

Pastors' Experience and Pastor Search

A SURVEY OF PROTESTANT PASTORS

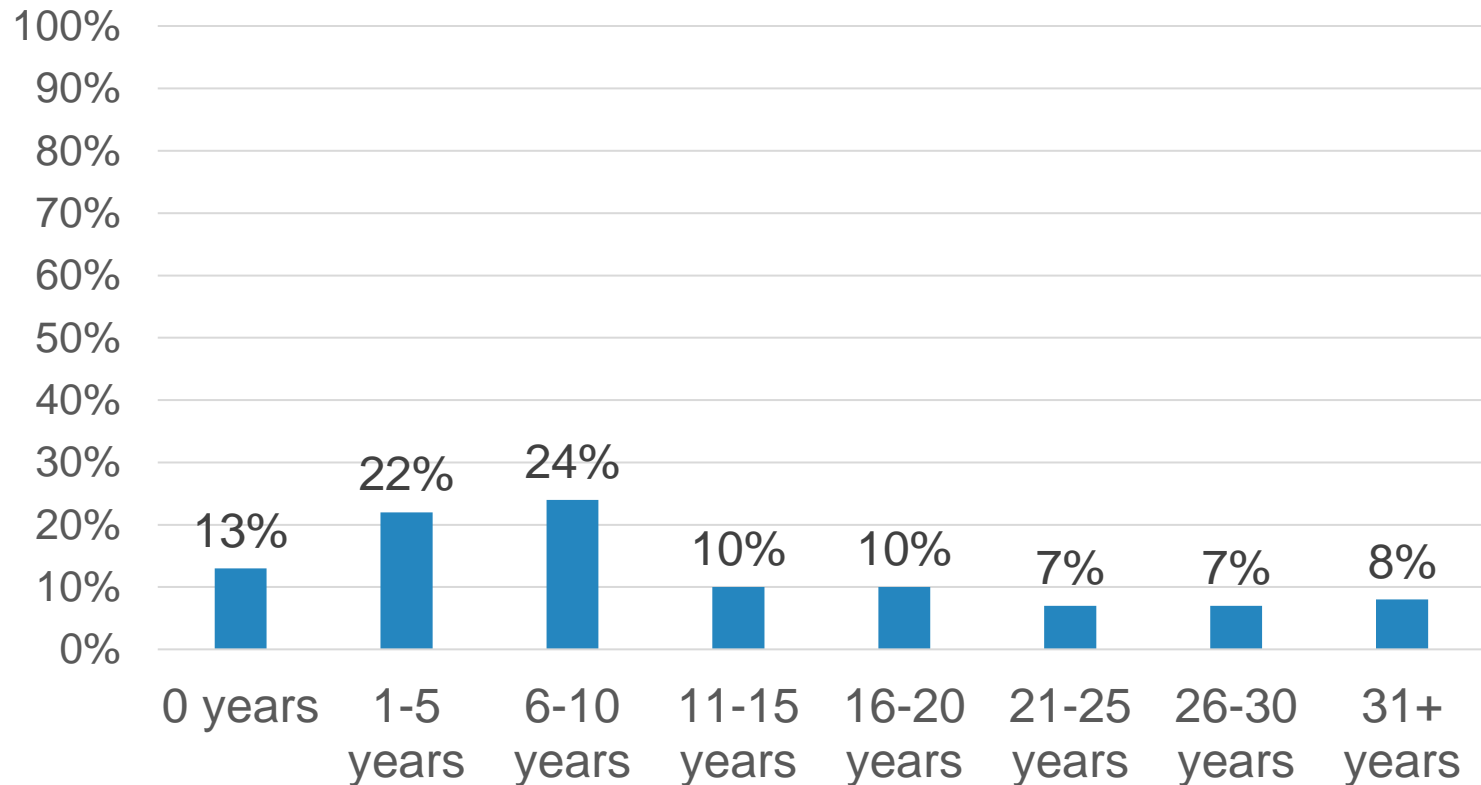
Lifeway **research**

Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,004 Protestant pastors was conducted August 29, 2023 - September 20, 2023
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,004 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

34% worked 5 years or less in non-ministry employment before becoming a senior pastor

