

First Congregational Church Canton

Member Survey

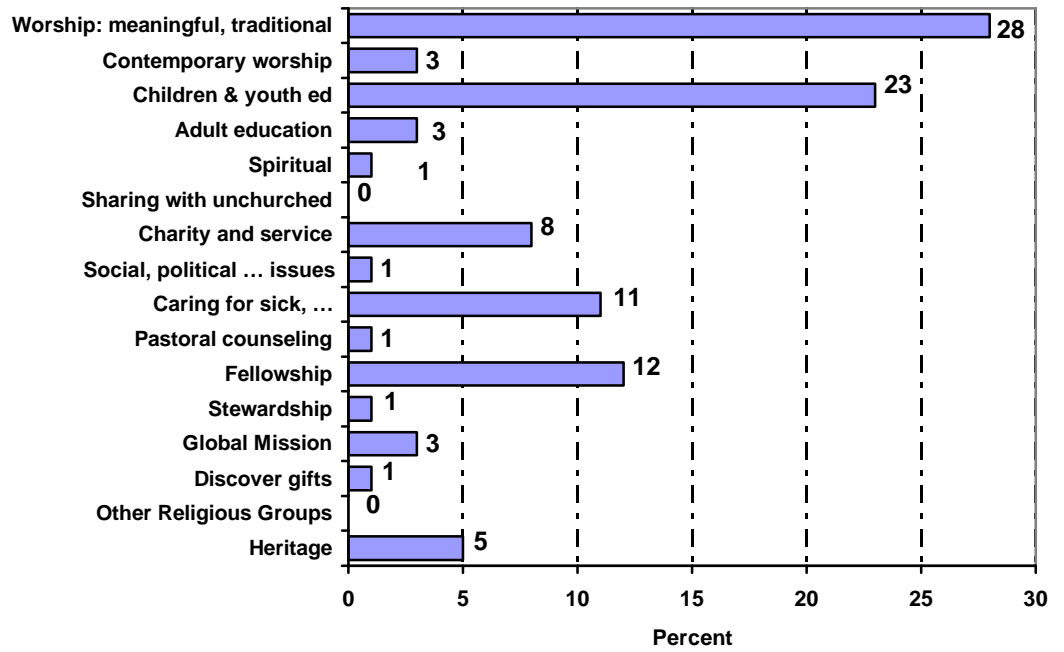
197 Total Respondents

TASKS OF THE CHURCH

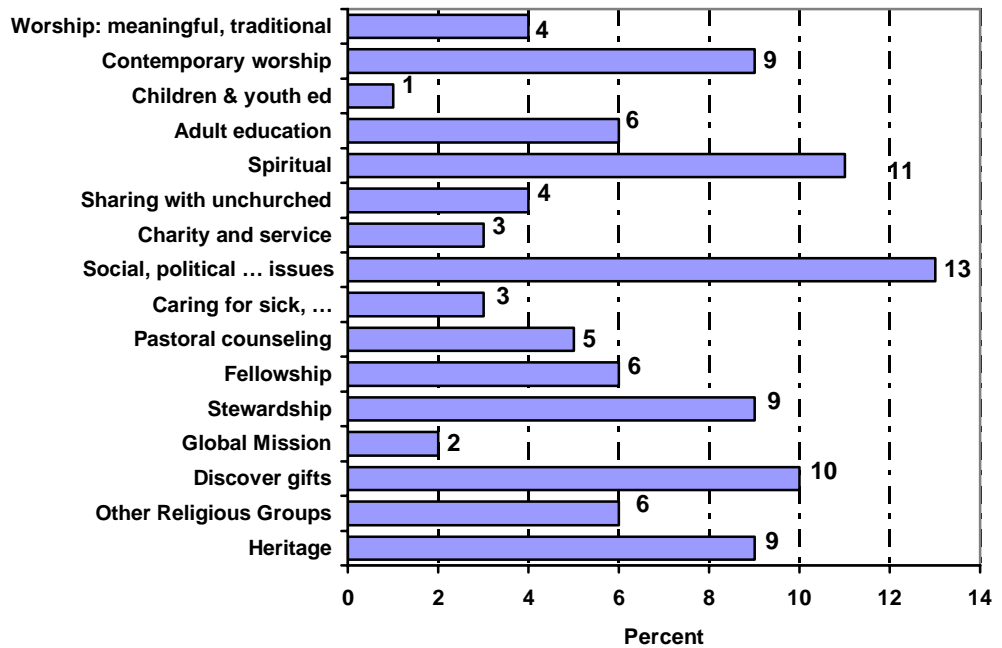
The survey listed a number of tasks that a local church is likely to perform. The congregational members were asked to evaluate these tasks as to whether they were generally satisfied with the congregation's current performance on the task, or whether they felt the tasks should receive more emphasis, or whether the task currently receives too much emphasis. The following percentages show how your congregation responded to these task questions. These percentages (read across) may not equal 100% due to rounding.

| | <i>Needs More</i> | <i>Very Satisfied</i> | <i>Generally Satisfied</i> | <i>Too Much</i> |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Offering worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and the Christian tradition. | 19% | 47% | 33% | 1% |
| 2. Providing worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms. | 18 | 36 | 43 | 3 |
| 3. Providing Christian education for children and youth. | 4 | 80 | 15 | 1 |
| 4. Providing Christian education programs for adults. | 16 | 28 | 56 | 0 |
| 5. Helping members deepen their personal and spiritual relationship with God. | 29 | 25 | 46 | 0 |
| 6. Sharing the Word with the unchurched. | 17 | 20 | 62 | 2 |
| 7. Engaging in acts of charity and service for persons in need. | 9 | 51 | 40 | 0 |
| 8. Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political, and economic issues. | 22 | 28 | 46 | 4 |
| 9. Providing a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved. | 5 | 60 | 35 | 1 |
| 10. Providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems. | 16 | 32 | 53 | 0 |
| 11. Providing fellowship opportunities for members. | 9 | 59 | 33 | 0 |
| 12. Helping members understand their use of time, talents, and money as expressions of Christian stewardship. | 23 | 32 | 44 | 1 |
| 13. Supporting the global mission of the church. | 6 | 39 | 49 | 6 |
| 14. Helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service. | 32 | 19 | 48 | 1 |
| 15. Participating in activities and programs with other religious groups. | 18 | 24 | 56 | 2 |
| 16. Expressing our denominational heritage/tradition. | 17 | 27 | 52 | 3 |

Overall, which one task does your congregation do best?



For the sake of your own personal involvement in your congregation, which one task would you most like to see strengthened?



ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Members were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements related to certain organizational issues, such as making decisions, sharing information, and developing resources. The percentage (read across) may not equal 100% due to rounding.

| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Moderately Agree</i> | <i>Slightly Agree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Members are well informed about what the various committees and groups in the congregation are doing. | 40% | 39% | 11% | 8% | 2% |
| 2. The activities taking place in the congregation are well publicized to the surrounding community. | 11 | 38 | 34 | 12 | 5 |
| 3. Study of the needs of the congregation and the community is regularly undertaken as the basis for church planning. | 11 | 31 | 25 | 20 | 14 |
| 4. Members and groups get a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in the congregation. | 15 | 39 | 29 | 14 | 4 |
| 5. Members are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and service. | 11 | 38 | 31 | 15 | 5 |
| 6. Lay leaders are provided the training they need for their committee and task assignments. | 10 | 32 | 19 | 15 | 25 |
| 7. Every member who is capable and interested has an equal opportunity to hold key leadership positions. | 44 | 28 | 7 | 15 | 5 |
| 8. The theological and biblical implications of important decisions are regularly discussed. | 8 | 34 | 36 | 13 | 9 |
| 9. Important decisions about the life of the church are rarely made without open discussion by church leaders <i>and</i> members. | 39 | 34 | 7 | 16 | 5 |
| 10. Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than hushed up or hidden behind closed doors. | 13 | 24 | 22 | 23 | 18 |
| 11. It is easy to summarize for visitors and non-members how our congregation differs from other congregations in the area. | 15 | 37 | 19 | 23 | 6 |
| 12. Members help each other out in times of trouble. | 56 | 35 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 13. Cooperative programs with other churches of other denominations are highly valued in our church. | 12 | 52 | 26 | 7 | 3 |
| 14. The <i>current</i> morale of our church members is high. | 32 | 31 | 15 | 9 | 14 |
| 15. There is a sense of excitement among members about our congregation's <i>future</i> . | 22 | 32 | 20 | 11 | 15 |

CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY:

Listed below are several alternatives that touch upon important dimensions of a church's identity. Using the seven point scale between each set of alternatives, members were asked to circle the number that best describes where the congregation falls, "1" meaning most like the characteristic on the left, "7" meaning most like the characteristic on the right, "4" meaning an equal mix of both. The number below indicates the average of all these responses.

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|---|
| 1. Our church is more influenced by history and tradition | 1-----2.7-----7 | Our church is more influenced by contemporary ideas and trends |
| 2. Members are similar to the people who live immediately around the church | 1-----2.3-----7 | Members are very different from people who live immediately around the church. |
| 3. Our church is very involved with the community around the church | 1-----3.1-----7 | Our church is not at all involved with the community around the church |
| 4. Our church is primarily oriented to serving our members | 1-----3.1-----7 | Our church is primarily oriented to serving the world beyond our membership |
| 5. Our congregation feels like one large family | 1-----3.2-----7 | Our congregation feels like a loosely knit association of individuals and groups |
| 6. Our church is known as a prestigious one in the area. | 1-----3.1-----7 | Our church is not considered one of the status churches in the area. |
| 7. Our church's approach to social issues is basically educational | 1-----2.4-----7 | Our church's approach to social is decidedly "activist." |
| 8. The congregation's approach to individual salvation emphasizes education, nurture and gradual growth in the faith | 1-----1.8-----7 | The congregation's approach to individual salvation stresses conversion and a born-again experience |
| 9. Our church gives strong expression to its denominational identity and heritage | 1-----2.3-----7 | It would be difficult for a visitor to know to which denomination the congregation belongs. |
| 10. Our congregation strives to create partnerships with other local churches. | 1-----3.4-----7 | Our congregation prefers to work by ourselves or through our Denominational channels |

Congregational respondents rates of agreement or disagreement with the following identity statements from the perspective of individual members looking at the congregation's overall identity and vision.

| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Our church's identity, as it is, is one with which I feel comfortable. | 44% | 42% | 14% | 1% |
| 2. It is easy for me to tell my friends what is unique about our church. | 25% | 53% | 22% | 0% |
| 3. I have a clear understanding of what our church stands for. | 25% | 54% | 20% | 1% |
| 4. An effective effort was made to instruct me in our church's mission. | 18% | 56% | 22% | 4% |
| 5. I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation. | 43% | 37% | 19% | 1% |
| 6. Being at this church has made a difference in my spiritual life. | 42% | 46% | 10% | 2% |

FUNCTIONS OF THE SENIOR MINISTER:

Members were asked to rate how high or low a priority should each of the following tasks be for the Senior Minister of the church. The following percentages show how your congregation responded to these task questions. The percentages (read across) may not equal 100% due to rounding.

| | <i>Very High</i> | <i>High</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Low</i> |
|---|------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1. Providing administrative leadership for the congregation's ministry. | 22% | 38% | 31% | 10% |
| 2. Actively and visibly supporting the church's stewardship program. | 12 | 38 | 46 | 5 |
| 3. Directly involving laity in planning and leadership of church programs and events. | 11 | 54 | 29 | 6 |
| 4. Planning and leading a program of new member recruitment. | 8 | 35 | 50 | 7 |
| 5. Participating in local community activities, issues and problems. | 14 | 34 | 45 | 8 |
| 6. Holding social justice issues before members. | 14 | 12 | 37 | 37 |
| 7. Planning and leading worship sensitive to the needs of the congregation. | 44 | 44 | 10 | 2 |
| 8. Emphasizing the spiritual development of members. | 36 | 38 | 22 | 4 |
| 9. Visiting the sick, shut-ins, and bereaved. | 26 | 51 | 23 | 1 |
| 10. Visiting members at their homes. | 7 | 26 | 37 | 30 |
| 11. Pastoral counseling of members having personal, family, and/or work related problems. | 24 | 60 | 14 | 2 |
| 12. Developing and supporting religious education program for children and youth. | 29 | 34 | 30 | 7 |
| 13. Developing and leading adult education programs. | 10 | 51 | 35 | 4 |
| 14. Supporting the world mission of the church. | 6 | 25 | 50 | 20 |
| 15. Participating in denominational activities beyond the local church, that is, at the regional or national level. | 6 | 13 | 50 | 31 |
| 16. Preparing and preaching inspiring sermons. | 75 | 21 | 4 | 0 |

SIZE AND CONDITION OF FACILITIES:

A. Congregational members were asked to assess the following spaces in terms of *size*.

| | <i>Excellent</i> | <i>Adequate</i> | <i>Needs Attention But Not Immediate</i> | <i>Needs Immediate Attention</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Worship Space | 58% | 42% | 1% | 0% |
| Educational Space | 31 | 59 | 10 | 0 |
| Fellowship Space | 47 | 50 | 2 | 1 |
| Office Space | 18 | 69 | 12 | 1 |
| Parking Space | 8 | 28 | 45 | 19 |

B. Congregational members were asked to assess the following spaces in terms of *general condition and aesthetic appeal*.

| | <i>Excellent</i> | <i>Adequate</i> | <i>Needs Attention But Not Immediate</i> | <i>Needs Immediate Attention</i> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Worship Space | 71% | 23% | 4% | 2% |
| Educational Space | 28 | 63 | 9 | 1 |
| Fellowship Space | 48 | 48 | 3 | 1 |
| Office Space | 29 | 60 | 10 | 2 |
| Parking | 4 | 29 | 47 | 20 |
| Exterior & Grounds | 24 | 55 | 13 | 8 |

WORSHIP

A. Members were asked how satisfied are were with each of the following aspects of the congregation's Sunday worship?

| | <i>Need More Emphasis</i> | <i>Very Satisfied</i> | <i>Generally Satisfied</i> | <i>Receives too Much Attention</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Providing time for members to greet one another | 4% | 67% | 30% | 0% |
| 2. Providing worship that is emotionally moving | 26 | 31 | 42 | 1 |
| 3. Providing worship that is intellectually challenging | 29 | 30 | 41 | 0 |
| 4. Attention given to sacraments | 6 | 47 | 46 | 1 |
| 5. Lay participation in leading worship | 5 | 50 | 45 | 1 |
| 6. Use of inclusive, non-sexist language | 12 | 47 | 35 | 6 |
| 7. Use of creeds or statements of faith | 3 | 55 | 40 | 2 |
| 8. Silent prayer/meditation | 14 | 53 | 31 | 2 |
| 9. Having parts of the worship especially for children | 2 | 69 | 25 | 4 |
| 10. Use of new or unfamiliar hymns | 7 | 27 | 45 | 21 |
| 11. Corporate prayer in which the entire church participates | 2 | 54 | 36 | 8 |
| 12. Providing worship at times other than Sunday morning | 13 | 26 | 59 | 2 |
| 13. Use of contemporary worship styles, music and language | 16 | 27 | 50 | 8 |

