

# Pastors' Views on Encouraging Bible Reading

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

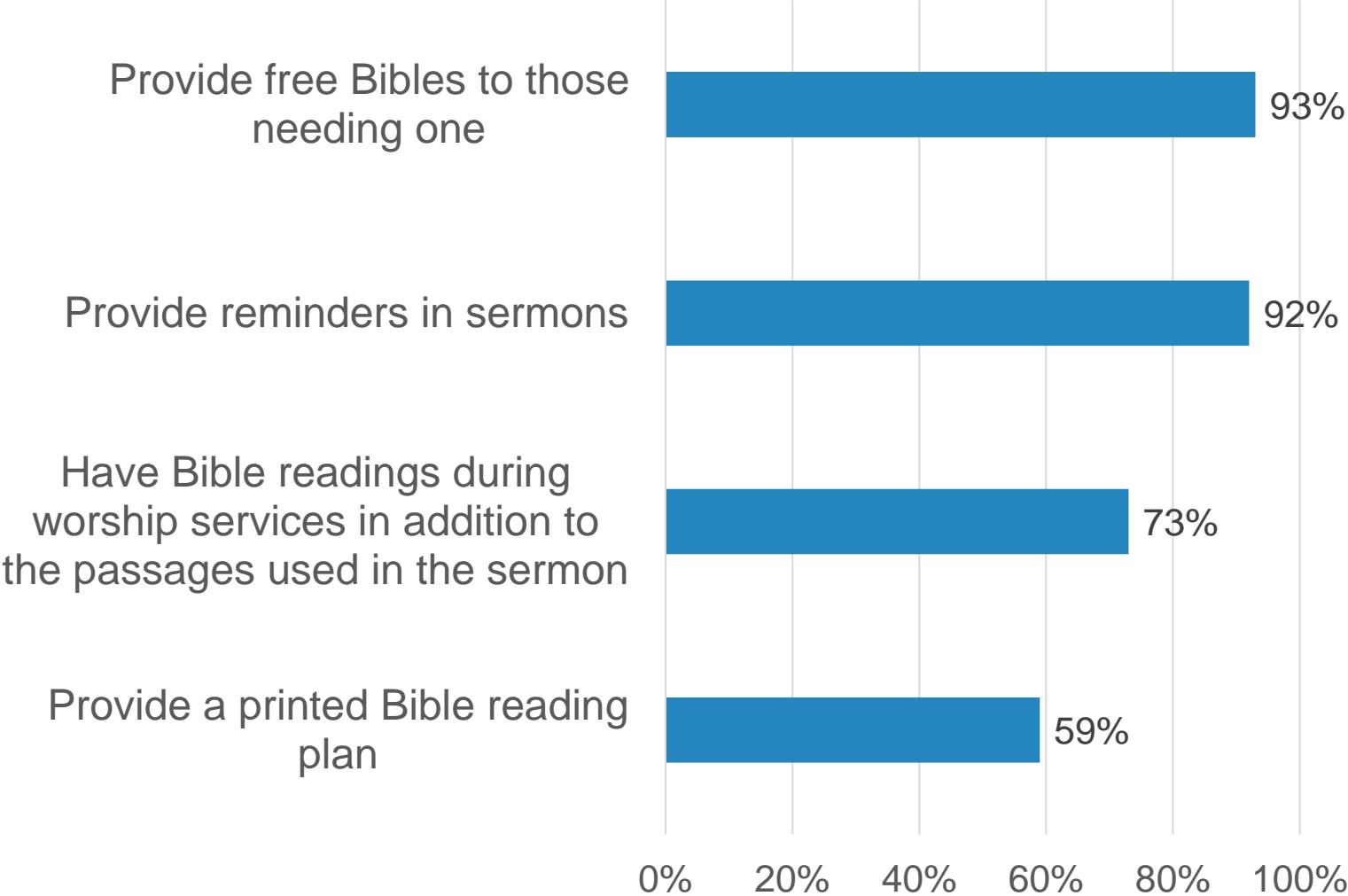
Lifeway research

# Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,003 Protestant pastors was conducted August 8 – September 3, 2024
- 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 1,003 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed  $\pm 3.3\%$  This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Comparisons are made to a survey of 1,000 pastors conducted by Lifeway Research August 22 - September 16, 2016, using the same methodology

