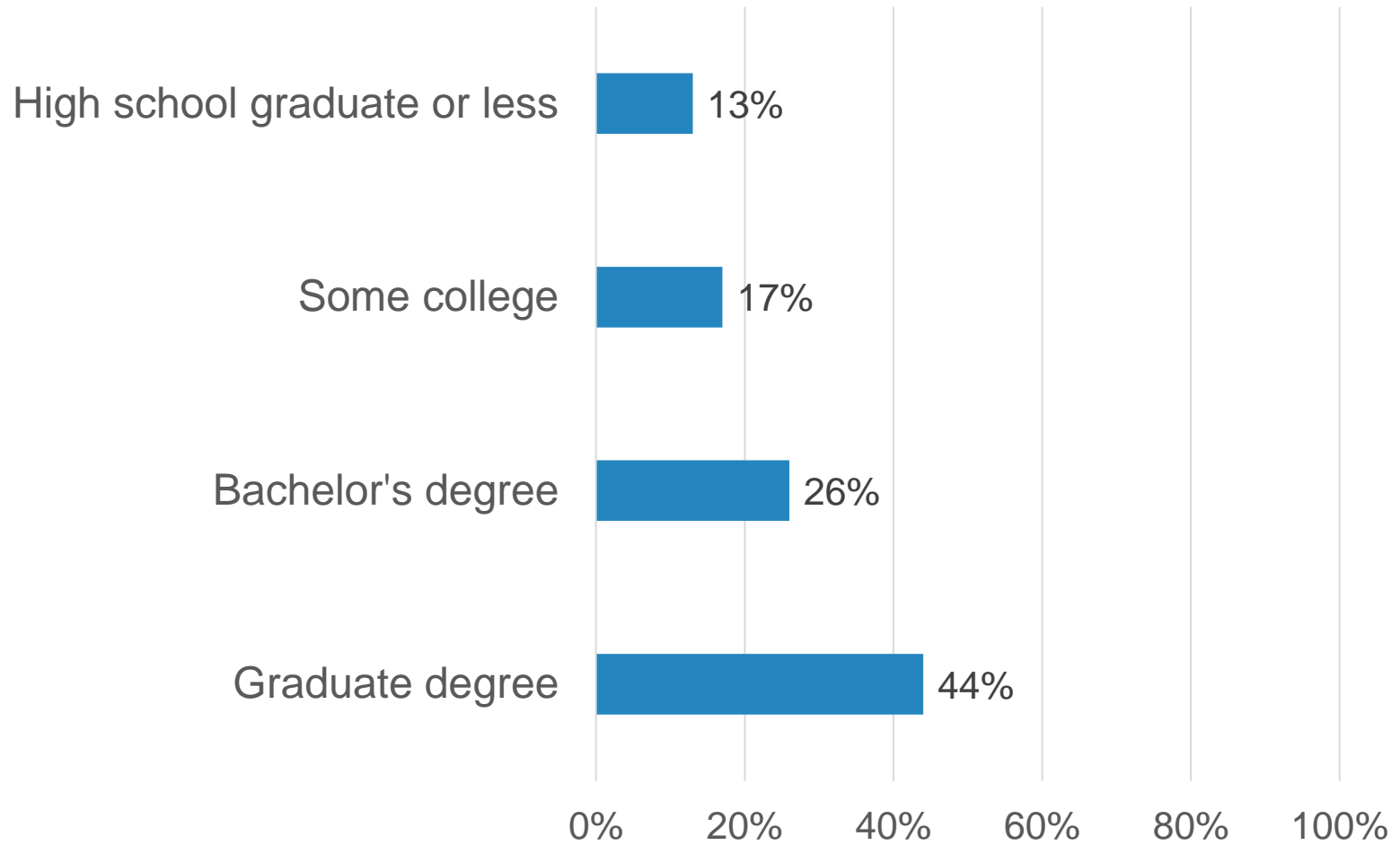
Self-identified theological beliefs of participating pastors of Hispanic congregations



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Q44: "Do you consider yourself any of the following (Select all that apply)" n=554