B. QUALITIES OF A GOOD SERMON

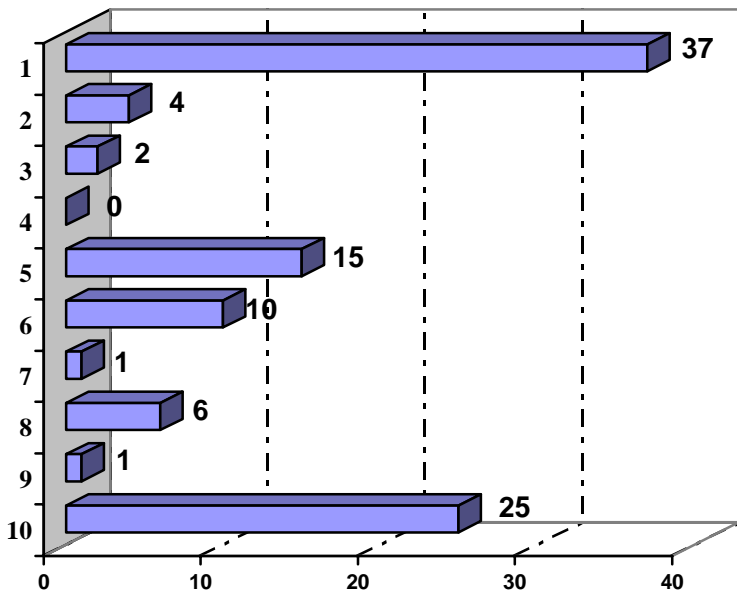
Members were asked, personally, how important for them is each of the following in the mix of qualities that make a good sermon?

| | <i>Essential</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Not Very Important</i> | <i>Downright Distracting</i> |
|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Sets forth a clear faith position as a guide for making decisions and living a faithful life. | 27% | 66% | 7% | 1% |
| 2. Based on a clear, unambiguous religious authority. | 10 | 58 | 30 | 3 |
| 3. Touches directly on my everyday life. | 45 | 50 | 5 | 0 |
| 4. Contains scholarly or literary illustrations. | 10 | 60 | 30 | 1 |
| 5. Is Biblically based and illustrated. | 21 | 65 | 14 | 1 |
| 6. Makes me reflect on issues and events that go beyond my personal life and local community. | 42 | 48 | 10 | 1 |
| 7. Is challenging and thought-provoking. | 52 | 40 | 8 | 1 |
| 8. Obviously flows from the depth of the preacher's own personal faith and spiritual convictions. | 20 | 59 | 19 | 2 |
| 9. Is comforting and reassuring. | 20 | 58 | 22 | 0 |
| 10. Is carefully composed and skillfully delivered. | 39 | 56 | 5 | 0 |
| 11. Is spiritually moving and inspirational. | 39 | 56 | 5 | 1 |
| 12. Sets forth various sides of an issue without advocating one position as the only Christian position. | 17 | 57 | 23 | 4 |

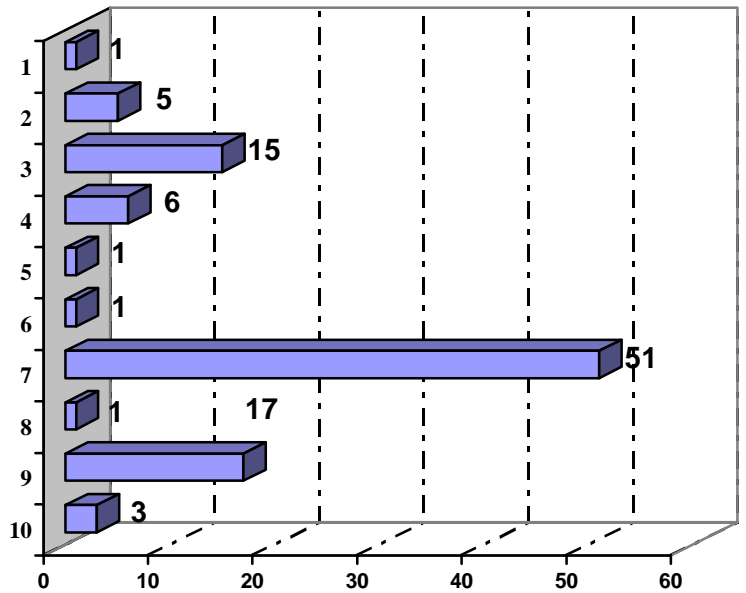
THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Members were asked to what extent they would like to see the following roles embodied in the pastor of the congregation?

| | <i>Essential</i> | <i>Very Much</i> | <i>Moderate</i> | <i>Not Very</i> | <i>Not at all</i> |
|---|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Minister of the Word/Teacher of the Congregation | 42% | 35% | 17% | 5% | 2% |
| 2. Church Administrator | 10 | 35 | 42 | 12 | 1 |
| 3. Social Activist | 8 | 24 | 35 | 27 | 6 |
| 4. Group Facilitator | 8 | 22 | 58 | 10 | 1 |
| 5. Celebrant/Worship Leader | 28 | 36 | 28 | 8 | 0 |
| 6. Spiritual Guide | 22 | 32 | 40 | 5 | 1 |
| 7. Witness/Evangelist | 4 | 7 | 29 | 34 | 26 |
| 8. Counselor/Healer | 13 | 35 | 45 | 8 | 0 |
| 9. Community Chaplain | 2 | 15 | 54 | 23 | 6 |
| 10. Friend/Fellow Traveler | 43 | 40 | 14 | 4 | 0 |



Most Important Role:



Least Important Role:

WHAT STYLE OF MINISTRY

Members were asked which trait of good pastors they preferred for each of these pairs

| | <i>Strongly Prefer</i> | <i>Slightly Prefer</i> | | <i>Slightly Prefer</i> | <i>Strongly Prefer</i> | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Expertise in Biblical and theological matters | 19% | 23% | | 42% | 17% | Emphasis on spiritual development and growth |
| 2. Thought-provoking and Challenging | 27 | 35 | | 22 | 16 | Comforting and reassuring |
| 3. Biblical preaching and teaching | 20 | 33 | | 34 | 13 | Preaching and teaching on Contemporary Issues |
| 4. New approaches and Ideas | 36 | 43 | | 20 | 2 | Does things as they have always been done |
| 5. Strong and decisive decision-maker | 8 | 22 | | 43 | 27 | Encourages lay decision-making |
| 6. Relaxed interpersonal style | 62 | 31 | | 5 | 2 | Formal interpersonal style |
| 7. Works hard to accomplish tasks | 7 | 12 | | 57 | 24 | Places feelings of others ahead of achieving goals |
| 8. Helps people figure out for themselves | 39 | 45 | | 13 | 3 | Advises people what to do |
| 9. Reflective and reserved | 4 | 16 | | 46 | 34 | Outgoing and socially engaging |
| 10. Maintains a private life | 24 | 50 | | 20 | 5 | Gives whole self to church |

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PERSONAL PRACTICES:

1. Members were asked which one of the following best expresses their view of the Bible?

Percent

- 0% (1) The Bible is an ancient book of history, legends and cultural stories recorded by man. It has little value today except as classic literature.
- 10% (2) The Bible is a valuable book because it was written by wise and good people, but I do not believe it is really God's Word, but it can teach us many moral precepts.
- 46% (3) The Bible is the record of many different people's response to God and because of this, people and churches today must interpret for themselves the Bible's basic moral and religious teachings.
- 42% (4) The Bible is the inspired Word of God and its basic moral and religious teachings are clear and true, even if it reflects some human error.
- 2% (5) The Bible is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally.