# “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”

Among Protestant Pastors

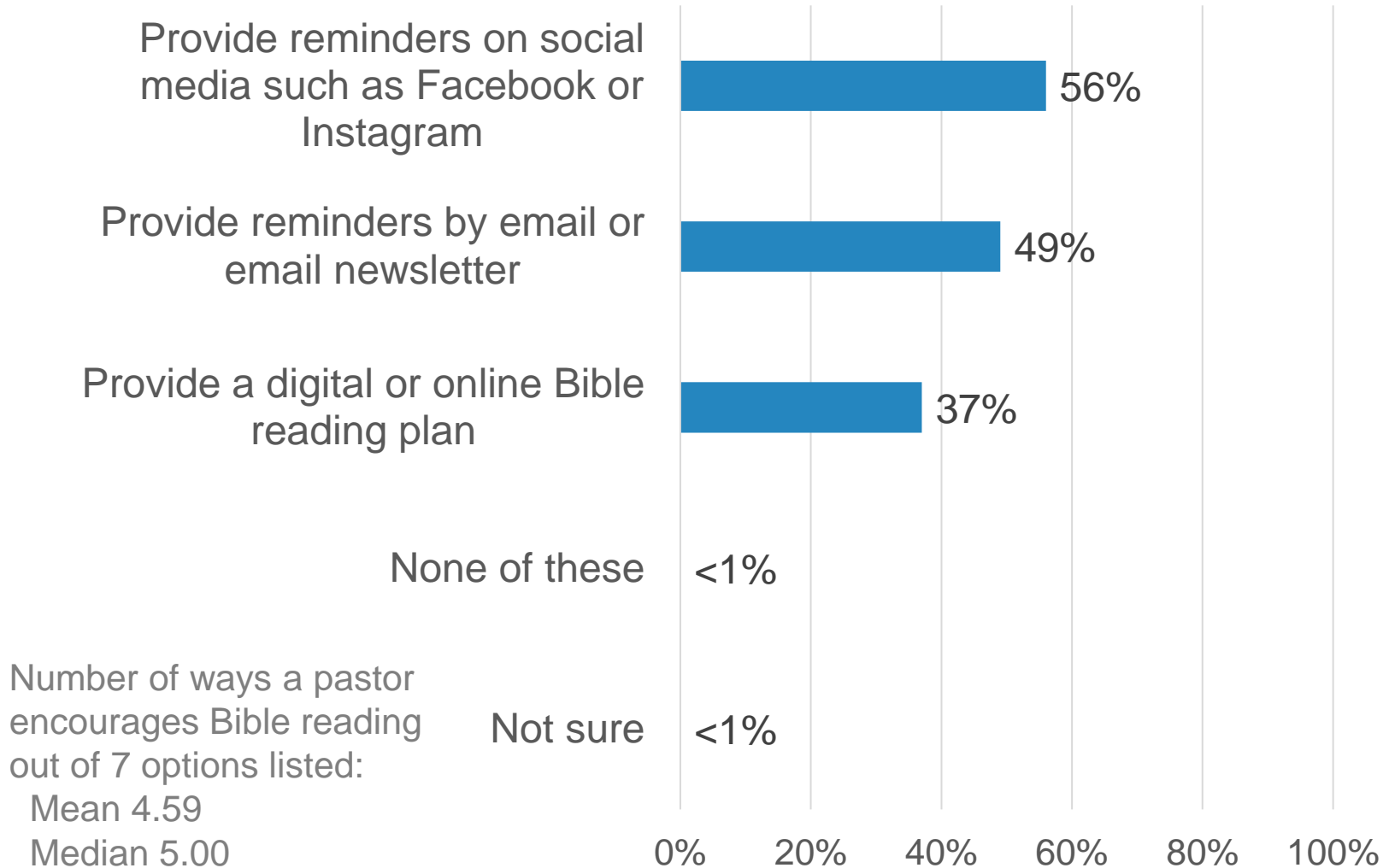


Lifeway research

Q: “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own? (Select all that apply)” n=1,003

