

Study Reveals Most Christians Would Like to See Changes in Their Church

Evangelical Protestant Christians are largely satisfied with the church they attend most often. However, 8 out of 10 still would like to see at least one change to their church.

The findings are detailed in “The Congregational Scorecard: What Evangelicals Want in a Church.” The study of over 1,000 American evangelical Protestants was released today by Grey Matter Research and Infinity Concepts.

Eighty-nine percent of evangelicals attend or view church at least occasionally. The remaining 11% who do not attend church were not included in this survey that assessed 14 different areas relating to the church and church attendance.

For those 14 areas, collectively an average of 74% are fine with their church as it is. However, 80% desire at least 1 change out of those 14 areas.

Evangelicals are most likely to be satisfied with:

- How often donations are requested (88%).
- Sermon length (85%).
- Overall service length (85%).

They are least likely to be satisfied with:

- Amount of in-depth teaching (69%).
- Overall style of the music (68%).
- Amount of political involvement/messages (68%).

- Size of the congregation (67%).
- Amount of outreach to the community (62%).

Mark Dreistadt, founder and president of Infinity Concepts, notes that one of the challenges for church leaders is that when people want change, they don't always agree on what change they want. "A third of evangelicals would like to change the style of music in their church, for example," Dreistadt explains. "But they're almost evenly split between those who want more traditional music and those who would like more contemporary music."

However, the report notes there are seven areas in which a specific change appeals to at least one out of five evangelical Protestant churchgoers:

- 38% want more community outreach (versus 1% who want less).
- 30% want more in-depth teaching (Less than 1% want less).
- 27% want more focus on evangelism (3% want less).
- 26% would like a larger congregation (7% would prefer a smaller one).
- 23% would like more racial/ethnic diversity (3% want less).
- 22% want less politics from their church—messages or involvement (11% want more).
- 20% want more music (5% want less).

Ron Sellers, president of Grey Matter Research, suggests that church leaders need to understand what their people want, but just following those desires is not always the best leadership decision. "Nearly 9 out of 10 evangelicals are fine with how often they are asked for financial support. Could that mean they are not being pushed to become truly generous givers? Nearly 4 out of 10 want the church to do more community

outreach. Are they doing all they can through volunteering and financial support to make that possible? Being a leader should mean knowing what people want, but also never forgetting what they need.”

In the big picture, Dreistadt emphasizes that a majority of evangelicals are satisfied with their church in each one of the 14 tested areas. “Most people attend churches that meet their needs by providing spiritual and personal support. This survey illustrates that evangelicals have largely been successful at finding a church that meets these needs, and churches have largely been successful at providing what people are seeking.

“However, being a pastor is a huge challenge that requires casting clear vision and making important decisions. We hope the findings in this study provide some confidence and support to pastors while also giving them some things to consider.”
{eoa}

Definition of ‘Evangelical Protestant’

This study uses the definition of “evangelical” favored by the National Association of Evangelicals, based on four key spiritual beliefs.

Grey Matter Research is a marketing research and consumer insights company with extensive experience serving the charitable and religious sectors. **Infinity Concepts** is a brand communication agency inspiring people of faith to action through consulting, branding, fundraising, public relations, creative, traditional media and digital media.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.