

Pastors' Views on Discipleship

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

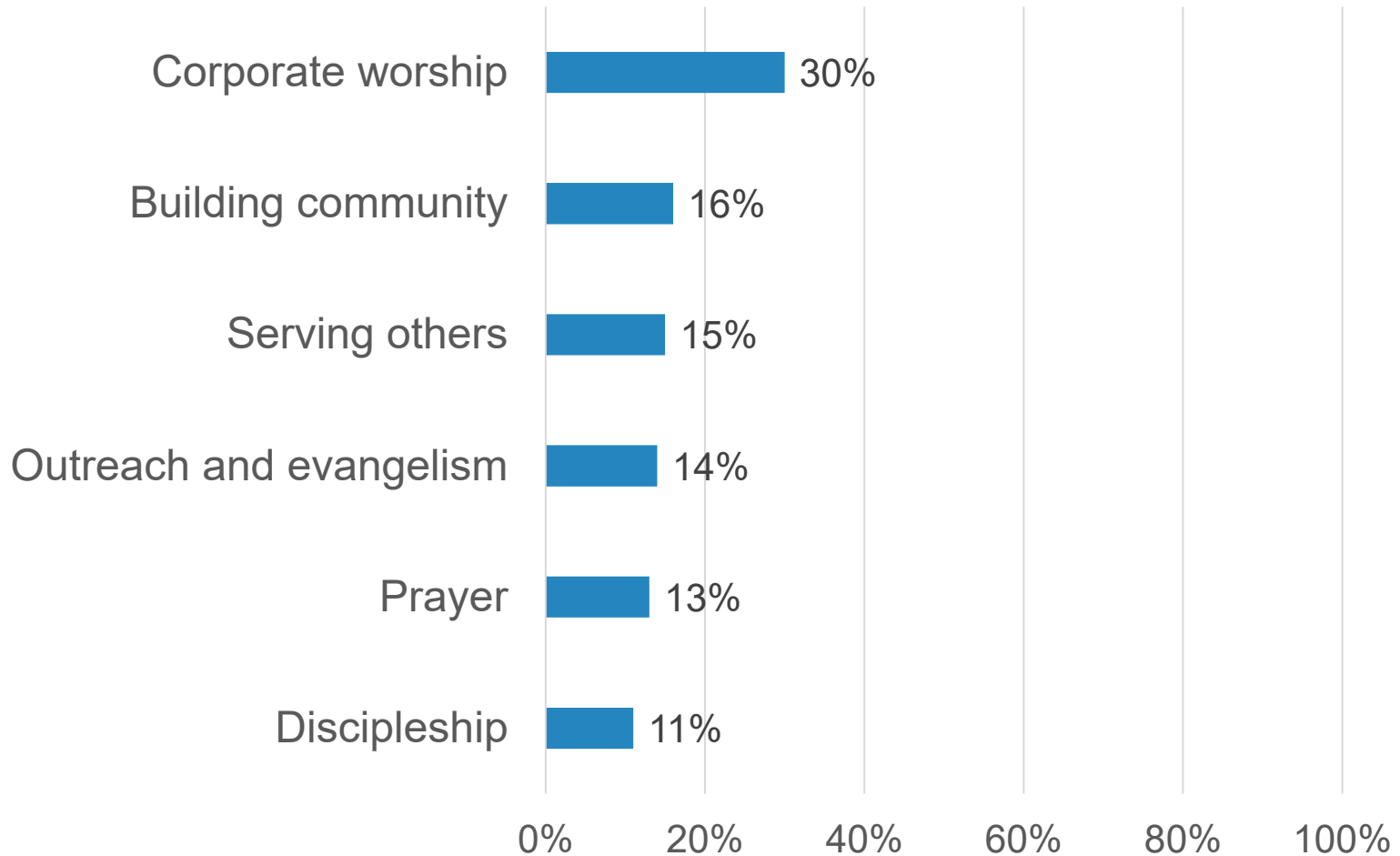
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Methodology