2. Rate your agreement or disagreement with the following belief statements.

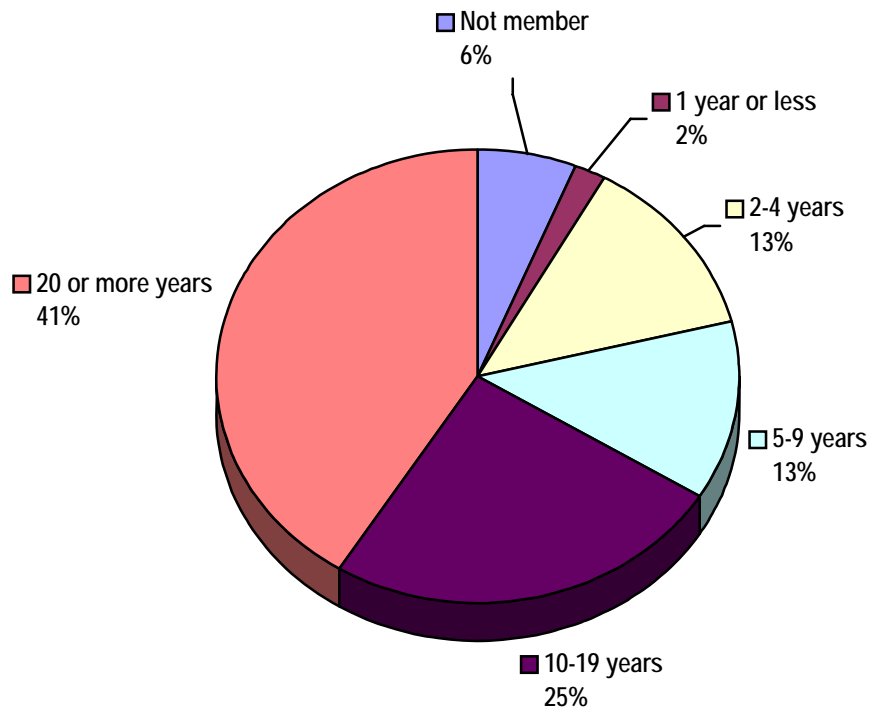
| | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Neutral or Unsure</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. There is no other way to salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ. | 17% | 23% | 22% | 29% | 11% |
| 2. Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life. | 38 | 31 | 21 | 7 | 4 |
| 3. Jesus' resurrection from the dead was an actual event. | 22 | 35 | 36 | 4 | 3 |
| 4. All religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth. | 17 | 41 | 23 | 12 | 7 |
| 5. The Bible has answers for all of the basic questions of life. | 8 | 35 | 40 | 14 | 4 |
| 6. Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel. | 17 | 33 | 37 | 11 | 3 |
| 7. It is often difficult to live out my faith in daily work, leisure and community life. | 5 | 33 | 11 | 41 | 11 |

3. Indicate how often you engage in the following practices.

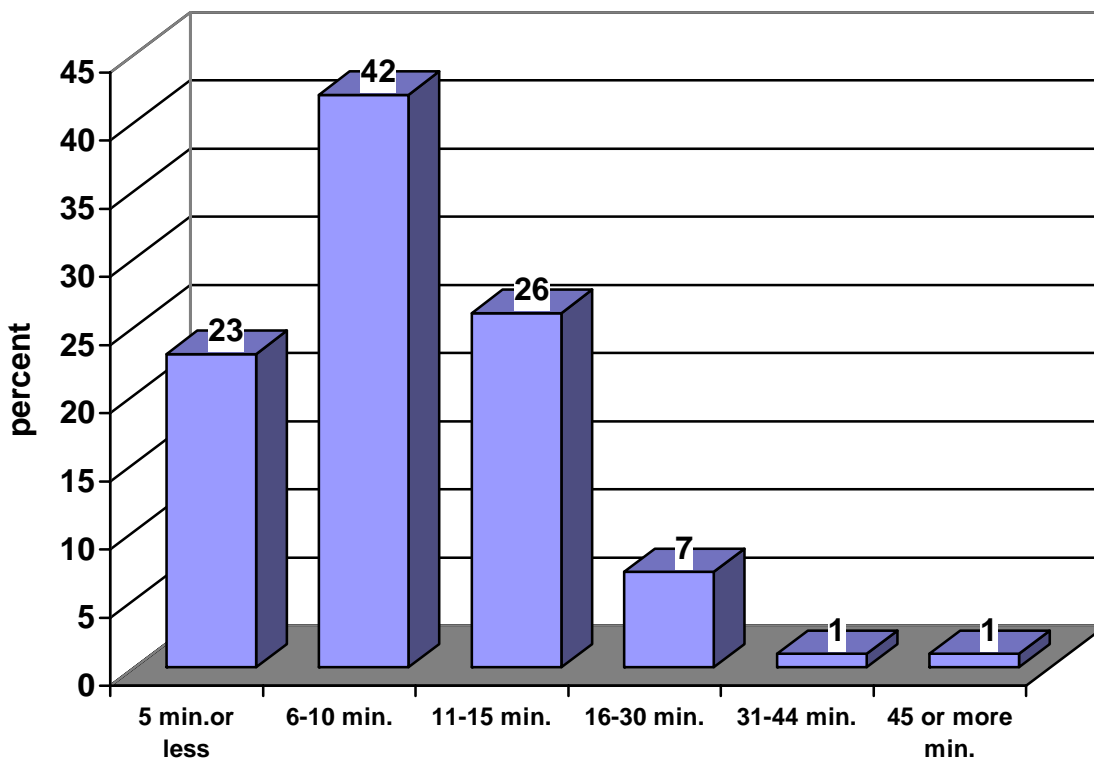
| | <i>Daily</i> | <i>Few times a week</i> | <i>Once a week</i> | <i>Few times a month</i> | <i>Seldom or Never</i> |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Spend time in private devotional activity such as prayer, meditation, reading the Bible or other spiritual books? | 24% | 28% | 14% | 13% | 20% |
| 2. Use the web at home or at the office? | 69 | 11 | 1 | 4 | 15 |
| 3. Use email? | 72 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 12 |
| 4. Look at religious Internet sites? | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 91 |
| 5. Volunteer time in social service? | 2 | 11 | 11 | 45 | 30 |

OUR CHURCH PARTICIPATION:

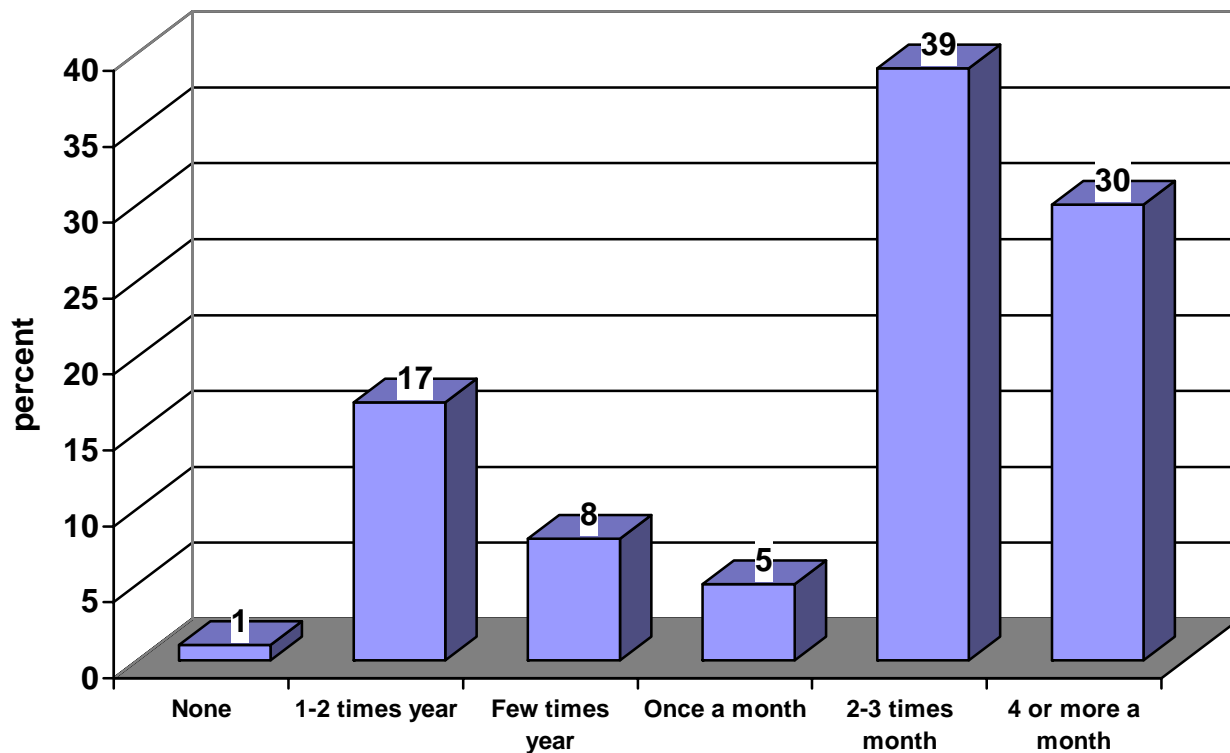
How long have you been a member?



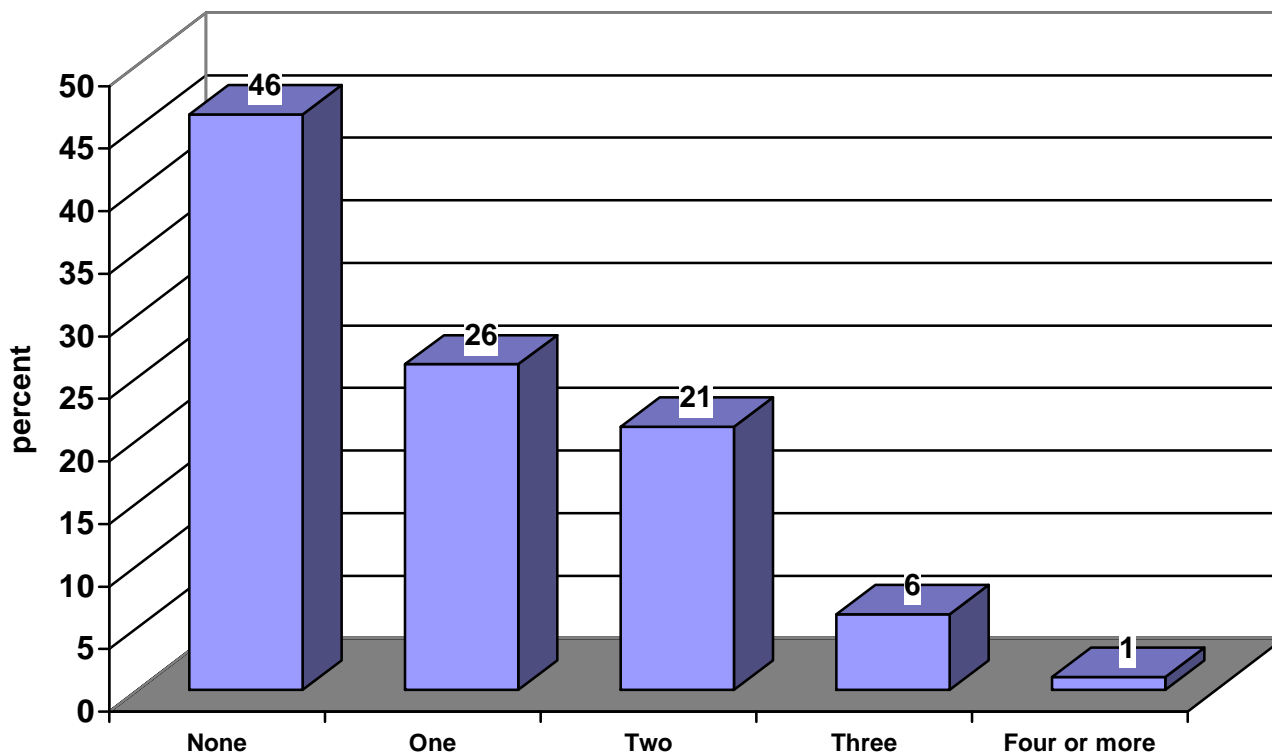
How long does it usually take you to travel from home to church?



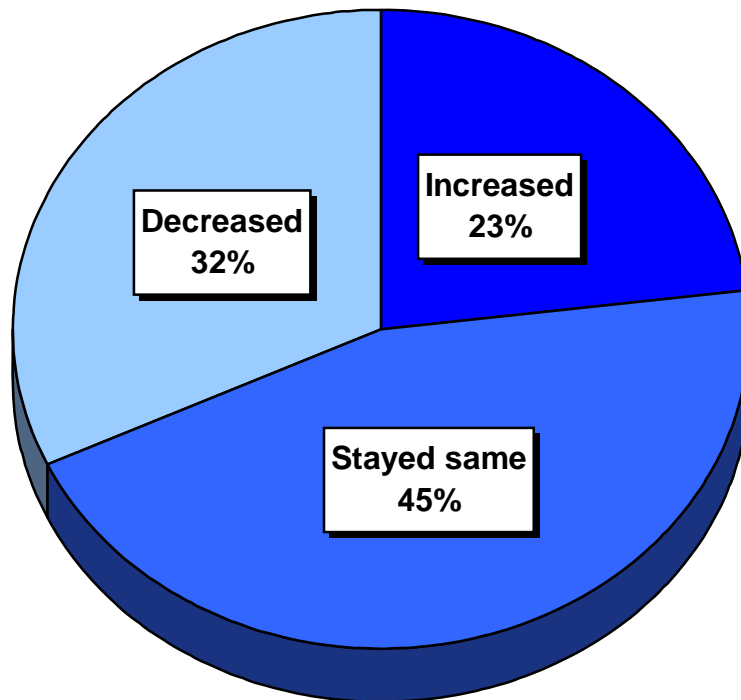
On the average, about how many times have you attended church services during the past year?



