

Study Reveals Since Pandemic, Sunday Church Attendance 'Less of a Priority' for Many Christians

A new study reveals that, since the pandemic, Sunday morning church attendance has become “less of a priority” for Christian families in the UK and the US.

The research was conducted by Liverpool Hope University together with Care for the Family, Evangelical Alliance, Hope Together, Parenting for Faith, Share Jesus International and the National Institute for Christian Education Research.

Of the families surveyed, the recent poll found that church engagement has fallen by 40%. However, research also indicates that families' faith at home has tended to improve since the pandemic, indicating that more people are remaining at home and watching services on their televisions or on their computers.

Many parents are now focusing on nurturing their child's faith more at home, and that “there is a significant disconnect between the perceptions of church leaders and parents about what is needed going forward, authors of the survey said.

“The parents interviewed explained that it had been difficult returning to church after the lockdowns [...] and having engaged with faith at home resources, they became more aware and critical of provision for children at church,” the report said.

One of the main reasons for the drop of church attendance, the report revealed, is that “many felt their congregation had become less tolerant of children,” and that churches “must

consider how to respond to this change in the family's those and practices."

The authors of the survey concluded that, "It is key to meet families where they are and support those spiritual connections which occur at home rather than simply seeking to coax them back into church attendance."

While some pre-COVID churchgoers have not returned to church at all, much of the decline in attendance is from people who were attending less often anyway.

The difficulties to regain pre-pandemic levels of attendance have led to fewer churches reaching 100 in attendance for a Sunday service. According to the survey, 68% of US Protestant churches have congregations of fewer than 100 people, including 31% having fewer than 50 in attendance.

Almost a quarter of evangelical churches fall into the 100-249 range, while 8% host more than 250 people or more each week.
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