- The survey of 2,620 Protestant pastors was conducted September 10-30, 2024
- Invitations were emailed to a probability sample of Protestant pastors who were recruited by phone using random samples selected from all Protestant churches.
- An oversample of Southern Baptist pastors were randomly selected from all SBC churches with pastor and an email listed. The 2,176 Baptist responses were weighted down to reflect their correct proportion of Protestant churches.
- Each survey was completed by the senior pastor, minister or priest at the church
- Responses were weighted by region, church size, and denominational category to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 2,620 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 2.05\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

The church function that pastors rank as what their church is “best” at

Among Protestant Pastors

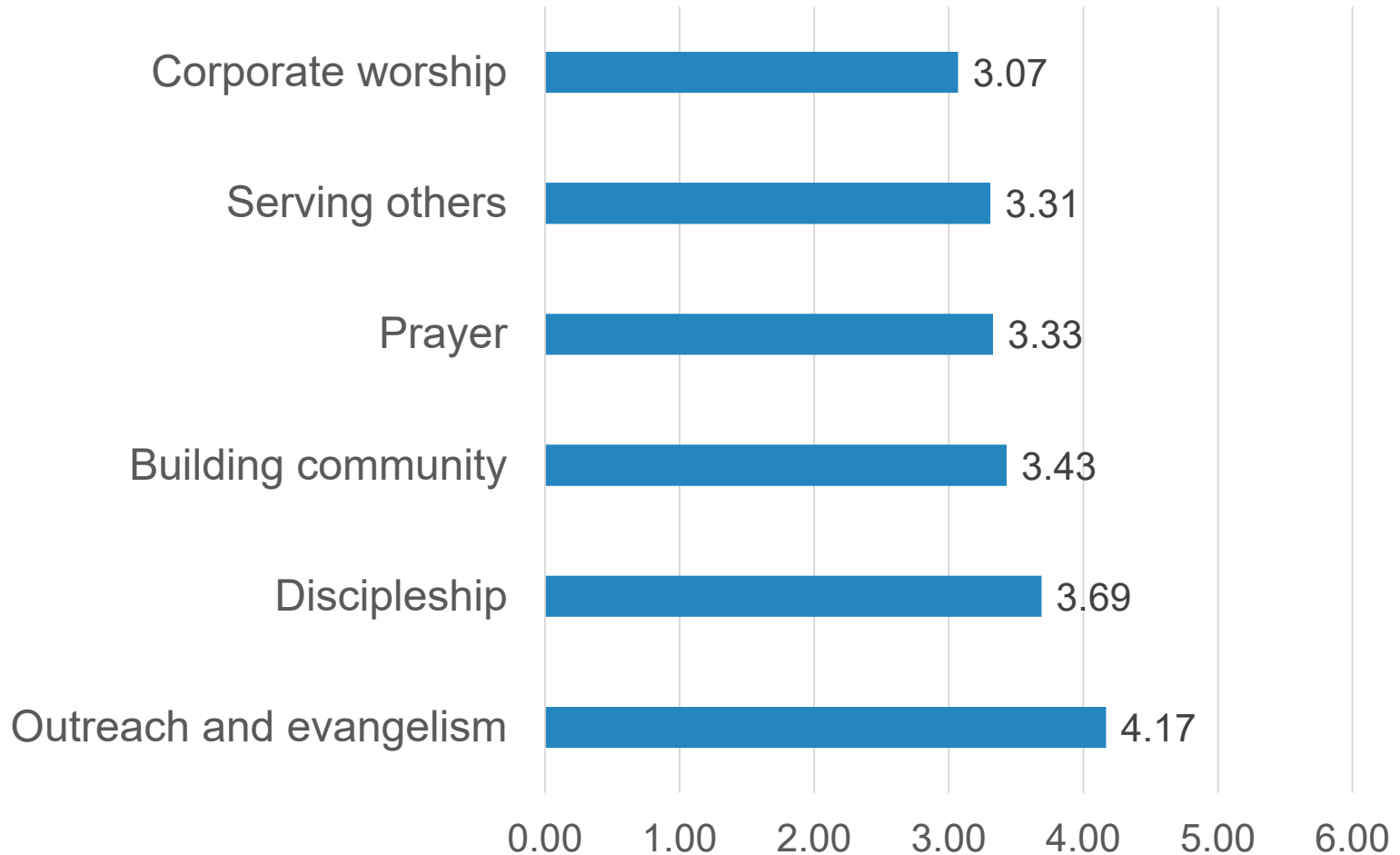


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Q6: "Please rank the following church functions 1 through 6 with 1 being what your church is best at and 6 being what needs the most improvement. Use each number once." n=2,620

Average (mean) ranking of church functions from best to needing the most improvement

