

**Lifeway** research

# Hispanic American Church Study

A SURVEY OF PASTORS OF HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE U.S.

Sponsored by Lifeway Recursos, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and Samaritan's Purse

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# Methodology

- The online survey of 692 pastors of Hispanic Congregations in the U.S. was conducted September 6 – November 1, 2022
- Respondents were invited by individual denominations and networks (see following slide). Invitations were primarily made by email providing pastors with a link to the online survey
- Each respondent was screened to ensure they were the senior pastor or the pastor of the Hispanic campus or Spanish-speaking congregation
- Respondents were screened to ensure the congregation was a Hispanic or multiethnic church or a Spanish-speaking worship service or campus within a non-Hispanic church (Pastors of a campus or Spanish-speaking worship service were instructed to only answer for that campus/service)
- Only congregations that were at least 50% Hispanic were included
- Slight weights were used to adjust for varying response rates across denominations
- The completed sample is 692 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed  $\pm 5.0\%$  This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. This includes the following questions intentionally asked of half of respondents to keep the survey length reasonable for each respondent (Q31-36, 40, 41, 44, 51, 52)

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Samaritan's Purse, and Lifeway Recursos for sponsoring this study.

Many thanks go to each member of the **Advisory Group** who believed in this project from the beginning and gave guidance at each step of the study:

- Dennis Rivera (Assemblies of God)
- Angel Jordan (BGEA)
- Lori Tapia (Christian Church Disciples of Christ)
- Carlos Moran (Church of God Cleveland)
- Danny Flores (Converge)
- Carlos Astorga (Lifeway Recursos)
- Jose Duran and Gabriel Salguero (NaLEC)
- Paco Garcia and Abraham Hernandez (NHCLC)
- Hernando Saenz (PCA-MNA)
- Luis Lopez (SBC)

Lifeway Research is grateful for the help of two research partners: David Parla and Lizette Dillinger.

The Lifeway Research project team: Kevin Walker, Daniel Price, and Scott McConnell

# Survey Invitations

This project would not have been possible without the survey invitations extended by the following groups to their Hispanic congregations:

- American Baptist Churches USA, Assemblies of God, Baptist Missionary Association of America, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church North America, Church of God (Anderson), Church of God (Cleveland), Church of the Nazarene, Churches of God General Conference, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Converge, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Free Church of America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Foursquare, Free Methodists, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, North American Baptists Conference (Hispanics for Christ), Presbyterian Church in America (MNA), Reformed Church in America, Seventh Day Adventist, Southern Baptist Convention, Vineyard
- Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Coalition (NHCLC), National Hispanic Pastors Association (NAHPA), National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC), Redeemer City to City, and Titus Foundation Phoenix.
- In addition to invites from the groups above, Lifeway Research sent invitations to churches in the Lifeway Research panel and to two rented lists of Hispanic churches.

# Who the Study Includes

Completed surveys from pastors of Protestant Hispanic congregations in the U.S. from the following groups are included in this study:

- American Baptist Churches USA
- Apostolic
- Assemblies of God
- Baptist Missionary Association of America
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Church of God (Anderson, IN)
- Church of God (Cleveland, TN)
- Church of the Nazarene
- Churches of God General Conference
- Christian & Missionary Alliance
- Christian Reformed Church North America
- Concilio Evangélico Internacional
- Converge
- Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Free Church of America
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Foursquare
- Free Methodists
- International Pentecostal Holiness Church
- Missionary Church
- Non-denominational churches
- North American Baptists Conference
- Presbyterian Church in America (MNA)
- Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Reformed Church in America
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Southern Baptist Convention
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church
- Vineyard
- Wesleyan Church
- Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Note: Groups listed here that are not on the Survey Invitations page are only partially represented.

