

New Study Reveals Current Trends on Centuries-Old Debate About Women Pastors

Newly released research from Lifeway found 55% of U.S. Protestant pastors reporting the “senior pastor” role is open to women in their churches, though this statistic differs among denominations.

In fact, the denominational swings on this metric are stunning. While 76% of mainline pastors said females can serve as senior pastors in their churches, just 44% of evangelicals said the same.

Digging deeper into the data, Methodists were most likely—94%—to report the allowance of women pastors. Meanwhile, Baptists account for the denomination with the smallest agreement (14%).

The other denominations most likely to allow a female senior pastor were: Pentecostals (78%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (77%), according to Lifeway.

Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research, noted the debate over women’s roles in the church isn’t anything new and has been raging throughout church history.

“This question has been debated for centuries with biblical scholars in different denominations coming to different conclusions about what Scripture means,” he said.

The apostle Paul’s writings on the matter have long stood at the centerpiece of discussion, with different denominations interpreting Paul’s intents in distinct ways. This discussion over complementarianism and egalitarianism is multifaceted and yields a variety of perspectives. You can read more about the

debate.

Read the full report [here](#).

The data came from a phone survey of 1,000 pastors conducted in Sept. 2021.

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