Among Protestant Pastors

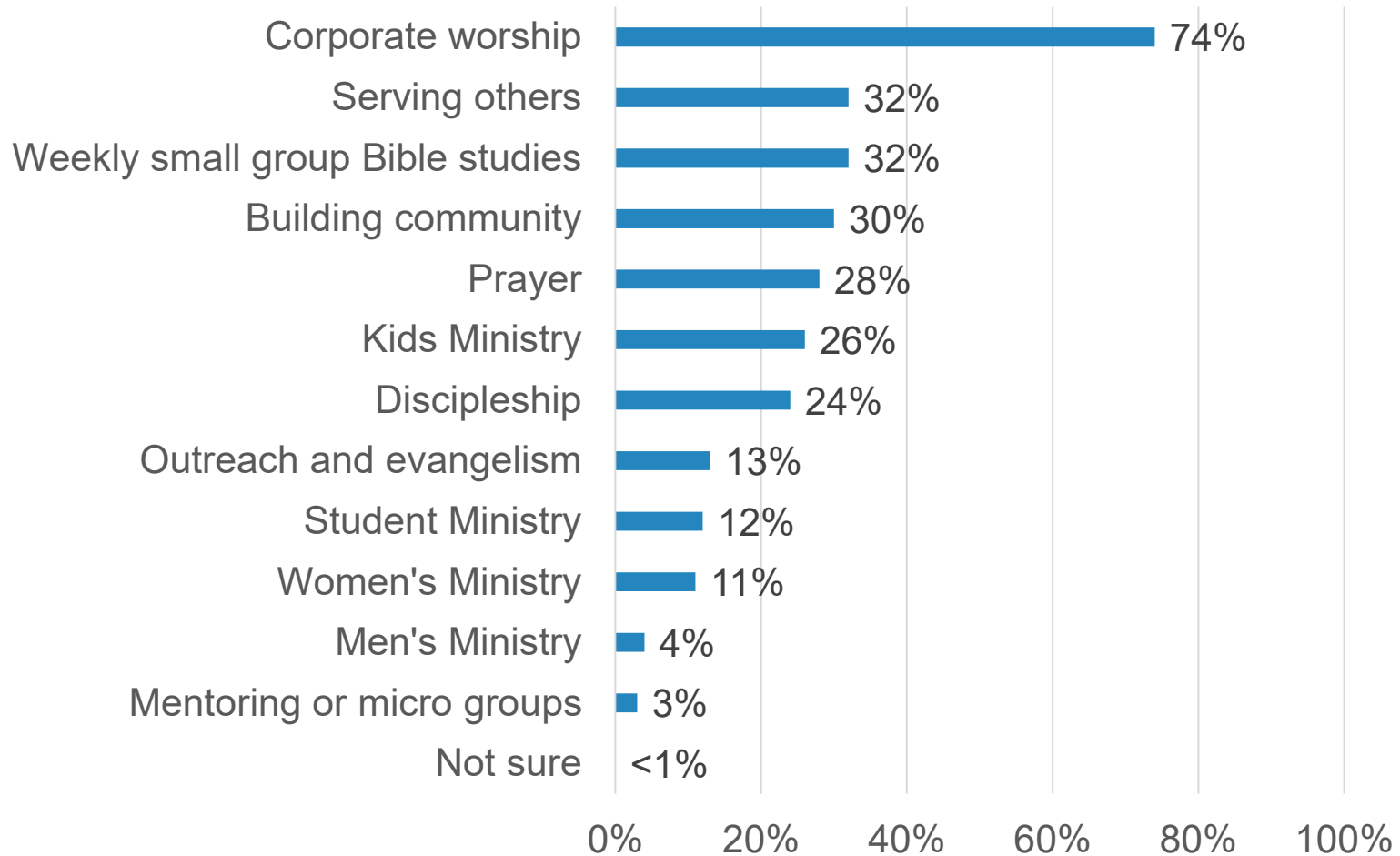


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Q6: "Please rank the following church functions 1 through 6 with 1 being what your church is best at and 6 being what needs the most improvement. Use each number once." n=2,620