# Limitations

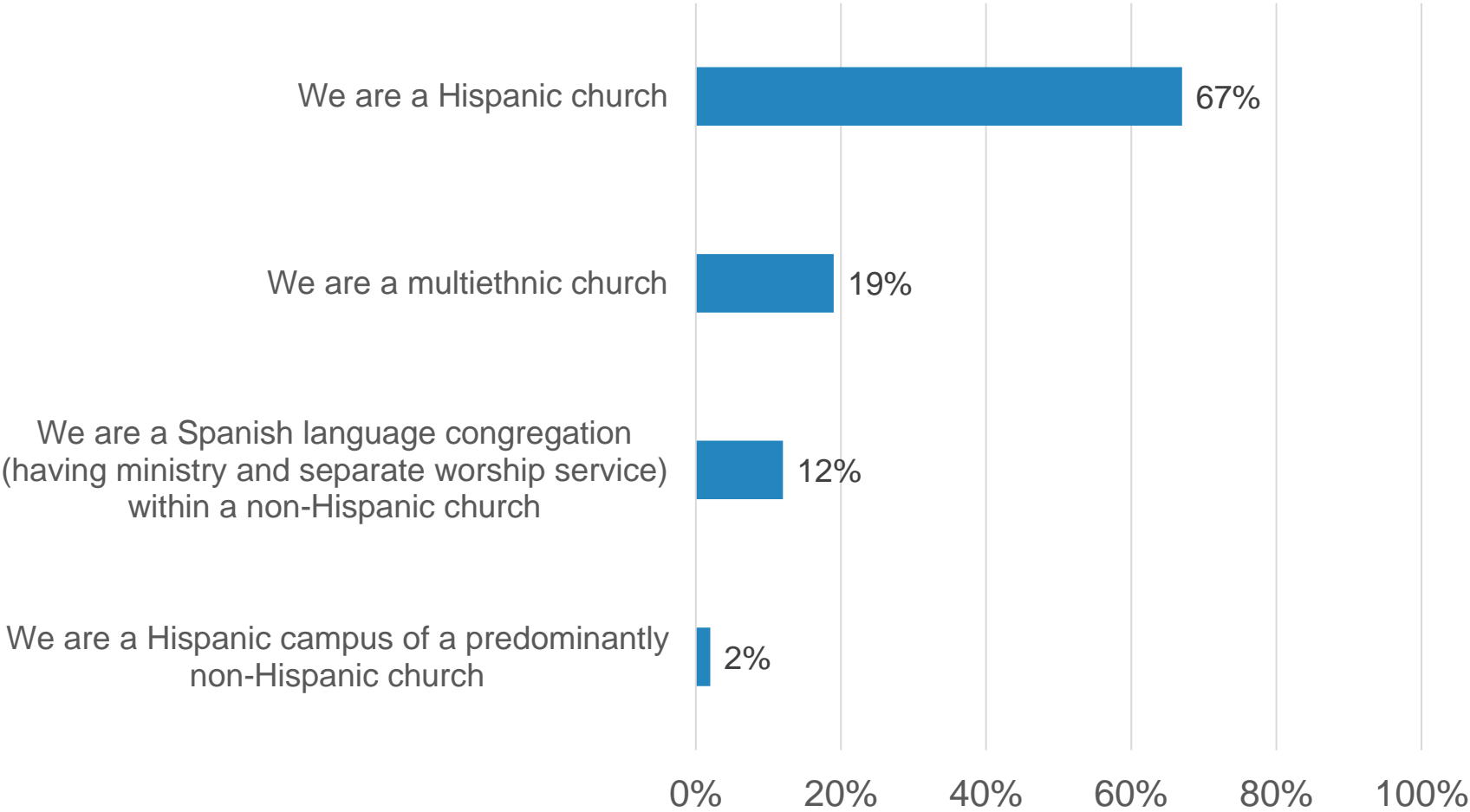
This is likely the largest number of Protestant Hispanic congregations in the U.S. ever invited to a single research study. However, even this robust sampling effort still has limitations.

Great efforts were made to connect with known groups of Hispanic congregations. Some denominations were not able to participate during the timeframe of this study. Congregations in denominations and faith groups listed on the survey invitations page were invited in the most comprehensive manner.

The full number of non-denominational Hispanic congregations in the U.S. is not known. The large networks and rented lists who were invited should represent above average sampling but may not match the coverage of invitations within denominations.

Hispanic congregations that exist as a Spanish-speaking service within a non-Hispanic church may be under-represented. While all known congregations were invited by cooperating groups, it is likely that some Spanish-speaking services have not yet identified themselves to their denomination or networks since the entire church already has affiliations of its own.