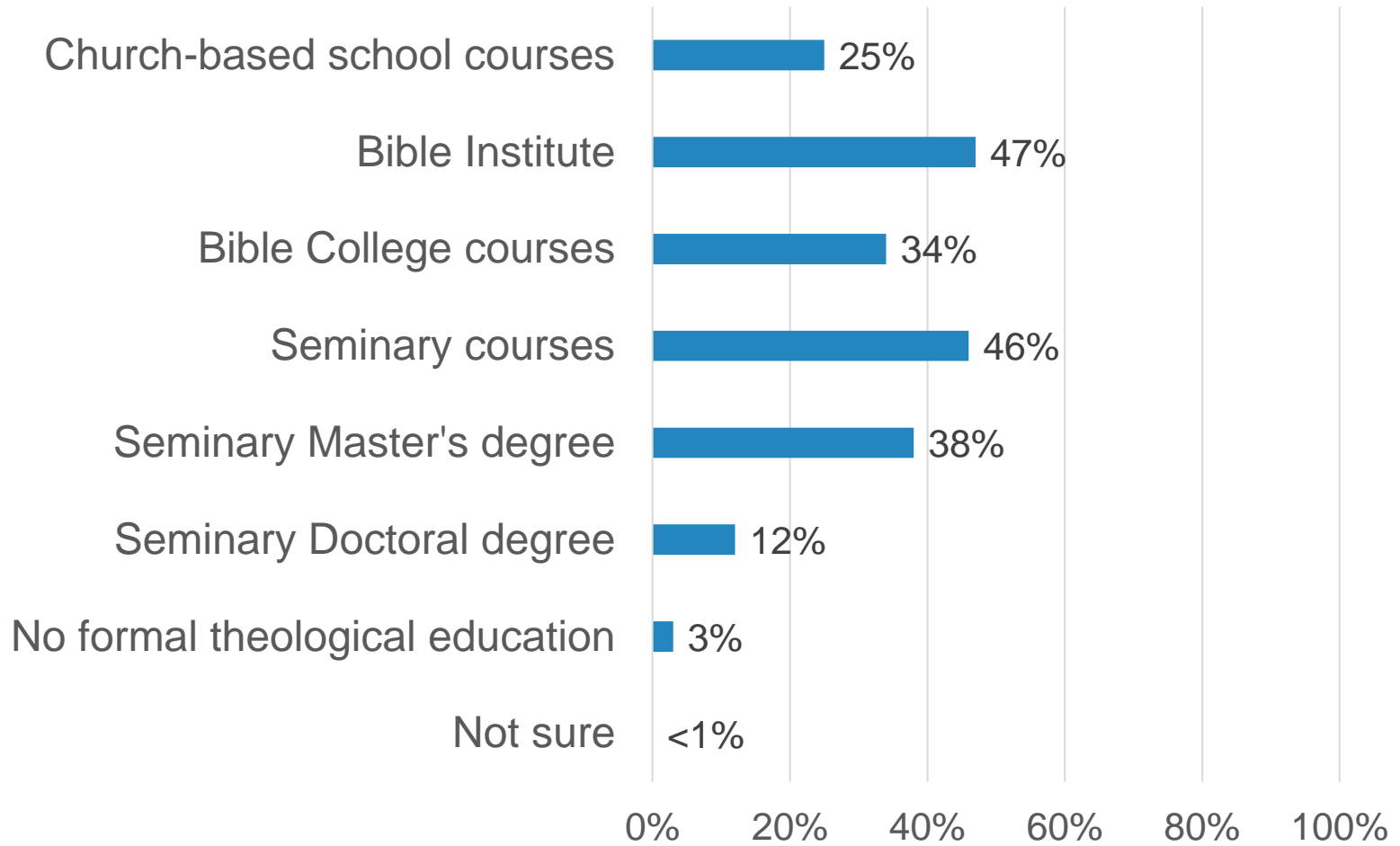
Education level of participating pastors of Hispanic congregations



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Q45: "Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?" n=554

Theological education completed by participating pastors of Hispanic congregations



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Hispanic American Church Study

A SURVEY OF PASTORS OF HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE U.S.

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