

Protestant Churchgoer Views On Pastors' Addressing Current Issues

A SURVEY OF 1,008 AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway **research**

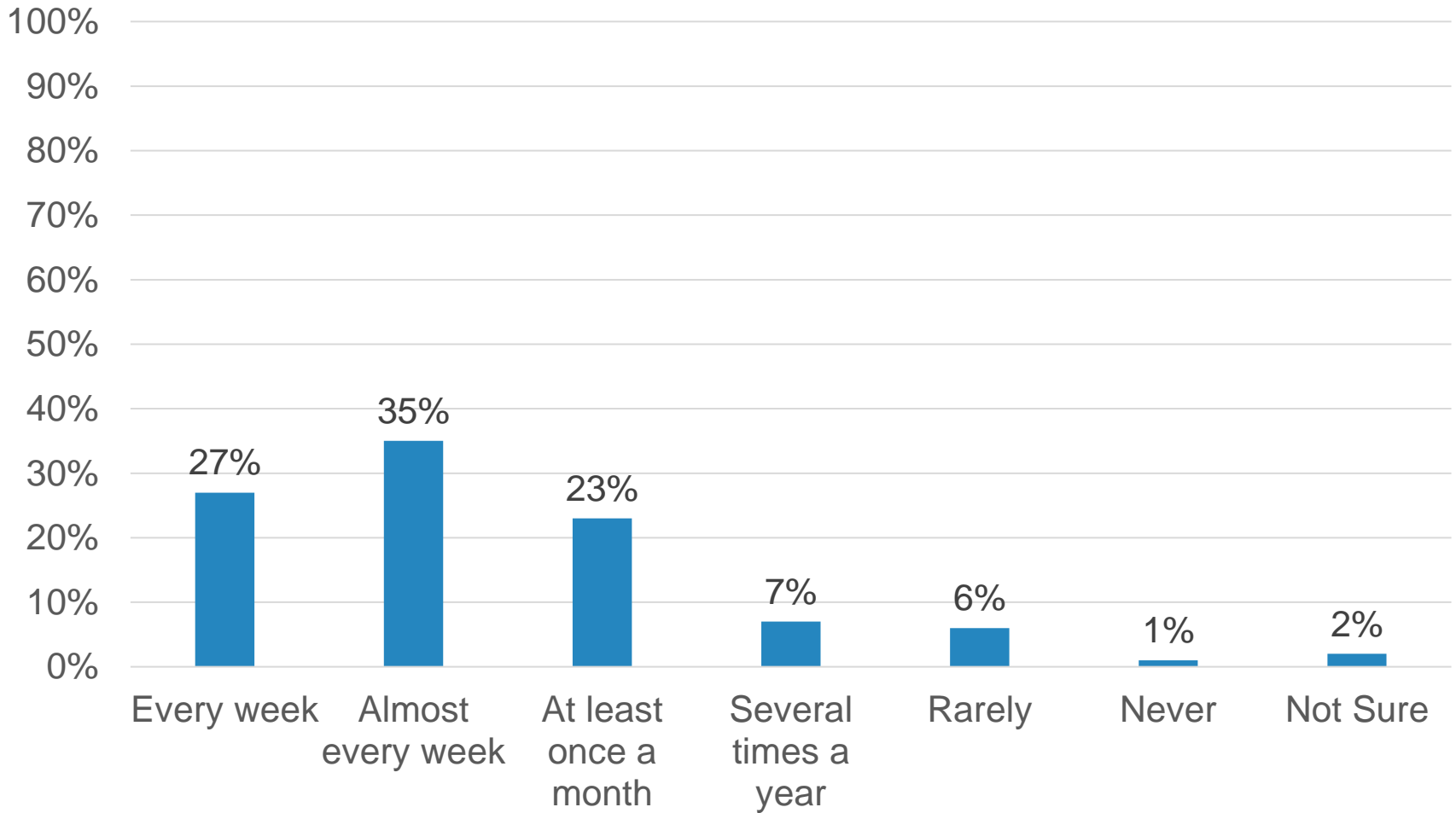
Methodology

- The online survey of 1,008 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted September 19-29, 2023, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attend religious services at least once a month
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and religion to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,008 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

Definitions

- **Evangelical Beliefs** are defined using the NAE Lifeway Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
 - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
 - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
 - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
 - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