In how many church committees and groups do you hold membership (not counting congregational membership itself?)



Has your involvement in the congregation increased, decreased, or remained about the same in the last few years?



If a member's participation has increased or decreased, which of the following are the reasons for the change. [Percentages will not equal 100% because it was possible to select more than one answer or none at all.]

If involvement has increased (n=45), why:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| More time available | 15 persons |
| Because of children | 10 |
| Accepted office/responsibility | 26 |
| More positive attitude | 0 |
| Better health | 11 |
| Stronger faith | 15 |

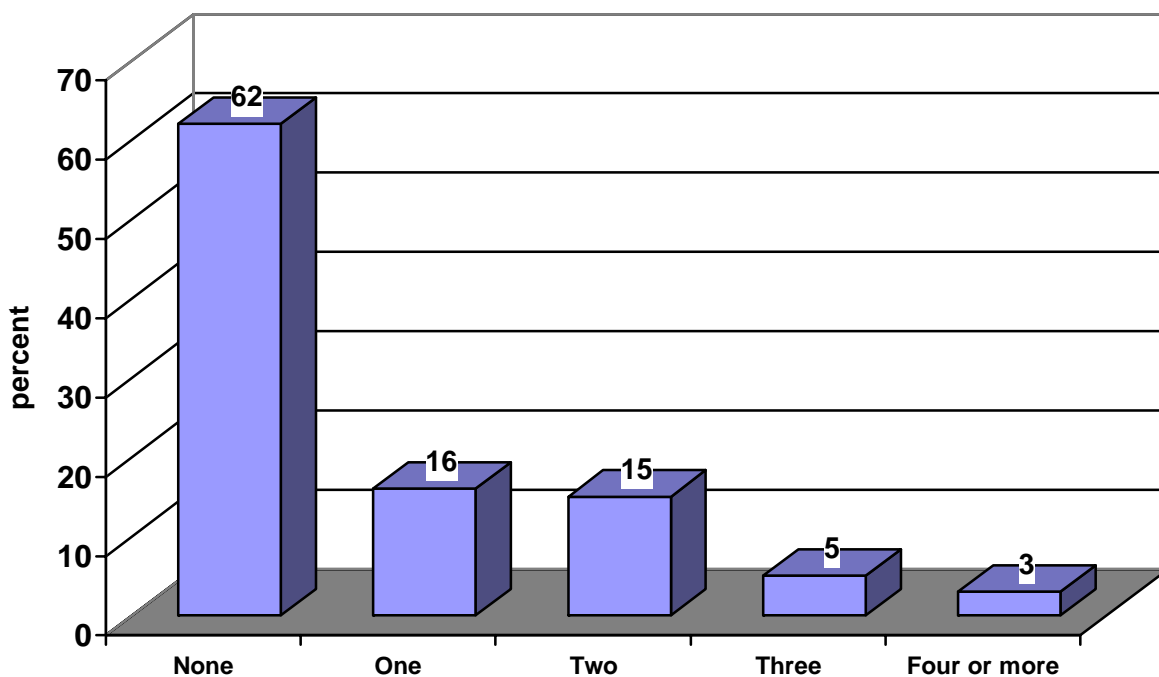
If involvement has decreased (n=62), why:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Less time available | 21 persons |
| Because of children | 4 |
| Given up office/responsibility | 12 |
| More negative attitude | 18 |
| Health problems | 2 |
| Decreased faith | 28 |

Approximately how much did your family household contribute to the church per year?

| Contribution Category | Percent of Respondents |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Under \$200 | 4% |
| \$200 - 599 | 16% |
| \$600 – 999 | 25% |
| \$1,000 – 1,499 | 18% |
| \$1,500 – 2,499 | 12% |
| \$2,500 – 3,499 | 10% |
| \$3,500 – 4,999 | 5% |
| \$5,000 – 7,499 | 5% |
| \$7,500 or more | 5% |

How many persons or families have members invited to visit or join the church in the past year?



OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

Age Grouping

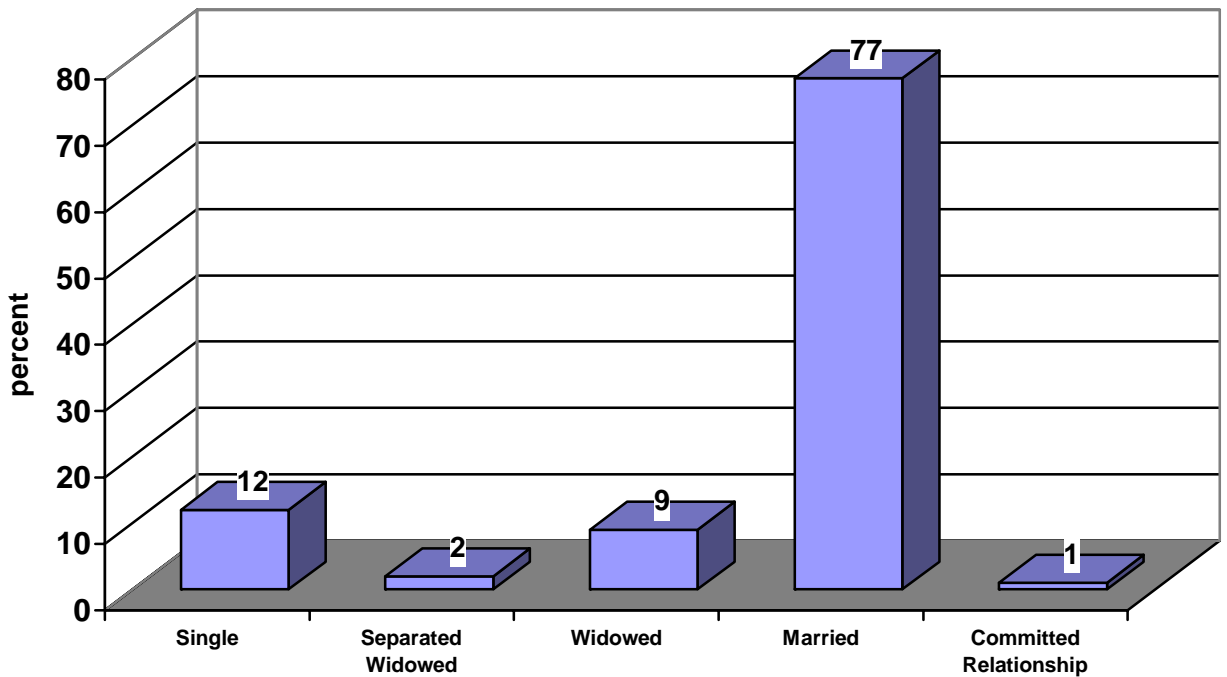
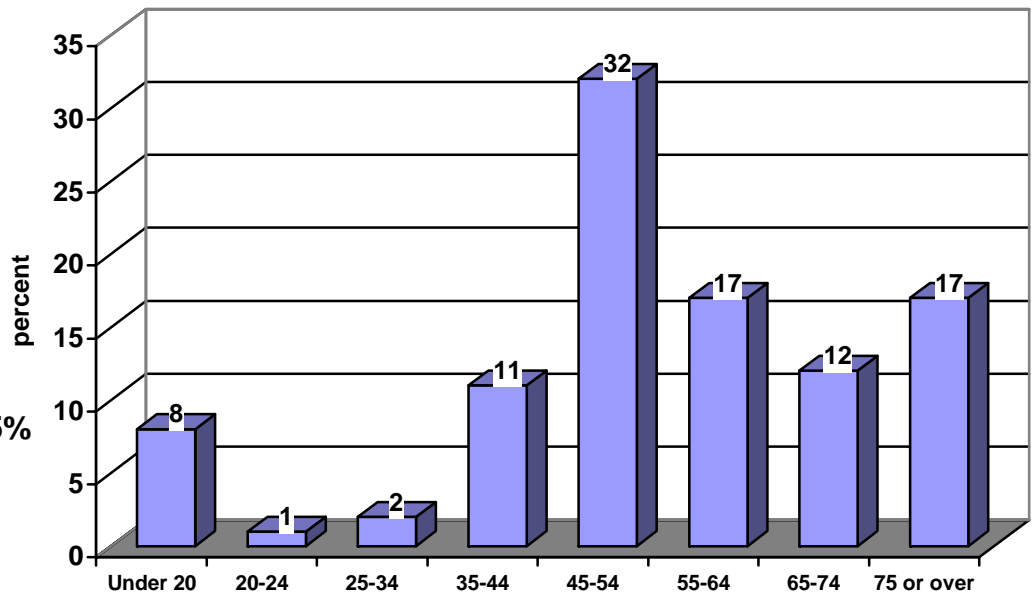
Gender