# 86% of participating Hispanic congregations are Hispanic or multiethnic churches



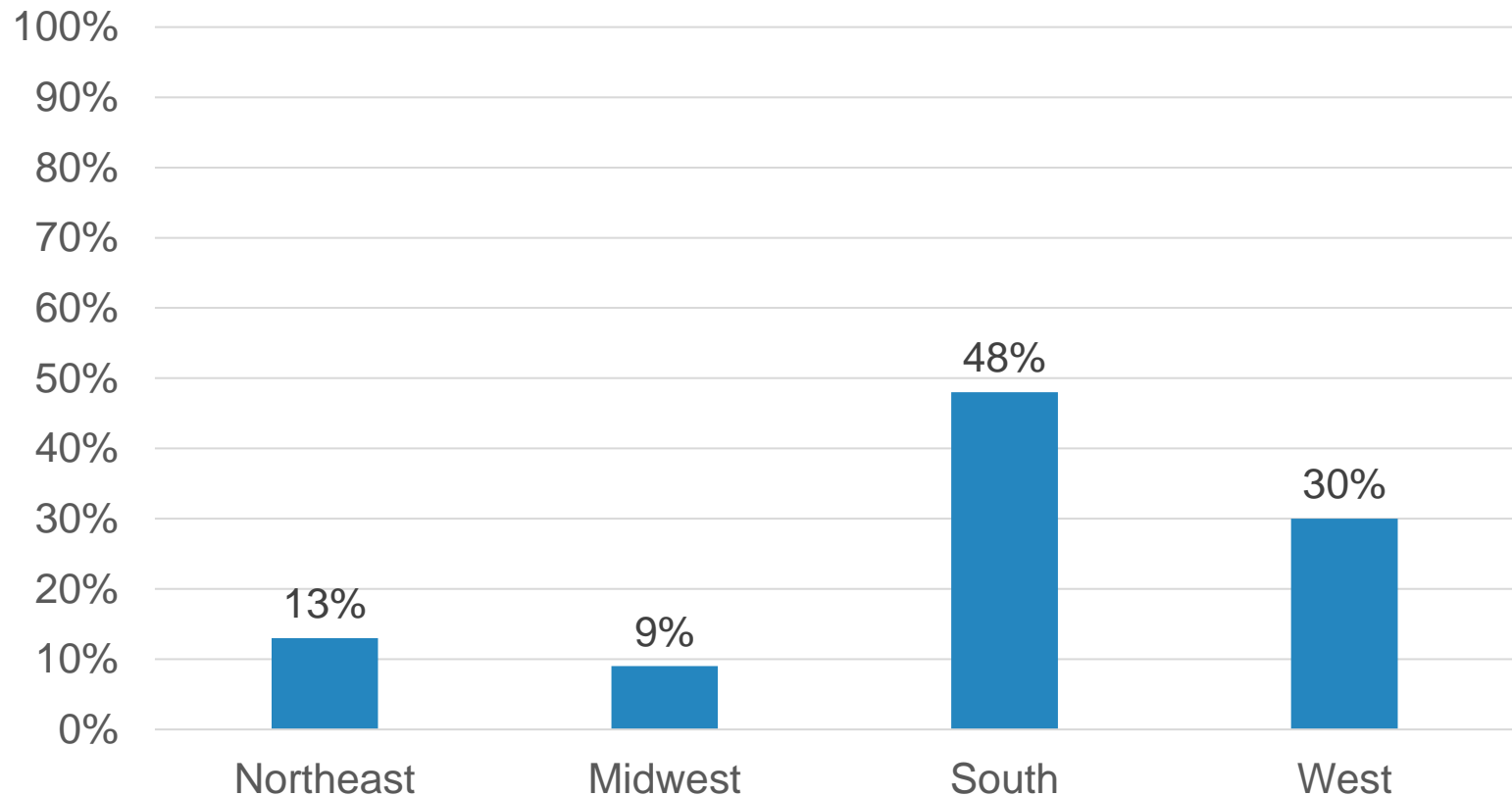
# Current ethnic make-up of participating congregations (Means)

Hispanic	94.4%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0.2%
Black/African American/ Afro-Latino	1.4%
Native-American/ Alaska Native	0.4%
White/Caucasian	3.3%
Other	0.4%

To be included in the study, a congregation had to answer that they were at least 50% Hispanic