# “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?” *Continued*

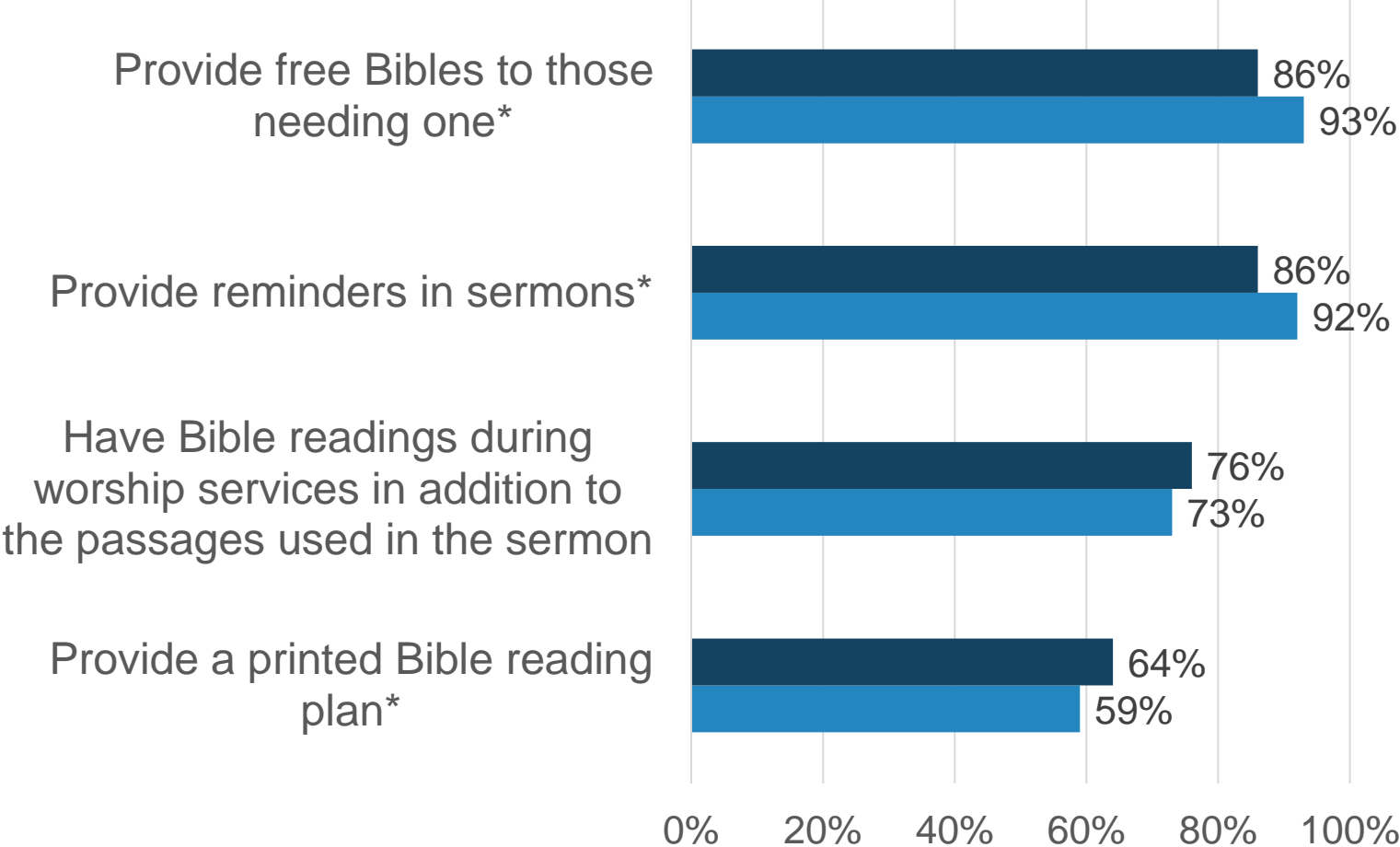
Among Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