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Among Protestant Pastors

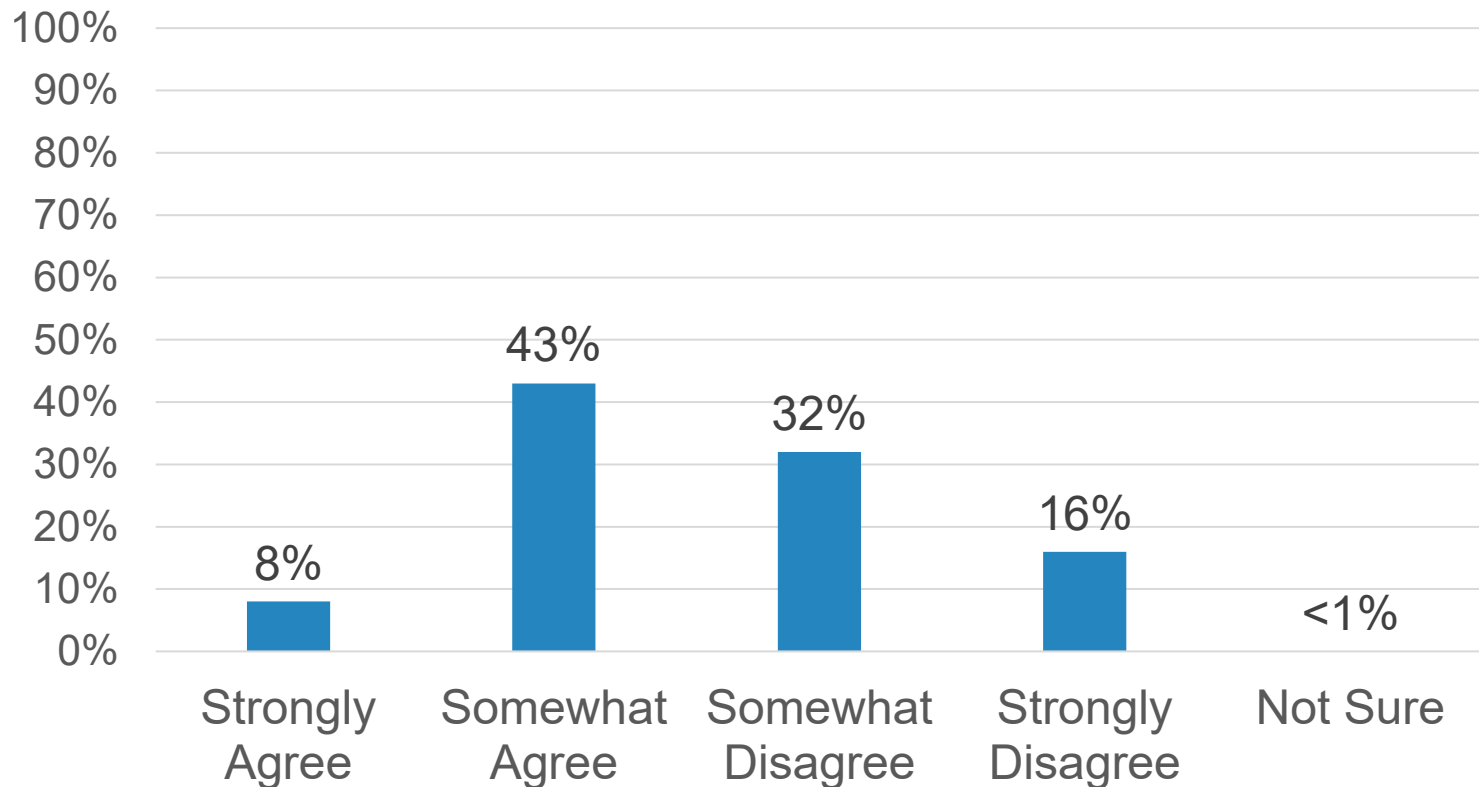


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Q7: “Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into? (Select up to 3)” n=2,620

52% are satisfied with the state of discipleship and spiritual formation in their church