# The largest number of Hispanic congregations participating are in the South and West regions

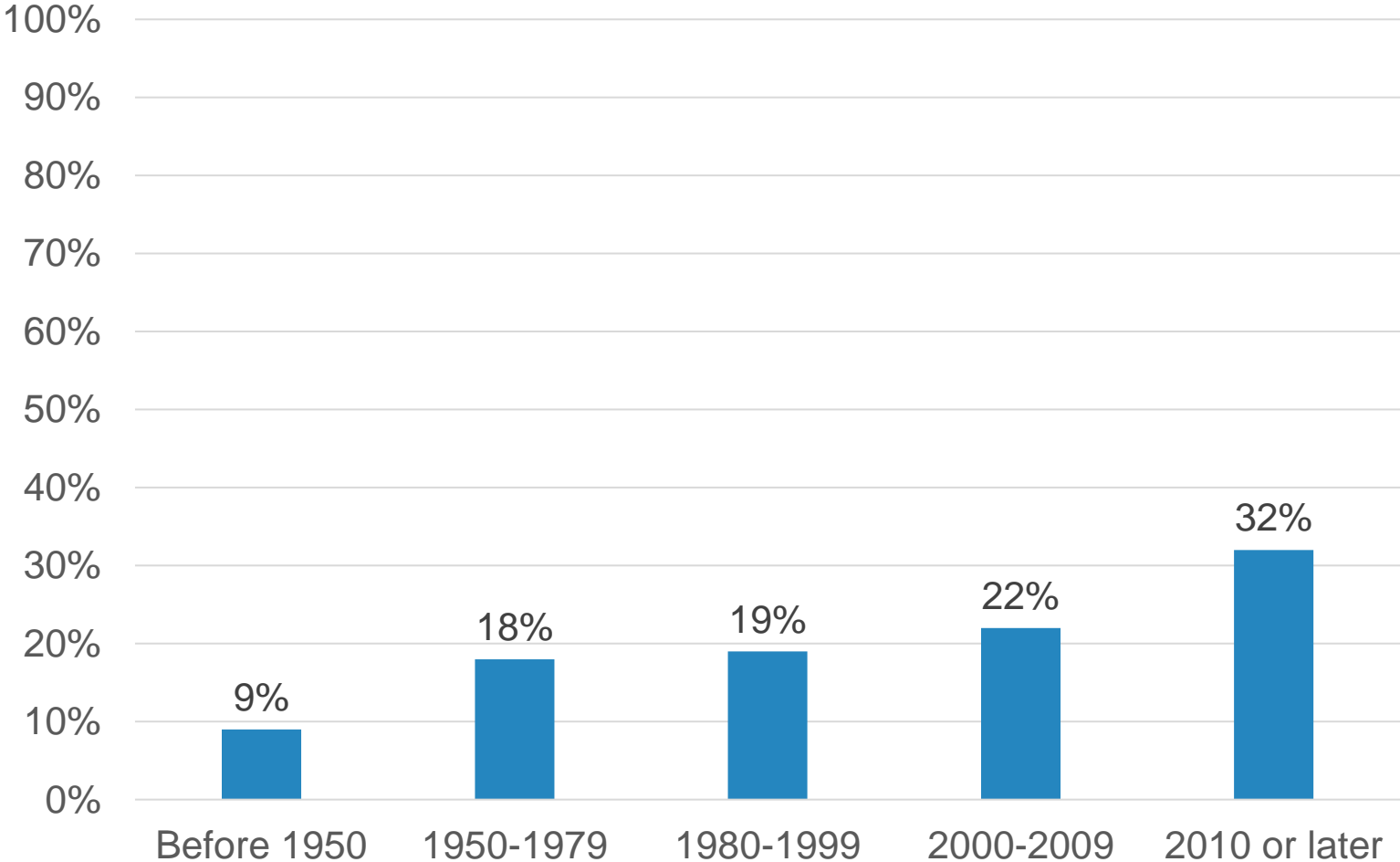


Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

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Q5: "In what State does your church meet?" n=654

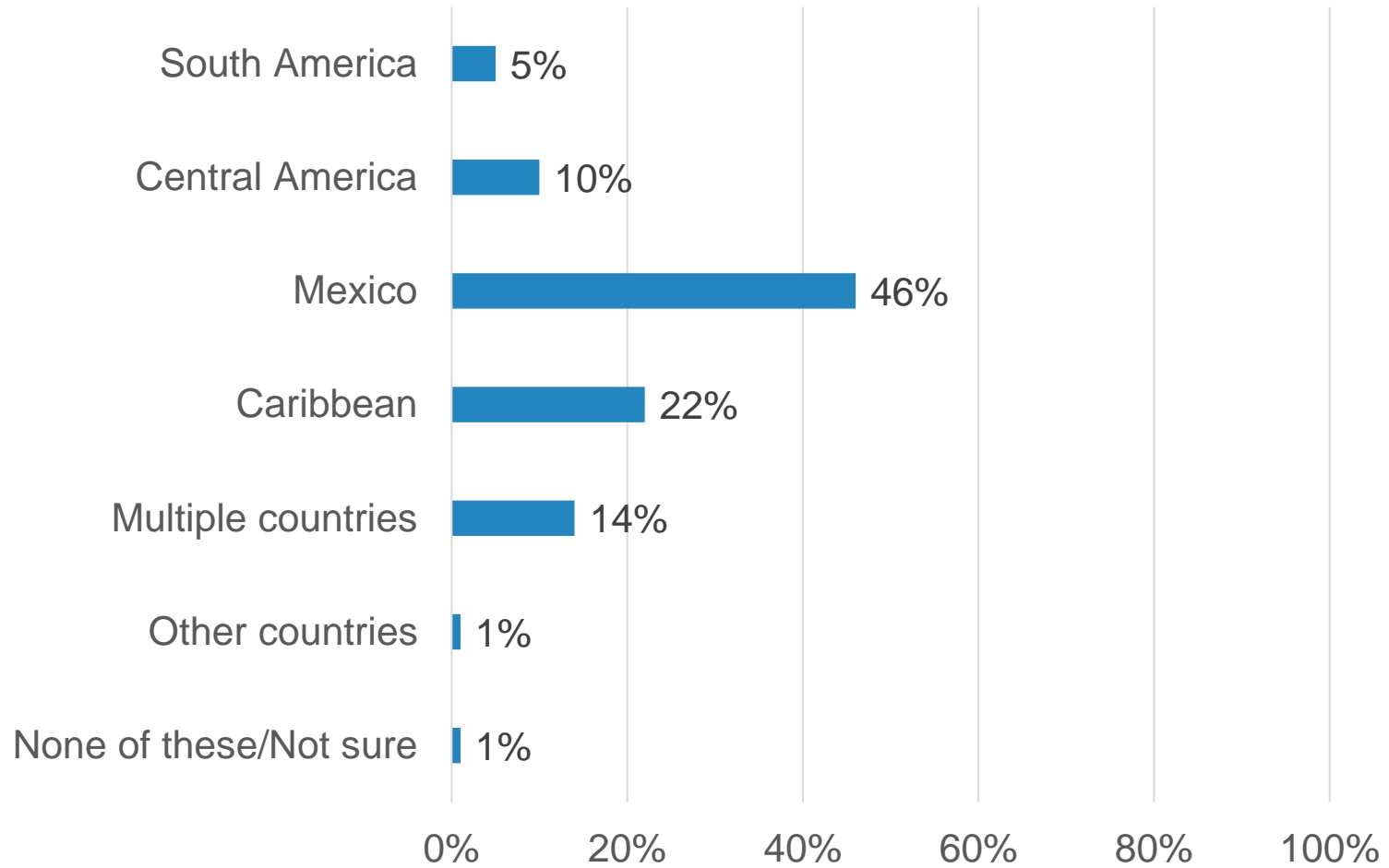
# 54% of participating congregations were established in 2000 or later



Lifeway research

Q11: "In what year was your church established? (If you are not sure, please give your best estimate.)" n=689

