

Research Shows Evangelical Millennials More Engaged in Faith Communities Than Other Generations

Millennials are much more likely to be engaged in their faith than other generations, according to a new study of evangelicals commissioned by Dunham+Company and conducted by WPA Intelligence.

Fifty-three percent of the study respondents who self-identify as evangelicals say they attend church once a week or more. However, of the three adult generations, 61% of Millennial evangelicals indicated at least weekly church attendance compared to 54% of Boomers and Matures and 44% of Gen X ers.

“Millennials are often believed to be disengaged in their faith, but this study shows that those Millennials who identify as evangelicals are more engaged in their faith than other generations,” says Rick Dunham, founder and CEO of Dunham+Company, which helps charitable organizations worldwide with their fundraising, marketing and media strategies. “This mirrors our study from 2017, which showed that Millennials generally are as likely to engage in religious attendance compared to other generations, with this current study showing a much higher engagement among those who identify as evangelicals.”

When it comes to charitable giving, 71% of evangelicals say they give to charitable organizations annually, compared to 55% of the general population, according to the Philanthropy Panel Study, 2001-2015. According to the Dunham+Company latest study, the largest generational group that gives the most annually continues to be Boomers and Matures at 78%. But,

Millennials are surpassing Gen Xers in giving to charities annually with 68% of Millennials saying they do compared to 63% of Gen Xers.

About 1 in 5 (19%) of all respondents say they will be contributing more to charities in the coming year. However, the younger the generation, the more likely they are to increase their giving. Thirty-four percent of Millennials said they would be giving more compared to 21% of Gen Xers and only 12% of Boomers/Matures.

In addition, 24% of those who attend services once a week or more said they would increase their giving, and 26% of those who give online say the same, while only 15% of those who give through the mail.

A plurality of evangelicals (40%) say they prefer to give online through the church's website or a mobile app, while that drops to 32% for those who prefer to give by check or through the mail.

And not surprisingly, the younger the generation, the more likely they are to give online. Sixty-two percent of Millennials prefer to do so compared to 50% of Gen Xers and 25% of the Boomer/Matures.

"Once again, the data demonstrates how vital it is for churches to not only facilitate online giving, but to ensure congregants know how to give online," says Dunham. "If the plurality of congregants are saying they prefer to give online, churches need to promote and encourage that every week."

In looking at the importance of the charitable tax deduction in influencing how much evangelicals give, once again, the younger the generation, the more likely the tax deduction influences the amount they give. While 40% of Boomers and Matures indicated that the charitable tax deduction would influence how much they gave, 53% of Gen Xers felt the same

way, with 63% of Millennials indicating as such.

“From church attendance, to giving and an intent to give more in the coming year, evangelical Millennials demonstrate they are highly engaged in their faith,” said Dunham. “It’s also important to note that while a plurality of evangelicals now prefer to give online, nearly 2 out of 3 Millennials prefer that way of giving, which has significant implications for how churches facilitate giving.”

The study was part of a WPA Intelligence study of 1,000 self-identified evangelical Christians nationwide. All respondents were contacted via an online panel. Interviews were conducted online April 3-9, 2019. The survey was stratified based on age, gender, ethnicity and region. A sample of 1,000 has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1% at the 95% confidence level.