Among Protestant Pastors

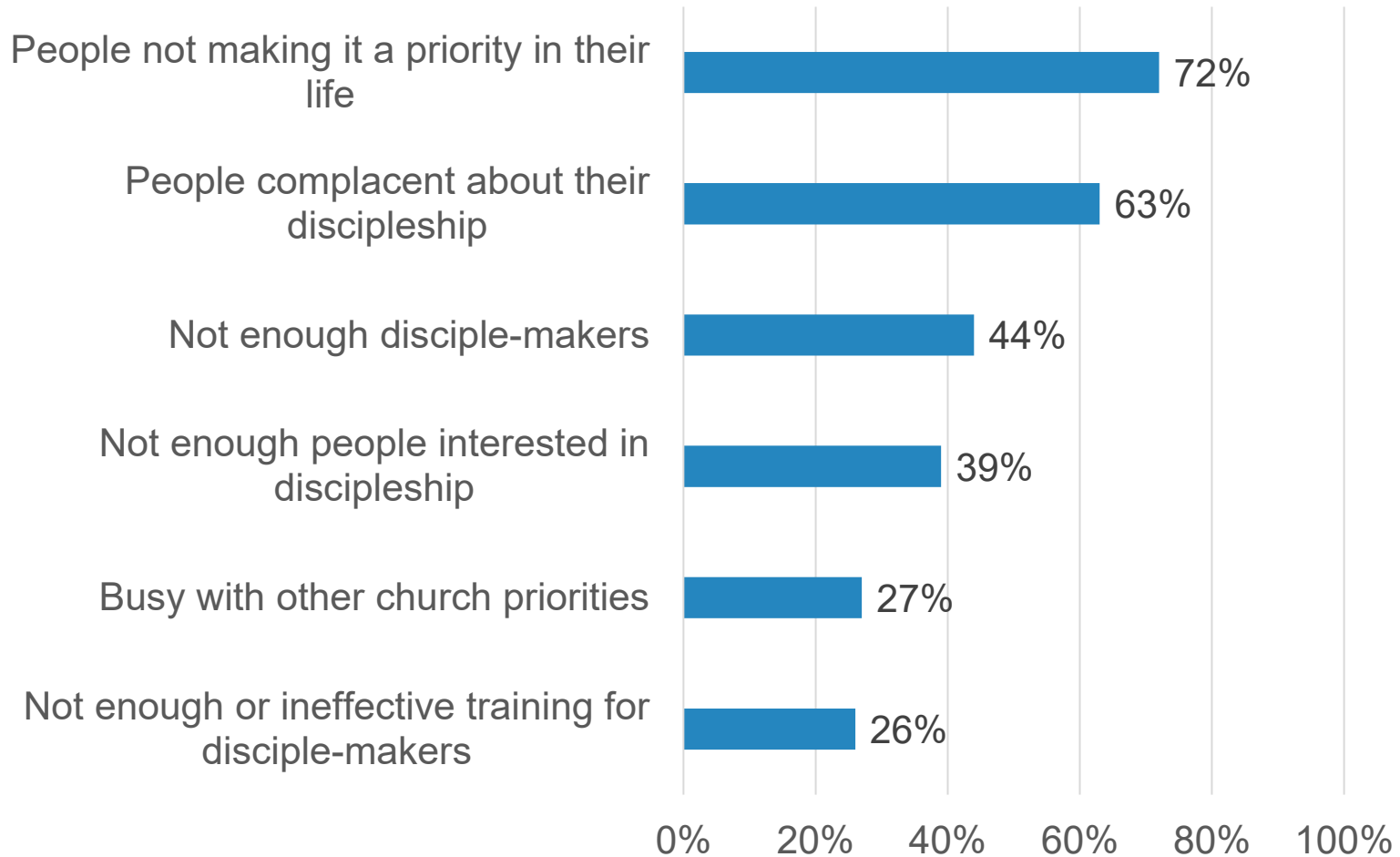


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Q9: "I am satisfied with the state of discipleship and spiritual formation in our local church." n=2,620

“Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples?”