# 46% say their congregation's origin is Mexico



Lifeway research

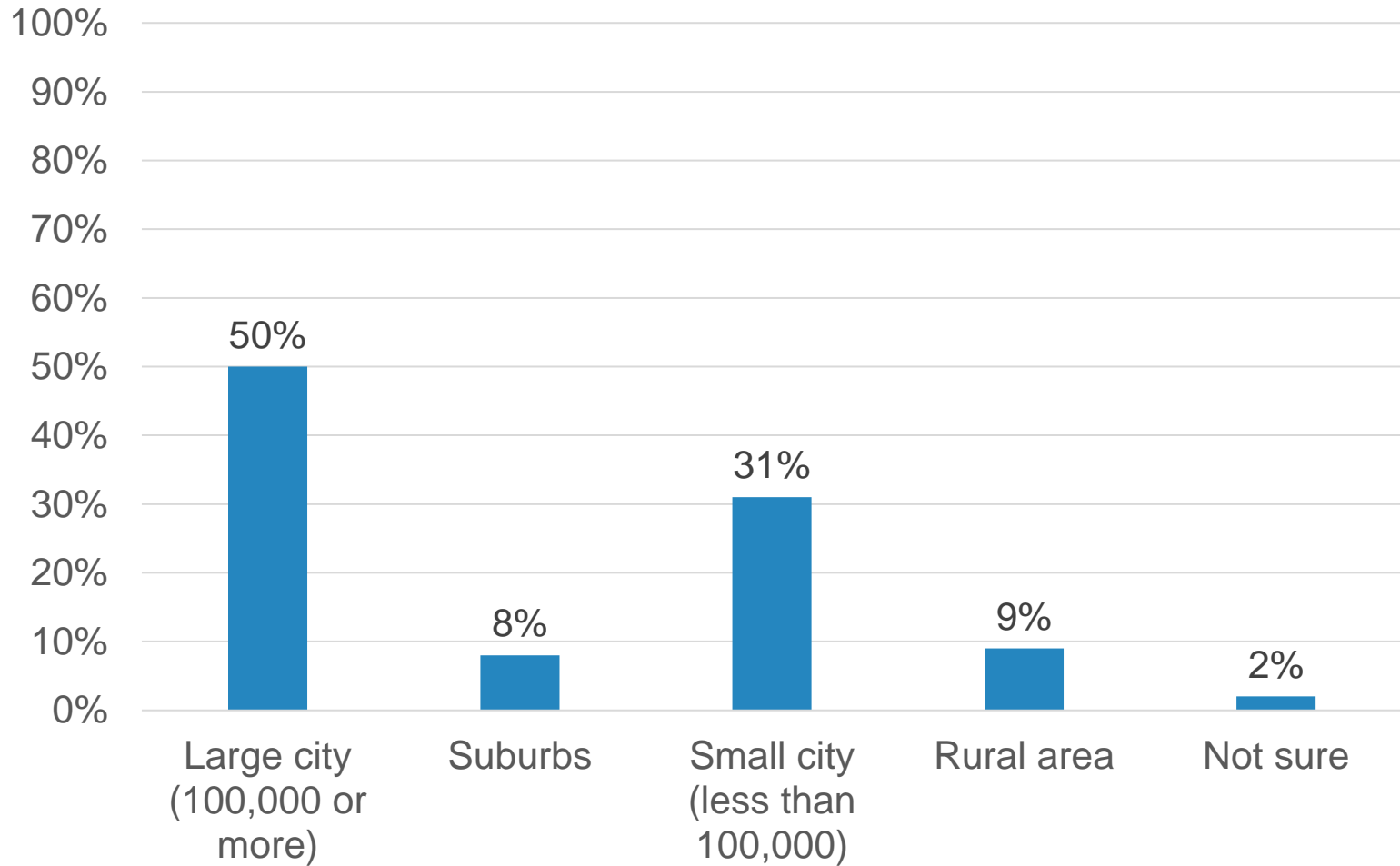
# Current immigrant breakdown of participating congregations (Means)

1 <sup>st</sup> Gen	Born outside of the United States	58%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen	Were born in the United States, but have parents who were born outside of the United States	24%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Gen+	Were born in the United States and so were their parents	17%

