

Pastors' Views on Sermon Length

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

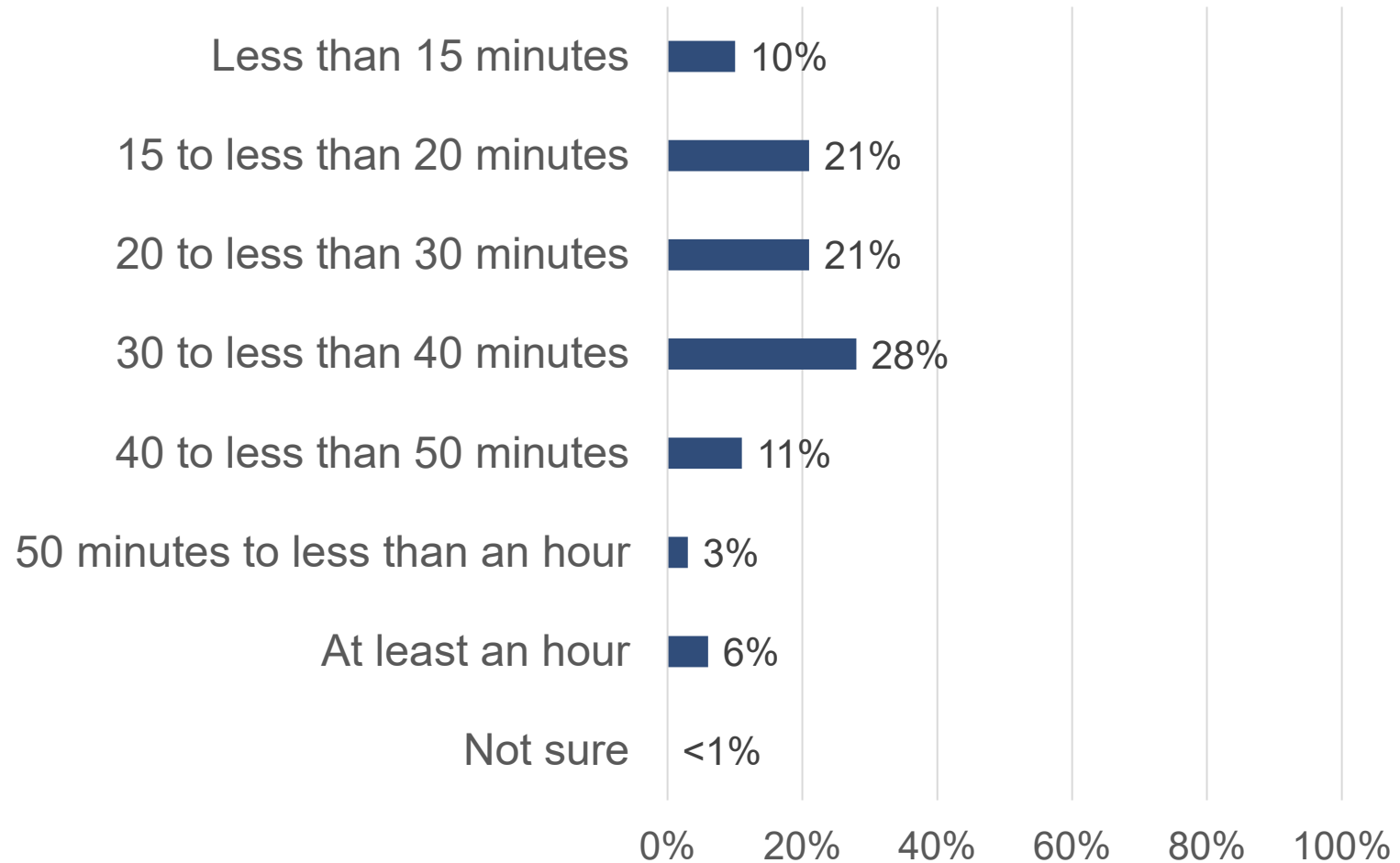
Lifeway Research

Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,003 Protestant pastors was conducted September 2-24, 2025
- 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 phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors using the same methodology conducted August 30 -- September 24, 2019