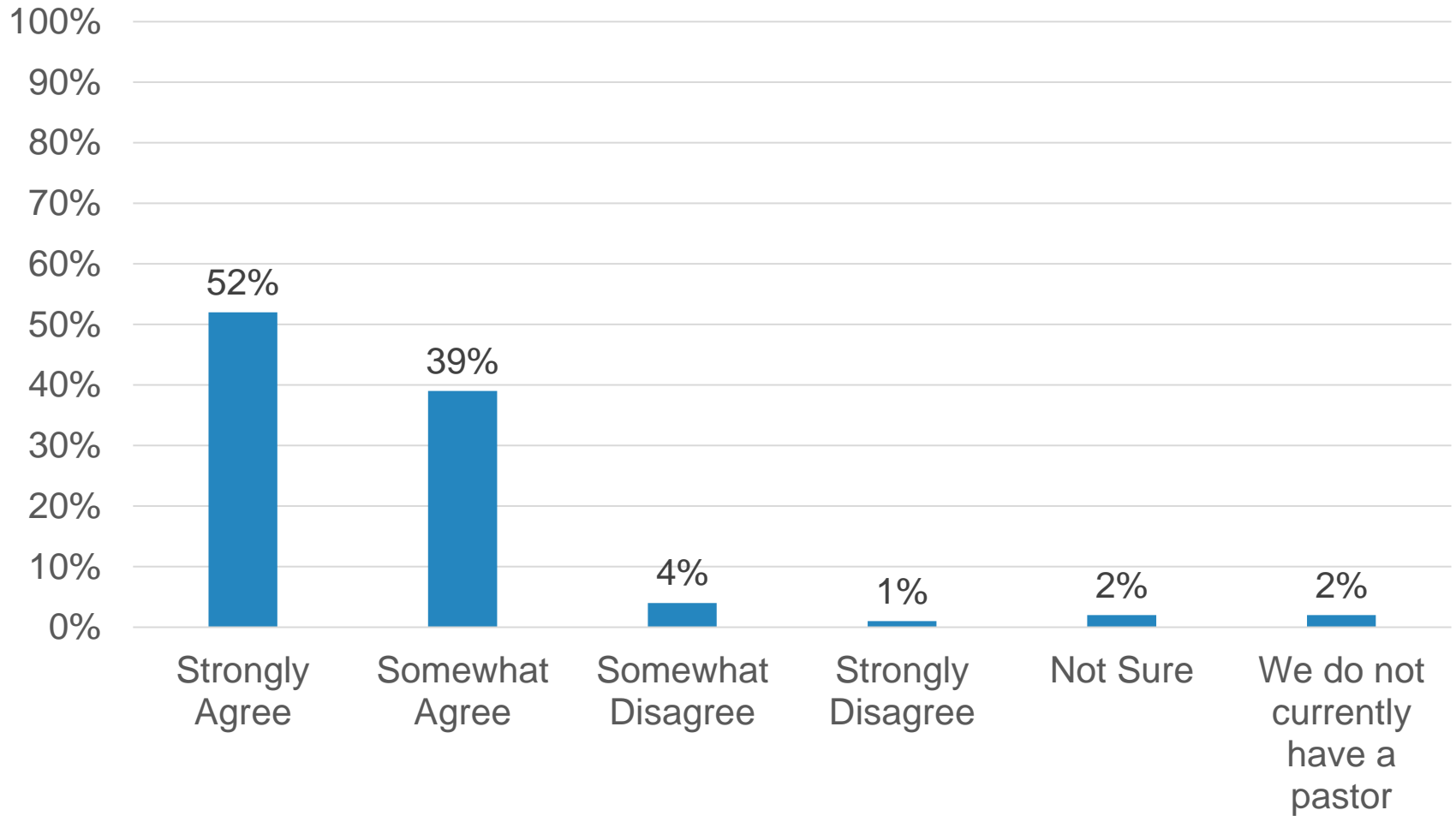
62% say that their pastor addresses current issues within a sermon every or almost every week



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Q: "How often does your pastor address issues happening today within a sermon?" n=1,008