# Current age breakdown of participating congregations (Means)

Under 18	18%
Ages 18 to 29	16%
Ages 30 to 49	38%
Ages 50 or older	28%

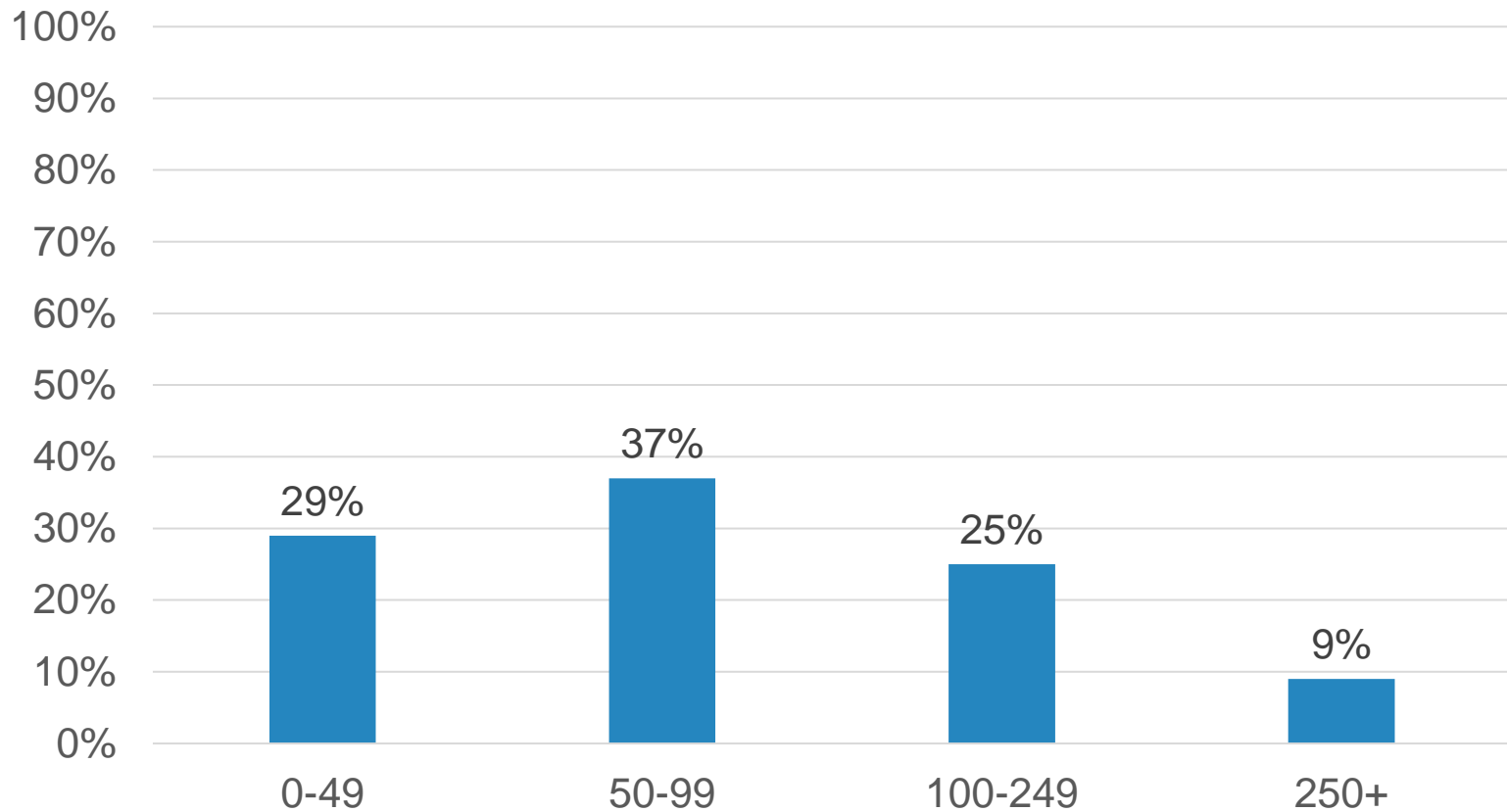
# 58% are located in large cities or suburbs



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Q15: "Which of the following best represents where your church is located? (Select One)" n=692