# “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”

Among Protestant Pastors



\*Statistically significant difference

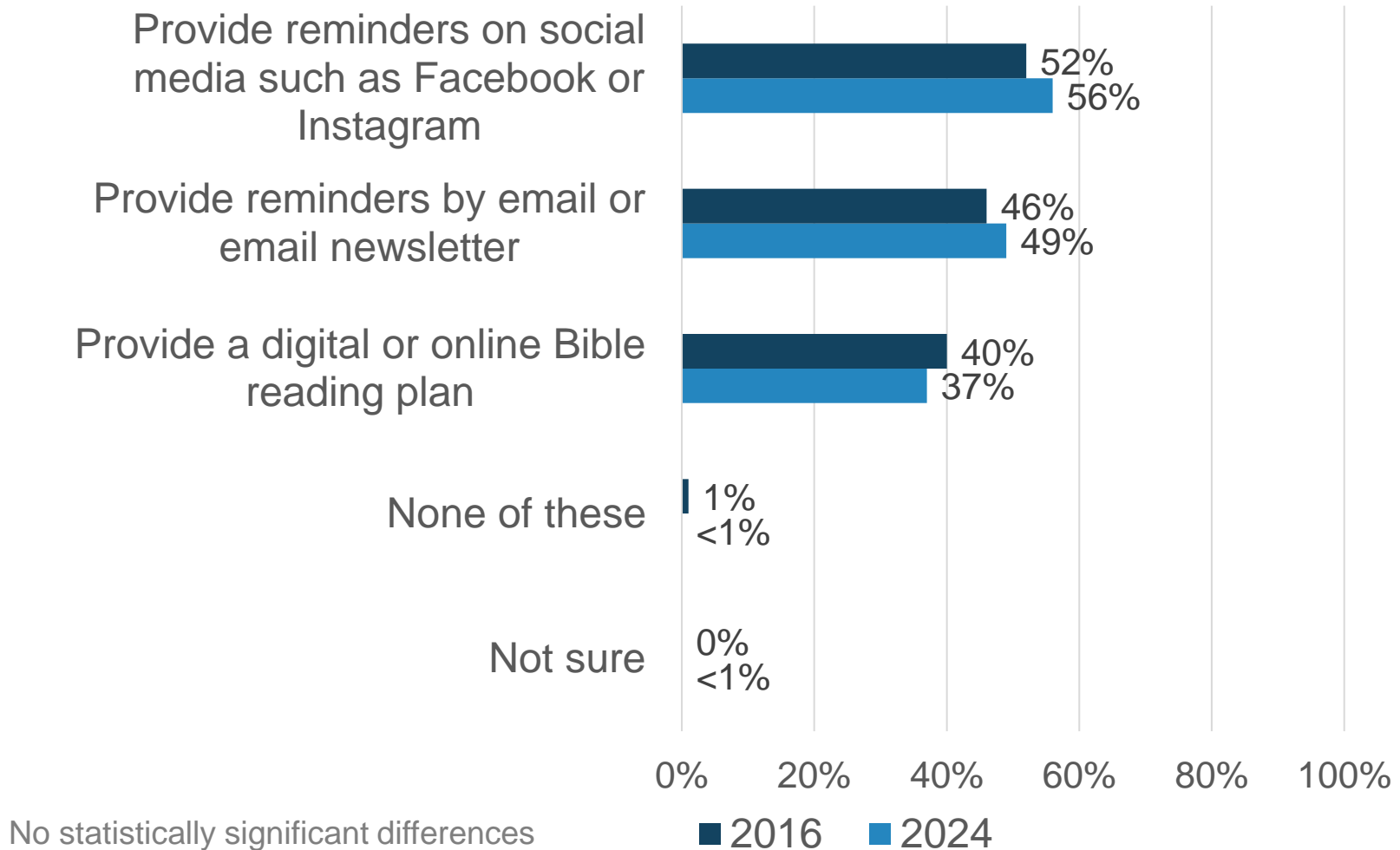
■ 2016 ■ 2024

Lifeway research

Q: “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own? (Select all that apply)”

# “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?” *Continued*

Among Protestant Pastors



**Lifeway** research

Q: “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own? (Select all that apply)”

# Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

**Lifeway**research

# 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

**“In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”**

**Have Bible readings during worship services in addition to the passages used in the sermon**

- Pastors with a Doctoral Degree (79%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (66%)
- Lutherans (83%) and Christian/Church of Christ (85%) are more likely to select than Baptists (71%), Pentecostals (55%), Presbyterian/Reformed (67%), and Non-denominational (66%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ are the least likely to select (58%)

# “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”

## Provide a printed Bible reading plan

- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (61% v. 48%)
- African American pastors are the least likely to select (41%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (64% v. 51%)
- Baptists (67%), Lutheran (69%), and Christian/Church of Christ (72%) are more likely to select than Methodists (51%), Pentecostals (53%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (41%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 100-249 (67%) and 250+ (69%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (53%) and 50-99 (56%)

# **“In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”**

## **Provide a digital or online Bible reading plan**

- Pastors age 45-54 (46%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (34%) and 65+ (31%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree (44%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (28%)
- Baptists (39%), Pentecostals (46%), Christian/Church of Christ (49%), and Non-denominational (41%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (28%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (28%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ are the most likely to select (65%)

# **“In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”**

## **Provide reminders in sermons**

- Pastors age 45-54 (95%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (90%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (93% v. 87%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree are the most likely to select (97%)
- Baptists (94%) are more likely to select than Presbyterian/Reformed (88%)

## **Provide free Bibles to those needing one**

- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (96% v. 91%)
- Baptists (96%), Pentecostals (98%), Christian/Church of Christ (99%), and Non-denominational (98%) are more likely to select than Methodists (88%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (88%)

# “In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”

## Provide reminders by email or email newsletter

- Pastors age 45-54 (59%) and 65+ (54%) are more likely to select than pastors age 18-44 (40%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (55%) or a Doctoral Degree (50%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (35%)
- Pastors in the Northeast are the most likely to select (60%)
- Lutherans (65%) and Methodists (65%) are more likely to select than Baptists (36%), Pentecostals (36%), Presbyterian/Reformed (47%), Christian/Church of Christ (48%), and Non-denominational (50%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ are the most likely to select (66%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 0-49 are the least likely to select (40%)

## **“In what ways, if any, do you encourage your congregation to read the Bible on their own?”**

### **Provide reminders on social media such as Facebook or Instagram**

- Pastors age 45-54 (62%) are more likely to select than pastors age 18-44 (52%) and 65+ (52%)
- Methodists (69%) and Pentecostals (69%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (47%), Presbyterian/Reformed (42%), and Non-denominational (50%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 0-49 are the least likely to select (44%)

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