80% say that their sermons are less than 40 minutes

Among Protestant Pastors

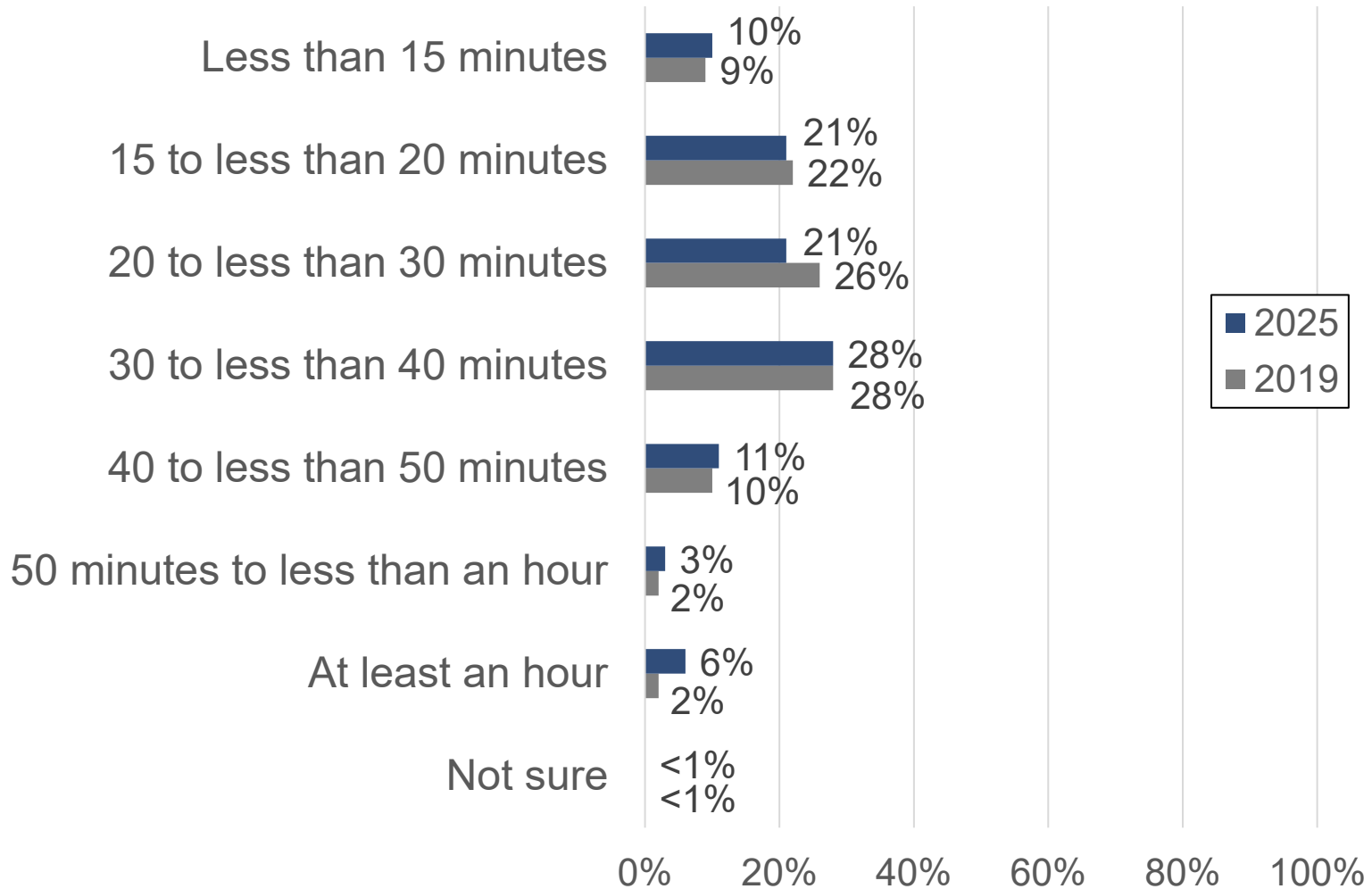


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Q: "How long is your typical sermon?" n=1,003

Fewer pastors say their sermons are less than 40 minutes than in 2019 (80% v. 85%)

Among Protestant Pastors



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Q: "How long is your typical sermon?" n=1,003

Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

Location

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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		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, attendance, and location.

REGION	DENOMINATION GROUP	ATTENDANCE	LOCATION
Northeast	Baptist	0-49	Urban
South	Lutheran	50-99	Suburban
Midwest	Methodist	100-249	Rural
West	Pentecostal	250+	
	Presbyterian/Reformed		
	Holiness		
	Non-Denominational		

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

“How long is your typical sermon?”

- Pastors age 18-44 (24%) and 65+ (24%) are more likely to select “15 to less than 20 minutes” than those 45-54 (16%)
- Pastors age 45-54 are the most likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” (36%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” than females (32% v. 21%)
- White pastors are the most likely to select “15 to less than 20 minutes” (23%)
- African American pastors (42%) are more likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” than White pastors (27%)
- African American pastors (16%) and pastors of Other ethnicities (14%) are more likely to select “At least an hour” than White pastors (4%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree are the most likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” (42%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the most likely to select “At least an hour” (15%)

“How long is your typical sermon?” *continued*

- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “Less than 15 minutes” than Evangelical pastors (17% v. 3%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “15 to less than 20 minutes” than Evangelical pastors (32% v. 11%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” than Mainline pastors (38% v. 17%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “40 to less than 50 minutes” than Mainline pastors (15% v. 7%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (15%) are more likely to select “Less than 15 minutes” than those in the South (8%) and West (6%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (27%) are more likely to select “15 to less than 20 minutes” than those in the South (17%)
- Pastors in the South (33%) are more likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” than those in the Midwest (23%)
- Pastors in the South (13%) are more likely to select “40 to less than 50 minutes” than those in the Midwest (7%)

“How long is your typical sermon?” *continued*

- Lutherans are the most likely to select “Less than 15 minutes” (27%)
- Lutherans (51%), Methodists (45%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (31%) are more likely to select “15 to less than 20 minutes” than Baptists (2%), Pentecostals (1%), Holiness (0%), and Non-denominational (1%)
- Methodists (33%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (29%) are more likely to select “20 to less than 30 minutes” than Baptists (19%), Lutherans (16%), Pentecostals (11%), and Non-denominational (17%)
- Baptists (50%) and Holiness (49%) are more likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” than Lutherans (3%), Methodists (8%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (27%)
- Pentecostals (22%) and Non-denominational pastors (28%) are more likely to select “40 to less than 50 minutes” than Lutherans (0%), Methodists (2%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (3%)

“How long is your typical sermon?” *continued*

- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 250+ are the least likely to select “Less than 15 minutes” (3%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (30%) and 50-99 (27%) are more likely to select “15 to less than 20 minutes” than those at churches with attendance of 100-249 (17%) and 250+ (8%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 (31%) and 250+ (39%) are more likely to select “30 to less than 40 minutes” than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (23%) and 50-99 (21%)
- Pastors at church in an urban area (21%) or a rural area (29%) are more likely to select “15 to less than 20 minutes” than those in a suburban area (14%)

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