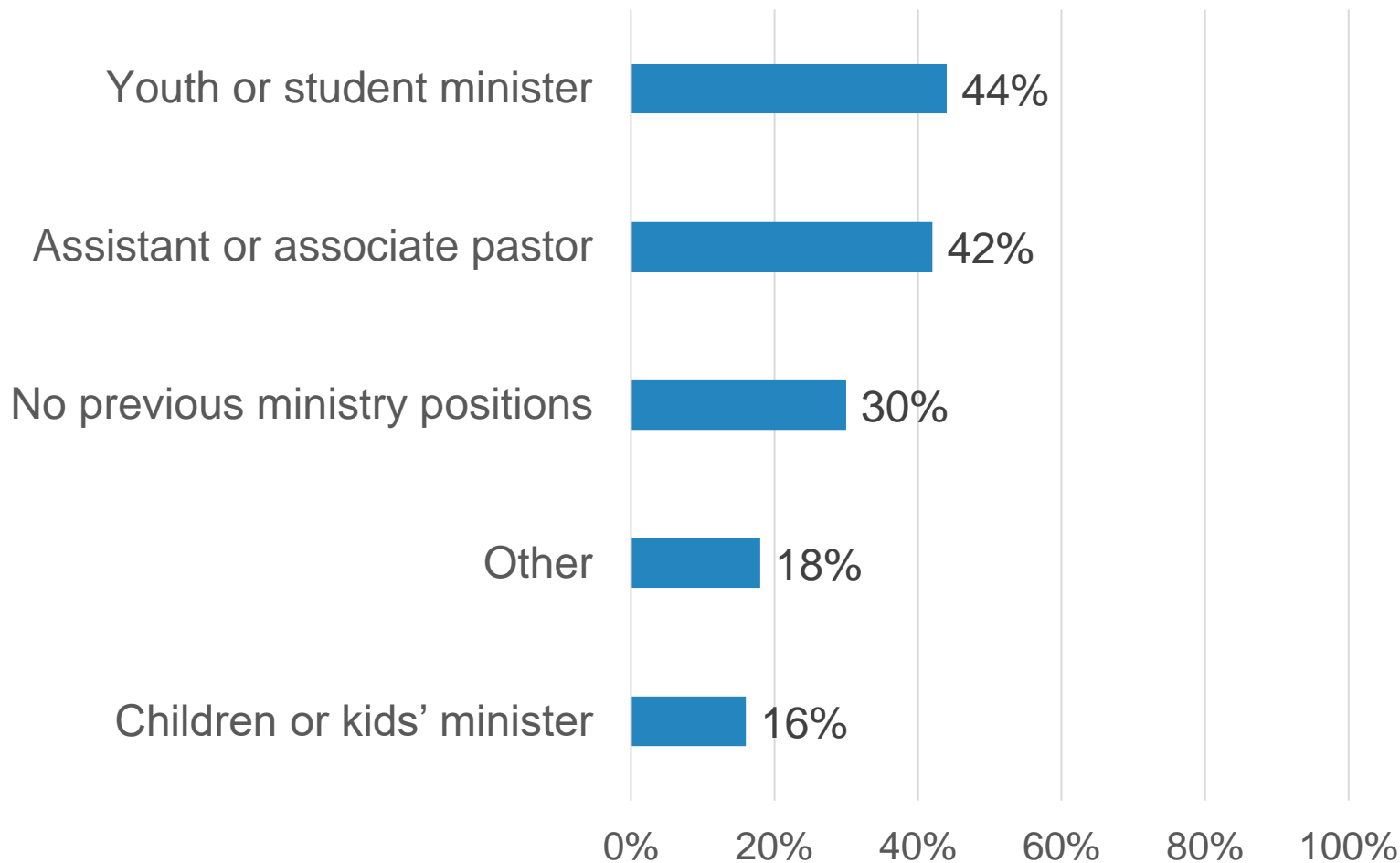
Among Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

“Before becoming a senior pastor, which if any of the following paid ministry positions did you have?”

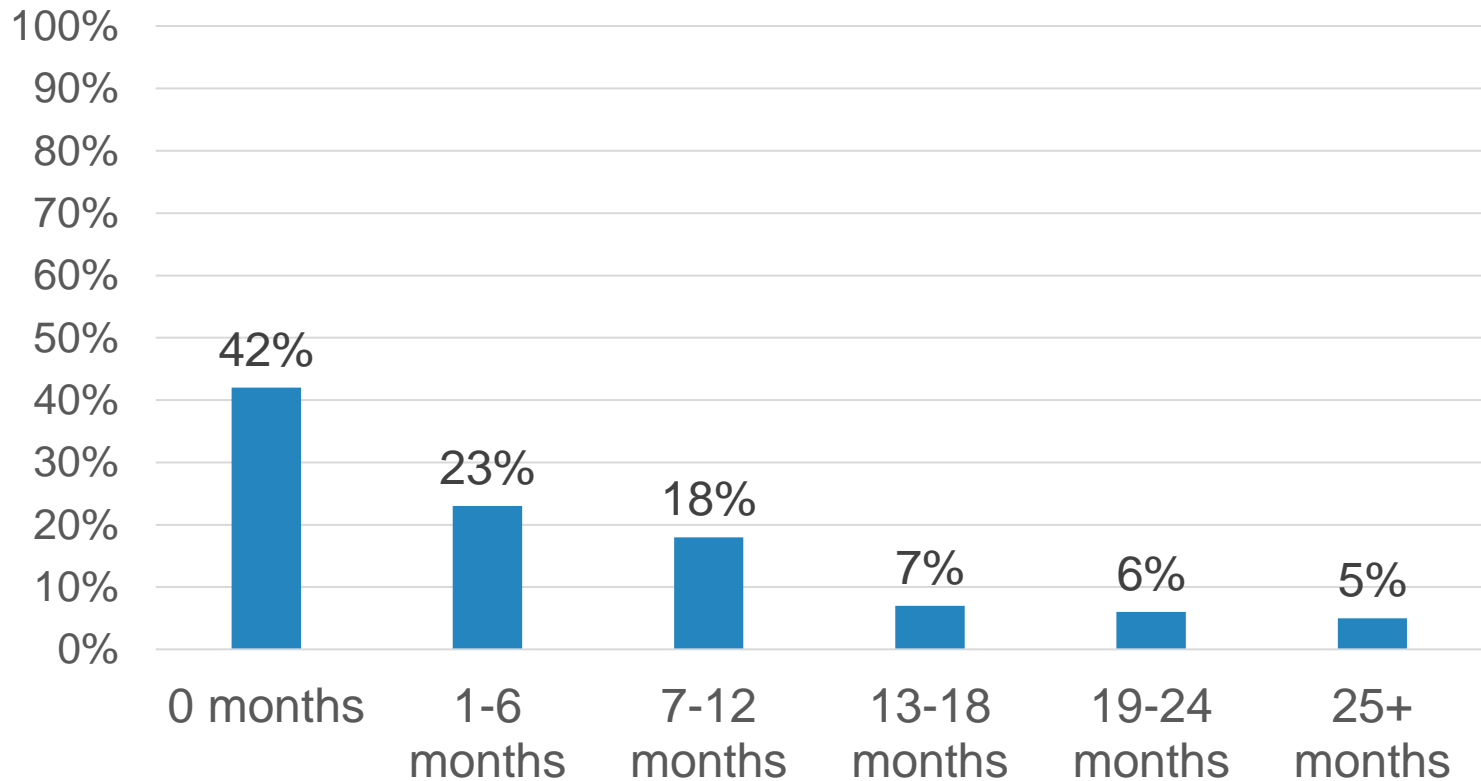
Among Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

