

What Do Pastors Think About Halloween? Study Reveals Surprising Results

It's a question that believers grapple with every year at this time. Should Christians avoid Halloween?

Some believers simply don't feel that it carries any spiritual implications, while others see it as a dangerous event to celebrate, especially for Christians.

But what do pastors think about Halloween and how members of their congregations should handle it? The results may be surprising.

A recent Lifeway study reveals that, while few pastors are refraining from influencing their church members' engagement in Halloween, only 13% of them say they encourage people to avoid Halloween altogether.

Christian alternatives to the events of Oct. 31 have become popular in recent years, with churches holding Fall festivals or engage in trunk-or-treat substitutes for handing out candy to children who dress up in costumes.

But deliverance minister Kathy DeGraw says that demonic doors can be opened even in these seemingly "innocent" variations, and that churches and pastors shouldn't give the enemy that opportunity.

"The Bible says to give no place to the devil," DeGraw says. "I think when we look at Halloween, what we have to look at is how many doors we can close so that we give no place to the devil. The adversary goes around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And we need to make sure we are living a righteous, pure, clean, holy life so that we are not someone

that he can come and devour or that he's even seeking."

Indeed, Ephesians 4:27-28 reads: "Do not give place to the devil. Let him who steals steal no more."

First Corinthians 10:21 also supports DeGraw's claim, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

"There will be people who will find different churches to go trunk-or-treating, but let's not have our church be that place, because when we allow our church to be that place, we're setting ourselves up—our church, our ministry—for spiritual warfare attack," DeGraw says. "Anton LaVey, the founder of Satanism, says he loves it when Christian parents dress their kids up for Halloween, because in the spiritual realm, there's just no differentiating between dressing them up as a spider or a goblin or dressing them up as an angel or a biblical character to the demonic realm that has made it [its] mission to curse us and wreak havoc on us."

"We are opening a door; we are opening a gateway when we allow that participation. That's why I really believe, that if you want to do something for Halloween, the best thing we should do is spend that time in prayer, and do evangelistic outreach 10 days later."

Remember pastors, that you are the gatekeepers and the shepherds here, and that your congregations lean on you for advice in these crucial spiritual matters—after consulting the ultimate word, the Bible, that is.

The Lifeway survey also revealed that only 8% of pastors said they don't encourage their church members to participate in

any of these alternatives.

“Few pastors simply ignore the fact that so many Americans participate in Halloween celebrations,” Lifeway Research executive director Scott McConnell says. “Most pastors focus on the social nature of these celebrations, encouraging their congregations to engage with others outside their church.”

Nearly three in five (58%) pastors say they want church members to build relationships with neighbors who trick-or-treat. More than one in three (34%) pastors encourage church members to hand out gospel tracts to trick-or-treaters.

The survey also reveals that older pastors, those older than 65, are those who are likely to encourage their churches to avoid Halloween completely (20%). They are most likely to not encourage their church members to respond to the annual event in any way (14%).

The Lifeway study showed other intriguing statistics. African American pastors are among the most likely to encourage their congregations to avoid Halloween (32%).

In terms of church size, pastors with congregations with less than 50 members are the most likely to encourage their congregations to avoid Halloween altogether (16%).

Here are more statistics from the survey:

- White pastors are the most likely to encourage congregations to build relationships with neighbors (61%) and invite neighbors to church events (73%)..
- Pastors in the South are among the most likely to encourage church members to hand out gospel tracts (38%)..
- Evangelical pastors (42%) are more likely than mainline pastors (28%) to encourage members to hand out gospel tracts. {eoa}

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Shawn A. Akers is the online editor for Charisma Media.