

Survey: Spiritual Maturity Comes Through Intentionality

Christians on the path to spiritual maturity have a habit of **seeking God** through prayer and worship – not just in church but also as a part of their daily life as a way to please and honor God, according to a **survey** released by LifeWay Research.

The survey of Protestant churchgoers identifies “Seeking God” as one of eight attributes of discipleship that consistently show up in the lives of maturing Christians. Seeking God invokes the intentional steps a Christian takes to follow Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him.

LifeWay Research found 73 percent of Protestant churchgoers set aside time for **prayer** every day to a few times a week. To examine how churchgoers are seeking God at times beyond worship services, the survey asked participants to “not include any times you do these things as part of a church worship service.” Nineteen percent say they set aside time for prayer of any kind between once a week and once a month, and 8 percent of churchgoers say “rarely/never.”

Women churchgoers are more likely than men (77 percent vs. 70 percent) to set aside time for prayer every day to a few times a week.

“Assessing a Christian’s spiritual growth without measures of seeking God would be like picking a flight with the right distance without confirming the destination,” said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. “Spiritual maturity is not an accident; seeking God speaks of intentionality – the believer who desires to know God in a deeper way and strives toward that goal.”

Seventy-eight percent of churchgoers indicate “one of the main reasons I live my life the way I do is to please and honor

God.” Six percent disagree with the statement and 16 percent neither agree nor disagree.

Besides prayer, 54 percent of churchgoers say they set aside time daily to a few times a week for private worship, praise or thanksgiving to God. Nearly a third (30 percent) say they do so between once a week and once a month. Seventeen percent indicate they rarely/never set aside time for private worship, praise or thanksgiving to God.

According to the survey, women are more likely than men (58 percent vs. 49 percent) to set aside time daily to a few times a week for private worship, praise or thanksgiving to God.

“When Jesus invited disciples to follow Him, it was a call to intentionally seek Him, to know Him, and to live for Him. This involves spending regular time with Him,” Stetzer said.

In addition to intentional times set aside for personal prayer and worship, churchgoers indicate a propensity for prayerfulness. Three quarters (75 percent) agree (strongly or somewhat) with the statement: “I find myself praying at the spur of the moment throughout the day.” Thirteen percent of churchgoers disagree with the statement. Eighty-four percent of female churchgoers and 66 percent of male churchgoers surveyed agree with the statement.

“The point of seeking God is not that He is hard to find,” Stetzer said. “Rather He desires we constantly invest in this relationship and seek to follow Him in every area of life. This requires intentionality and ultimate priority in a disciple’s life.”

To help pastors, churches and individuals measure spiritual development, LifeWay Research used the study’s data to develop a questionnaire for believers, called the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA). This online evaluation delivers both individual and group reports on **spiritual maturity** using the eight attributes of biblical **discipleship**. The TDA also

provides helpful and practical suggestions on appropriate next steps for spiritual development.

To learn more about the transformational discipleship research visit [. The TDA is available at \[.\]\(#\)](#)