Male -- 34%
 Female --66%

Ethnic Background

White – 98.5%
 Pacific Islander – 0.5%
 Hispanic – 0.5%
 Asian – 0.5%

Marital Status



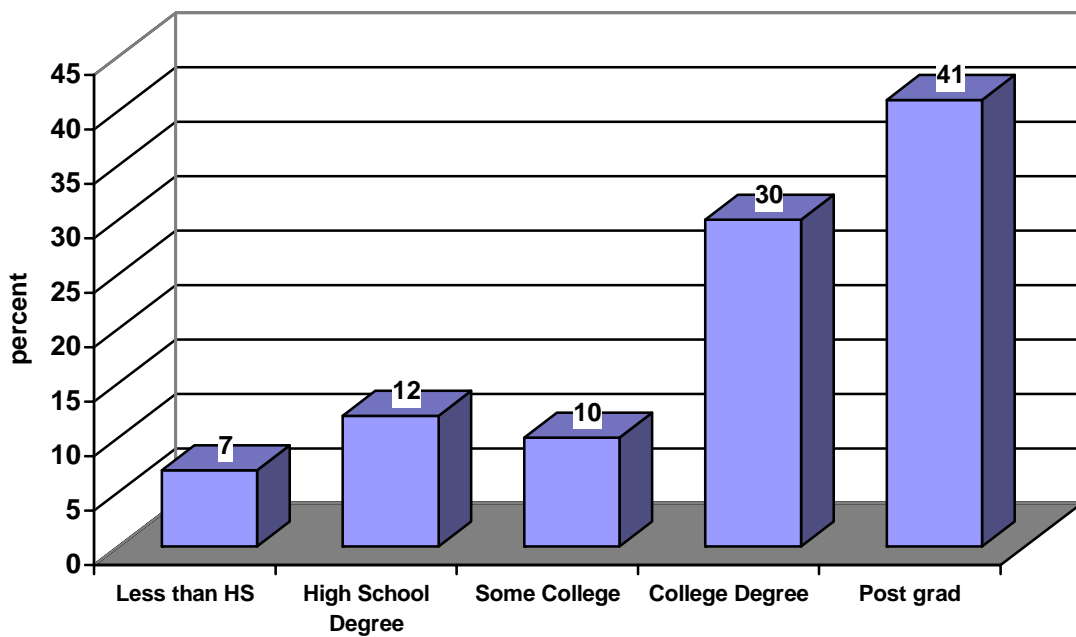
Of those who have children, Number of children in age range:

| | # of Children |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Birth - 5 years old | 44 |
| Six - 12 years old | 49 |
| Thirteen - 18 years old | 67 |
| Nineteen and over at home | 42 |

Which best describes your current household?

| | Percent |
|---|---------|
| One person living alone | 11 |
| A couple without children | 28 |
| One adult with child/children | 2 |
| Two or more adults with child/children | 54 |
| Several adults living in same household | 5 |