# Current average attendance



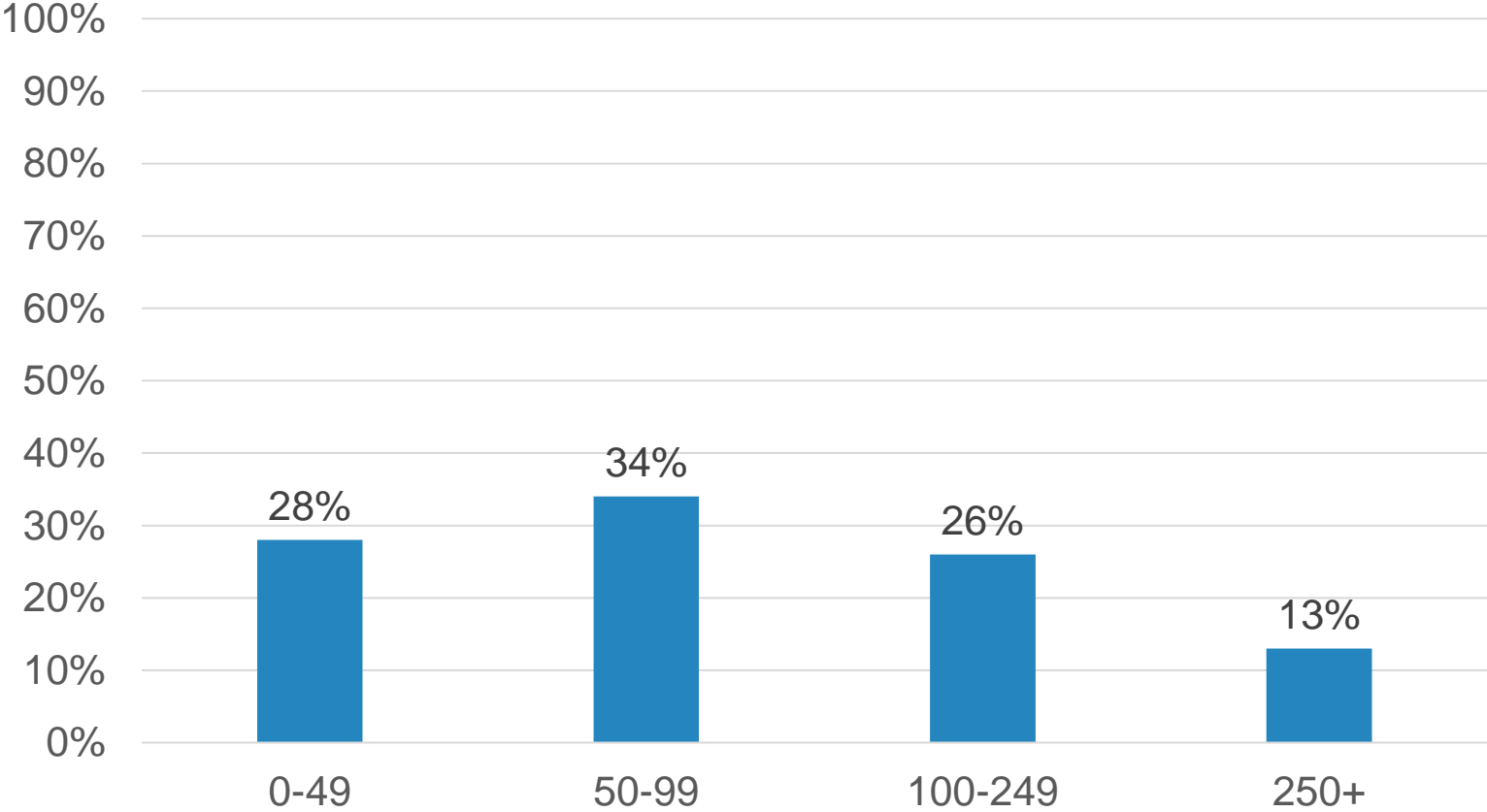
Mean attendance: 115

Median attendance: 70

**Lifeway**research

Q16: "What is your congregation's average worship attendance **in-person** on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" n=692

# Average attendance – January 2020



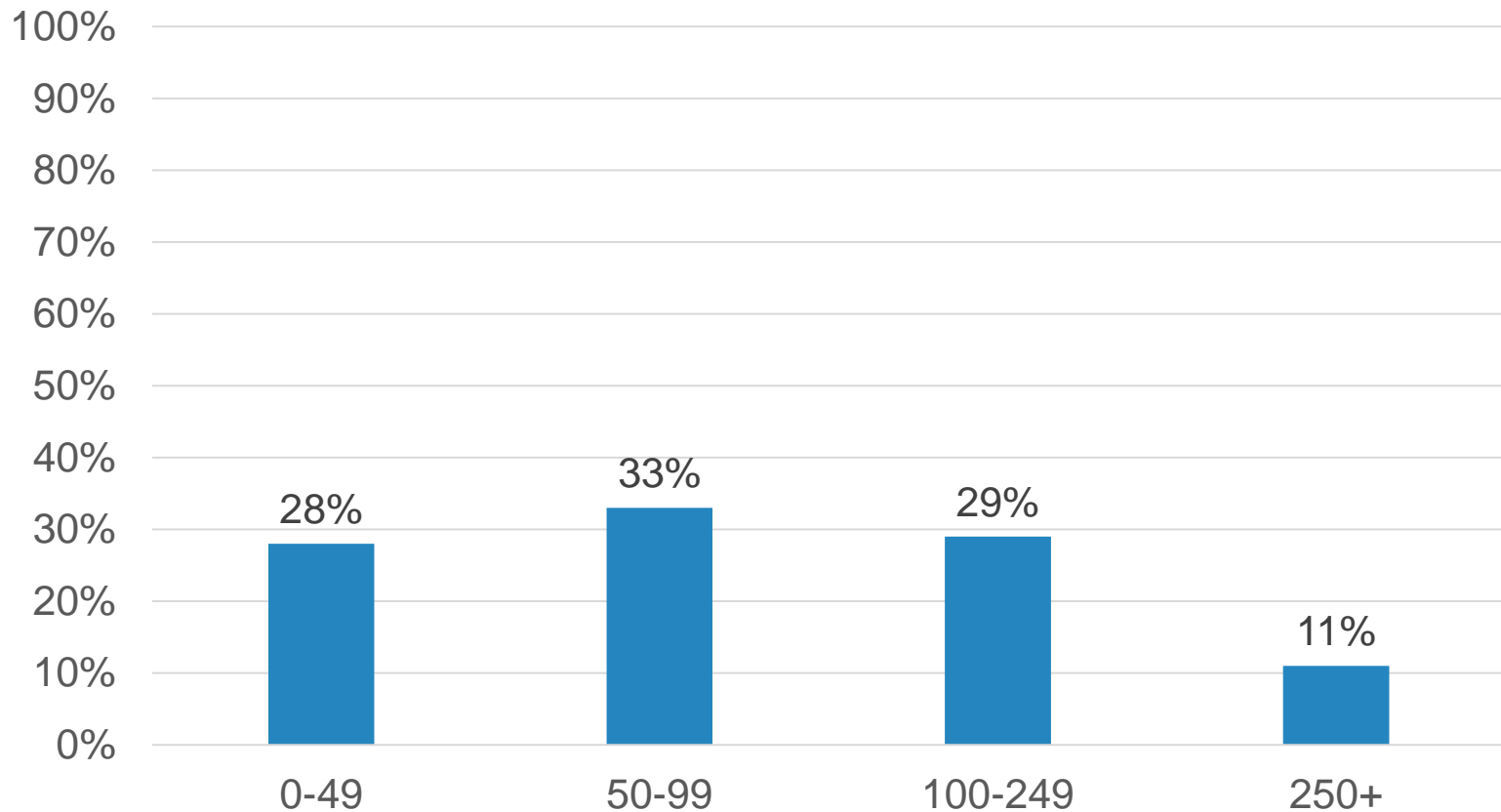
Mean attendance: 136  
Median attendance: 75