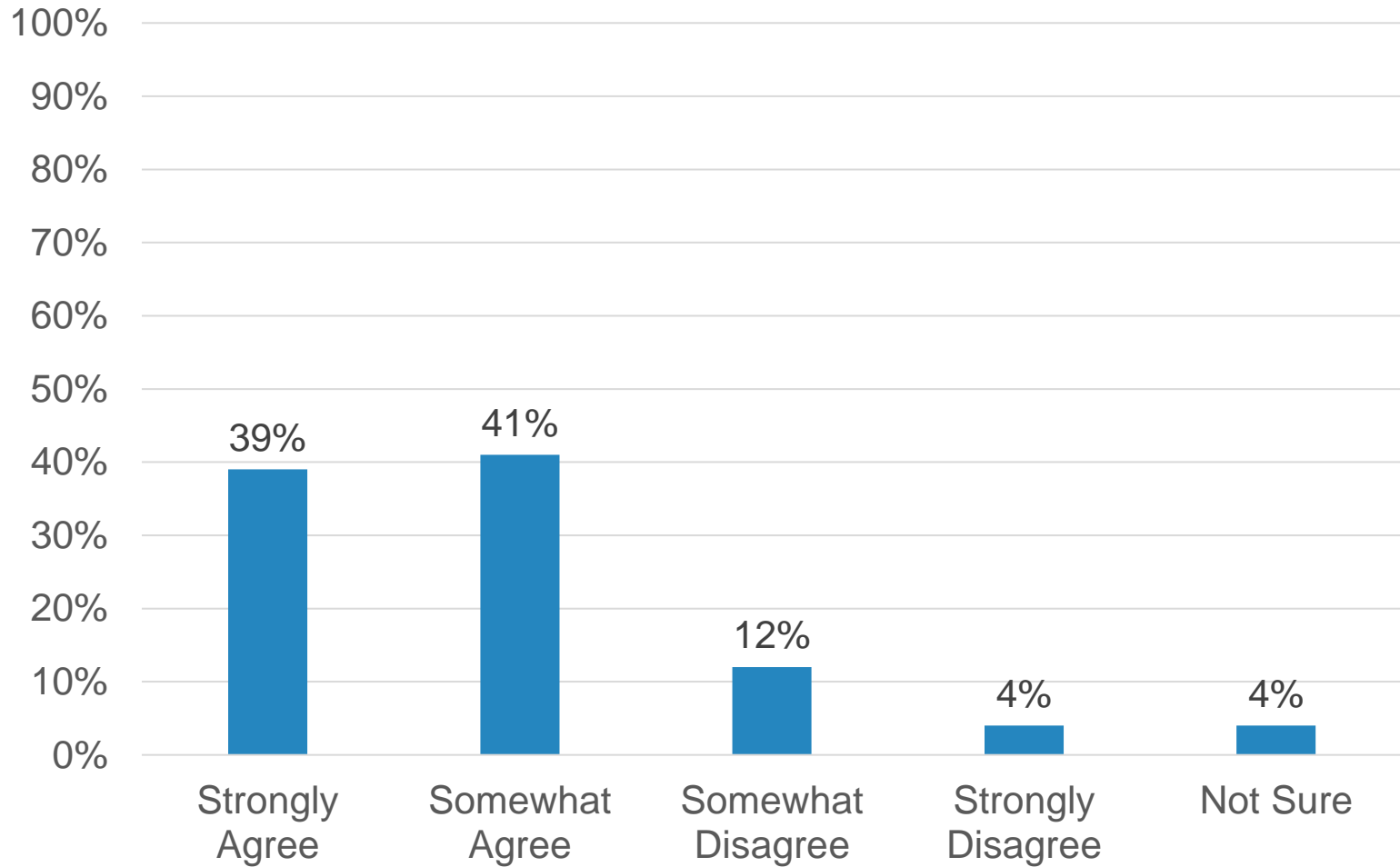
91% agree they trust the pastor of their church



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Q: "I completely trust the pastor of my church." n=1,008

8 out of 10 believe that a pastor must address current issues to be doing their job



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Q: "A pastor must address current issues to be doing their job." n=1,008

Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Denomination

Worship Service Attendance

Church Size

Evangelical Beliefs

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, ethnicity, region, and education.

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	REGION	EDUCATION
Male	18-34	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	35-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among denomination, worship service attendance, church size and evangelical beliefs.

DENOMINATION	WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE	CHURCH'S WORSHIP ATTENDANCE	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Baptist	1 to 3 times a month	Less than 50	Yes
Methodist	4 or more times a month	50 to 99	No
Lutheran		100 to 249	
Presbyterian/Reformed		250 to 499	
Christian/Church of Christ		500 or more	
Non-denominational			

“How often does your pastor address issues happening today within a sermon?”

- Males are more likely to select “Several times a year” than females (9% v. 5%)
- Those age 18-34 (34%) and 35-49 (41%) are more likely to select “Every week” than those 50-64 (25%) and 65+ (17%)
- African Americans (40%) are more likely to select “Every week” than Whites (24%) and Other Ethnicities (19%)
- Those in the Midwest (41%) and South (36%) are more likely to select “Almost every week” than those in the West (27%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (33%) are more likely to select “Every week” than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (24%) or a Graduate Degree (20%)
- Lutherans (42%) and Christian/Church of Christ (48%) are more likely to select “Almost every week” than Non-denominational (30%)
- Those who attend a worship service 1 to 3 times a month (26%) are more likely to select “Several times a year” than those who attend 4 or more times a month (21%)

“How often does your pastor address issues happening today within a sermon?” *Continued*

- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “Every week” than those without evangelical beliefs (31% v. 23%)
- Those who attend churches with worship attendance of 500+ (13%) are more likely to select “Rarely” than those in churches of 50 to 99 (4%), 100 to 249 (5%) and 250 to 499 (3%)

“I completely trust the pastor of my church.”

- Males are more likely to Agree than females (93% v. 89%)
- Those age 50-64 are the most likely to Agree (95%)
- Whites (93%) are more likely to Agree than African Americans (83%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (9%) are more likely to Disagree than those who are High School Graduates or less (4%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (95% v. 87%)

“A pastor must address current issues to be doing their job.”

- Those age 65+ (22%) are more likely to Disagree than those 18-34 (12%) and 50-64 (12%)
- Whites (82%) and Other Ethnicities (87%) are more likely to Agree than Hispanics (68%)
- Methodists (96%) and Christian/Church of Christ (89%) are more likely to Agree than Lutherans (76%)
- Those who attend churches with worship attendance of 250 to 499 (88%) are more likely to Agree than those in churches of Less than 50 (76%), 50 to 99 (77%), and 500+ (78%)

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