

Pastors Prepare for the Unthinkable

A new Lifeway Research study confirms that most pastors are making their congregant's safety one of their top priorities.

According to "Planning and Armed Congregants Top Church Security Measures", 81% of U.S. Protestant pastors say their church has some type of security measure in place.

Although churches are meant to be safe places, recent mass shootings make it hard for churches to ignore that they must be prepared for the unthinkable.

"Churches are not immune to violence, disputes, domestic disagreements, vandalism and burglary," said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. "While loving one another is a core Christian teaching, churchgoers still sin, and non-churchgoers are invited and welcomed. So real security risks exist whether a congregation wants to acknowledge them or not."

Fifty-seven percent of pastors are most likely to say their congregation has an intentional plan for an active shooter situation. While 54% say armed church members are part of the measures they have in place.

More than a quarter use radio communication among security personnel, while 20% say they have a no firearms policy in the building where they meet or have armed private security personnel on-site.

Fewer have uniformed police officers on church grounds (5%) or metal detectors at entrances to screen for weapons (1%).

As CBN News reported, American churches have seen a steady rise in acts of hostility in recent years.

The FRC's "Hostility Against Churches" report documents 420 acts between Jan. 2018 and Sept. 2022. They include vandalism, arson, bomb threats, gun-related incidents and more.

"Criminal acts of vandalism and destruction of church property are symptomatic of a collapse in societal reverence and respect for houses of worship and religion—in this case, churches and Christianity," the report states.

"Americans appear increasingly comfortable lashing out against church buildings, pointing to a larger societal problem of marginalizing core Christian beliefs, including those that touch on hot-button political issues related to human dignity and sexuality," the FRC explains.

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