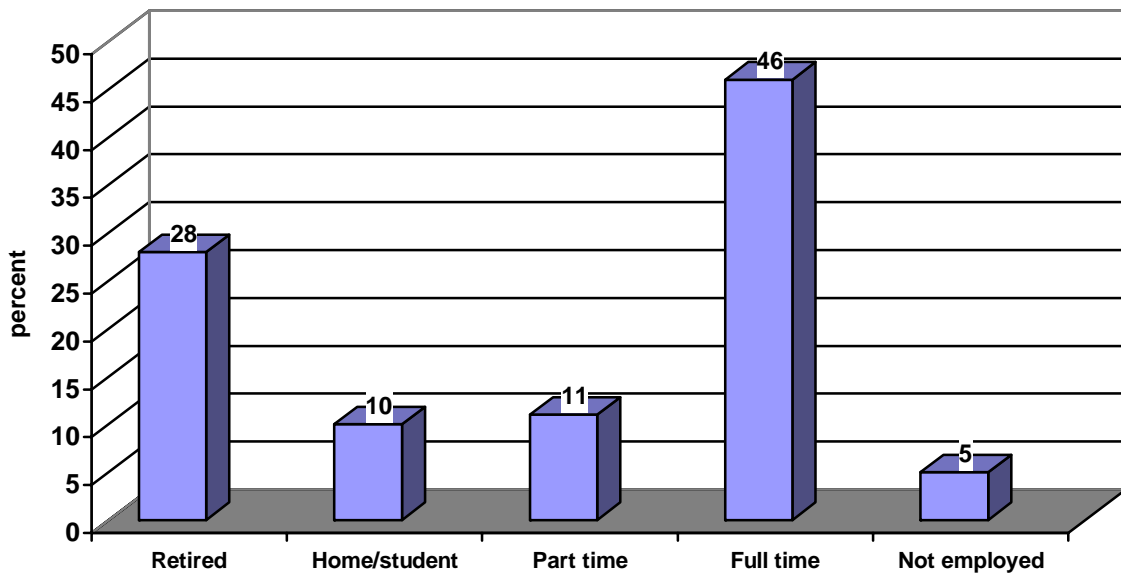
Level of Education



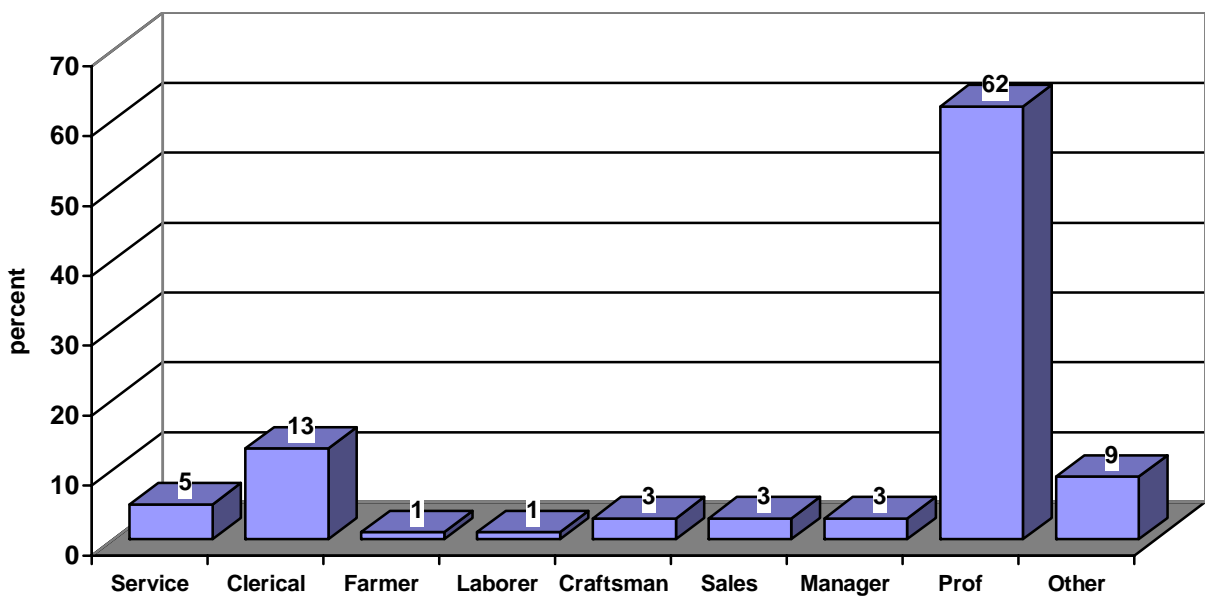
Household Income Range 167 respondents

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Under \$25,000 | 6% |
| \$25,000 - \$49,999 | 13% |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 14% |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 23% |
| \$100,000 - \$149,999 | 25% |
| \$150,000 or more | 19% |

Employment Status



Occupation



Are you self-employed? 12 percent said yes

If you are married, is your spouse employed?

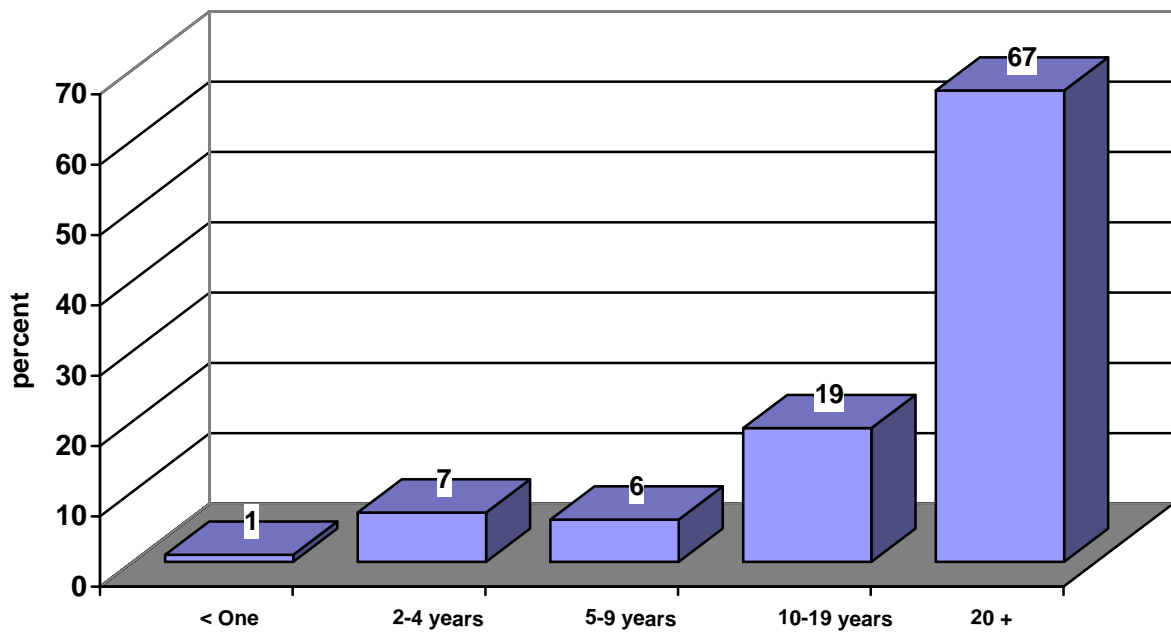
| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Yes, full time | 59% |
| Yes, part time | 14% |

Religious Heritage

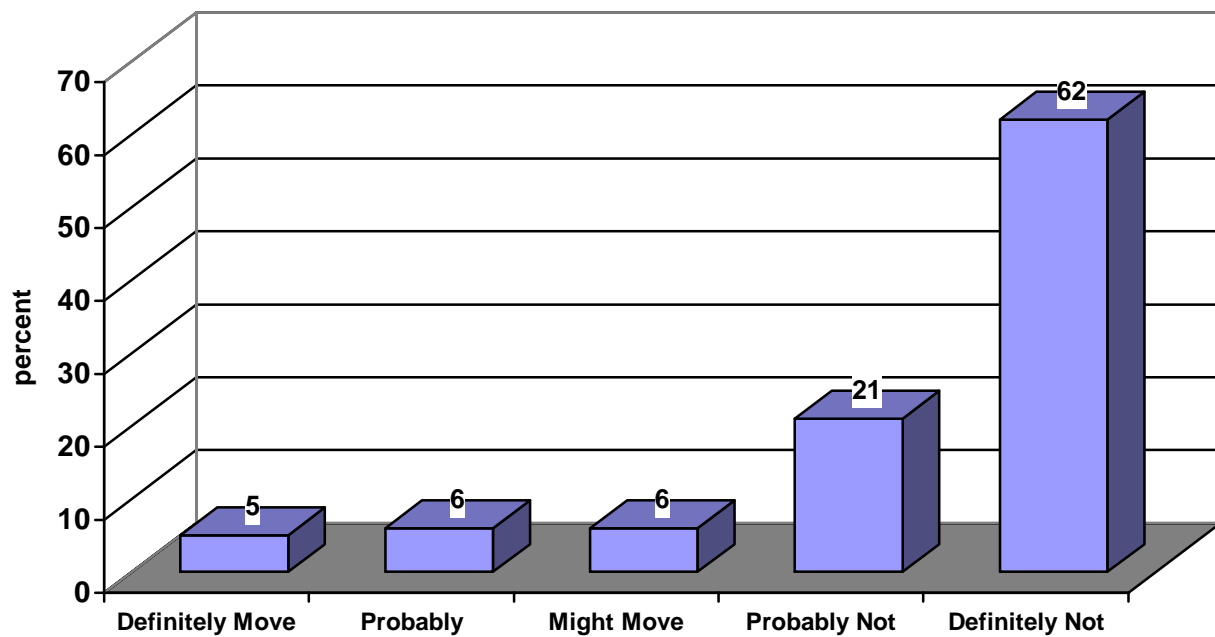
Members were involved in the following denominations when they were growing up:

| Denomination | Percent |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Baptist | 3% |
| Disciples of Christ | 0 |
| Episcopal | 5 |
| Lutheran | 4 |
| Methodist | 9 |
| Presbyterian | 11 |
| United Church of Christ | 36 |
| Unitarian Universalist | 1 |
| Other Protestant | 10 |
| Roman Catholic | 19 |
| Other | 2 |
| None | 1 |

How many years have members lived in this general area?



How likely is it that the membership might move out of this general area within the next few years?



How many of your closest friends attend this church?