Among Protestant Pastors

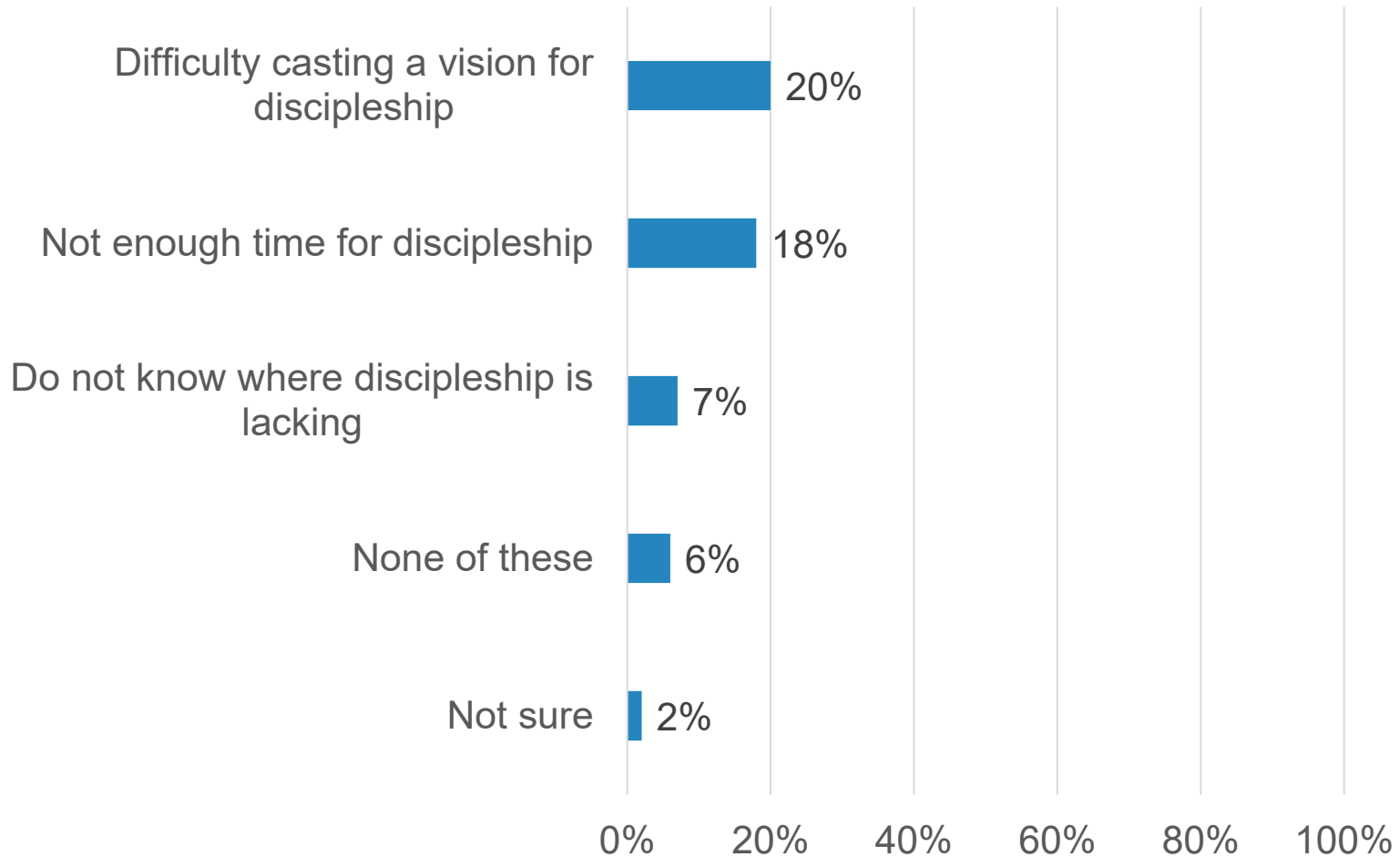


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Q28: “Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples? (Select all that apply)” n=2,620

“Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples?” *continued*

Among Protestant Pastors



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Q28: “Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples? (Select all that apply)” n=2,620

Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Education Level

Church

Region

Average Attendance

Year Church Established

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the pastor's age, ethnicity, and education.

AGE	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION
18-34	White	No College Degree
35-49	African American	Bachelor's Degree
50-64	Hispanic	Graduate Degree
65+	Other Ethnicities	

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church's region, attendance, and year established.

REGION	ATTENDANCE	YEAR ESTABLISHED
Northeast	0-49	Before 1900
South	50-99	1900-1949
Midwest	100-249	1950-1999
West	250+	2000-2024

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

Keep “Please rank the following church functions 1 through 6 with 1 being what your church is best at and 6 being what needs the most improvement.” Responses of what church is best at:

- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select Outreach/evangelism (8%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select Prayer (48%)
- Pastors with a Graduate Degree are the most likely to select Building Community (19%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to select Discipleship (19%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select Corporate worship (25%)

Keep “Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Prayer

- Pastors age 65+ (40%) are more likely to select than pastors age 35-49 (23%) and 50-64 (27%)
- African American pastors (60%) and Hispanic pastors (56%) are more likely to select than White pastors (26%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (32%)