83% say their church was without a pastor for one year or less before they were named pastor

Among Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

Q: "Approximately how many months was your church without a pastor before you were named pastor?" n=967

Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

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		Hispanic	Graduate Degree	
65+		Other Ethnicities	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

“After high school and before becoming a senior pastor, how many years, if any, did you work in non-ministry employment of any kind?”

- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to answer “1-5 years” (29%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to answer “6-10 years” (35%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to answer “31+ years” (20%)
- Male pastors are more likely to answer “1-5 years” than females (24% v. 14%)
- White pastors (23%) are more likely to answer “1-5 years” than African American pastors (6%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to answer “26-30 years” (15%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to answer “31+ years” (17%)
- Lutherans (20%) and Christian/Church of Christ (20%) are more likely to answer “0 years” than Baptists (11%) and Non-denominational (7%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 50-99 (27%) and 100-249 (27%) are more likely to answer “6-10 years” than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (16%)

“Before becoming a senior pastor, which if any of the following paid ministry positions did you have?”

Assistant or associate pastor

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (33%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (45% v. 27%)
- Hispanic pastors are the most likely to select (54%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select (24%)
- Pentecostals (56%) and Non-denominational (52%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (29%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 100-249 (45%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (37%)

“Before becoming a senior pastor, which if any of the following paid ministry positions did you have?”

Youth or student minister

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select (28%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (47% v. 29%)
- African American pastors are the least likely to select (30%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select (30%)
- Pastors in the South (49%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (39%) and West (36%)
- Baptists (49%), Pentecostals (54%), and Non-denominational (54%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (22%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (37%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ (61%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (38%) and 50-99 (41%)

“Before becoming a senior pastor, which if any of the following paid ministry positions did you have?”

Children or kids’ minister

- Hispanic pastors (29%) are more likely to select than white pastors (15%)
- Pastors with no college degree (20%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (21%) are more likely to select than those with a Doctoral Degree (10%)
- Pentecostals (27%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (7%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (10%)

“Before becoming a senior pastor, which if any of the following paid ministry positions did you have?”

Other

- African American pastors (28%) are more likely to select than white pastors (17%)
- Presbyterian/Reformed (26%) are more likely to select than Baptists (16%) and Methodists (15%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 0-49 (21%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (15%)

“Before becoming a senior pastor, which if any of the following paid ministry positions did you have?”

No previous ministry positions

- Pastors age 18-44 are the least likely to select (20%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (39% v. 28%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select (44%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to select (48%)
- Lutherans (41%) are more likely to select than Methodists (28%), Pentecostals (21%), and Non-denominational (22%)

“Approximately how many months was your church without a pastor before you were named pastor?”

- Pastors age 45-54 (47%) are more likely to answer “0 months” than pastors age 55-64 (35%)
- Female pastors are more likely to answer “0 months” than males (51% v. 39%)
- Hispanic pastors (53%) are more likely to answer “0 months” than white pastors (40%)
- Pastors with no college degree (50%) are more likely to answer “0 months” than those with a Master’s Degree (38%) or a Doctoral Degree (36%)
- Pastors in the South (19%) are more likely to answer “7-12 months” than those in the Northeast (12%)
- Methodists are the most likely to answer “0 months” (81%)
- Pentecostals (53%) and Non-denominational (59%) are more likely to answer “0 months” than Baptists (28%), Lutherans (24%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (30%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ are the most likely to answer “0 months” (67%)

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