- Pastors with a Graduate Degree are the least likely to select (25%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 are the most likely to select (40%) followed by 50-99 (34%) 100-249 (19%) and 250+ (6%)
- Pastors at churches established 1900-1949 (33%) and 1950-1999 (31%) are more likely to select than those at churches established before 1900 (22%) and 2000-2024 (26%)

Outreach and evangelism

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (22%) are more likely to select than White pastors (12%) and African American pastors (4%)

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Serving others

- Pastors age 65+ (40%) are more likely to select than pastors age 35-49 (27%) and 50-64 (32%)
- White pastors (33%) and African American pastors (40%) are more likely to select than Hispanic pastors (21%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (36%) and 50-99 (36%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 100-249 (30%) and 250+ (20%)
- Pastors at churches established before 1900 (38%) and 1900-1949 (39%) are more likely to select than those at churches established 1950-1999 (27%) and 2000-2024 (25%)

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Corporate worship

- Pastors age 18-34 are the most likely to select (84%)
- White pastors (76%) are more likely to select than Hispanic pastors (49%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (58%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select (64%)
- Pastors in the Midwest are the most likely to select (80%)
- Pastors at churches established 2000-2024 are the least likely to select (66%)

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Building community

- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select (14%)
- White pastors are the most likely to select (32%)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (24%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (37%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (27%) and 100-249 (25%)
- Pastors at churches established 1900-1949 are the least likely to select (20%)

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Discipleship

- Pastors age 18-34 (31%) are more likely to select than pastors age 50-64 (23%) and 65+ (21%)
- Hispanic pastors are the most likely to select (46%)
- Pastors in the Midwest are the least likely to select (18%)
- Pastors at churches established 2000-2024 are the most likely to select (36%)

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Weekly small group Bible studies

- White pastors are the least likely to select (30%)

Mentoring or micro groups

- African American pastors (12%) are more likely to select than White (2%) and Hispanic pastors (1%)

Kids Ministry

- Pastors age 35-49 (30%) and 50-64 (25%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (18%)
- White pastors (27%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (10%) and Hispanic pastors (13%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (45%)
- Pastors at churches established 2000-2024 are the least likely to select (19%)

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Student Ministry

- Pastors age 35-49 (18%) are more likely to select than pastors age 50-64 (11%) and 65+ (6%)
- White pastors (13%) and African American pastors (16%) are more likely to select than Hispanic pastors (5%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (6%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (15%) and South (15%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (4%) and West (7%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (4%)

“Which 3 of these does your church put the most time and effort into?”

Women’s Ministry

- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to select (20%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 are the most likely to select (16%)

Men’s Ministry

- No meaningful significant differences

Keep “I am satisfied with the state of discipleship and spiritual formation in our local church.”

- Pastors age 50-64 (53%) and 65+ (56%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 18-34 (44%)
- Hispanic pastors (60%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (62%) are more likely to Agree than African American pastors (42%)
- Pastors in the South (57%) and West (57%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (45%) and Midwest (42%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to Agree (65%)
- Pastors at churches established 2000-2024 are the most likely to Agree (71%)

Keep “Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples?”

Not enough time for discipleship

- Pastors age 18-34 are the most likely to select (35%) followed by 35-49 (23%), 50-64 (16%), and 65+ (8%)
- African American pastors are the least likely to select (3%)

Not enough or ineffective training for disciple-makers

- Pastors age 18-34 are the most likely to select (42%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select (52%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 100-249 (32%) and 250+ (37%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (21%) and 50-99 (20%)

“Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples?”

Not enough disciple-makers

- Pastors age 18-34 (50%) and 35-49 (47%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (40%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select (67%)
- Pastors in the Northeast are the most likely to select (52%)

Not enough people interested in discipleship

- Pastors age 65+ (44%) are more likely to select than pastors age 18-34 (34%) and 35-49 (37%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the least likely to select (19%)
- Pastors at churches established before 1900 are the most likely to select (50%)

“Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples?”

People complacent about their discipleship

- White pastors (65%) are more likely to select than Hispanic pastors (43%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (46%)
- Pastors in the Midwest are the most likely to select (69%)
- Pastors at churches established 2000-2024 are the least likely to select (42%)

People not making it a priority in their life

- Pastors age 35-49 (75%) are more likely to select than pastors age 18-34 (65%) and 65+ (68%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select (86%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (76%) and Midwest (78%) are more likely to select than those in the South (68%)
- Pastors at churches established before 1900 are the most likely to select (82%)

“Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples?”

Do not know where discipleship is lacking

- No meaningful significant differences

Busy with other church priorities

- Pastors age 18-34 are the most likely to select (47%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select (41%)
- Pastors with a Graduate Degree are the most likely to select (30%)
- Pastors in the South are the least likely to select (20%)
- Pastors at churches established 2000-2024 are the least likely to select (19%)

“Which of the following are roadblocks in your church’s effort in making disciples?”

Difficulty casting a vision for discipleship

- Pastors age 35-49 are the least likely to select (16%)
- White pastors are the most likely to select (22%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the least likely to select (11%)
- Pastors at churches established before 1900 (27%) and 1950-1999 (23%) are more likely to select than those at churches established 1900-1949 (14%) and 2000-2024 (13%)