**Lifeway**research

Q17: “In January 2020 (before COVID-19), what was your congregation’s average worship attendance on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?” n=652



# Average attendance – Fall 2017



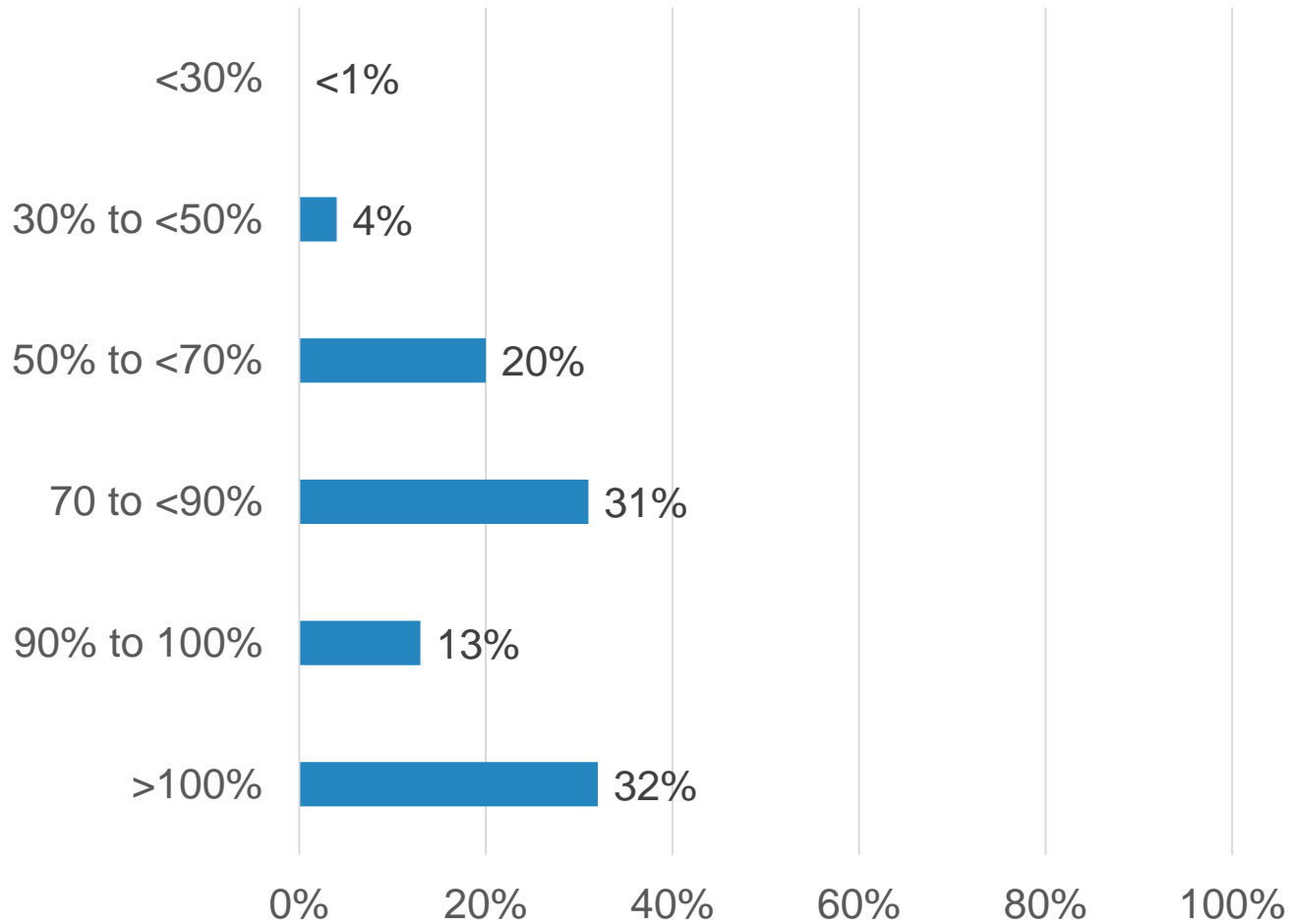
Mean attendance: 132

Median attendance : 75

**Lifeway**research

Q18: "Five years ago (Fall 2017), what was your congregation's average worship attendance on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" n=585

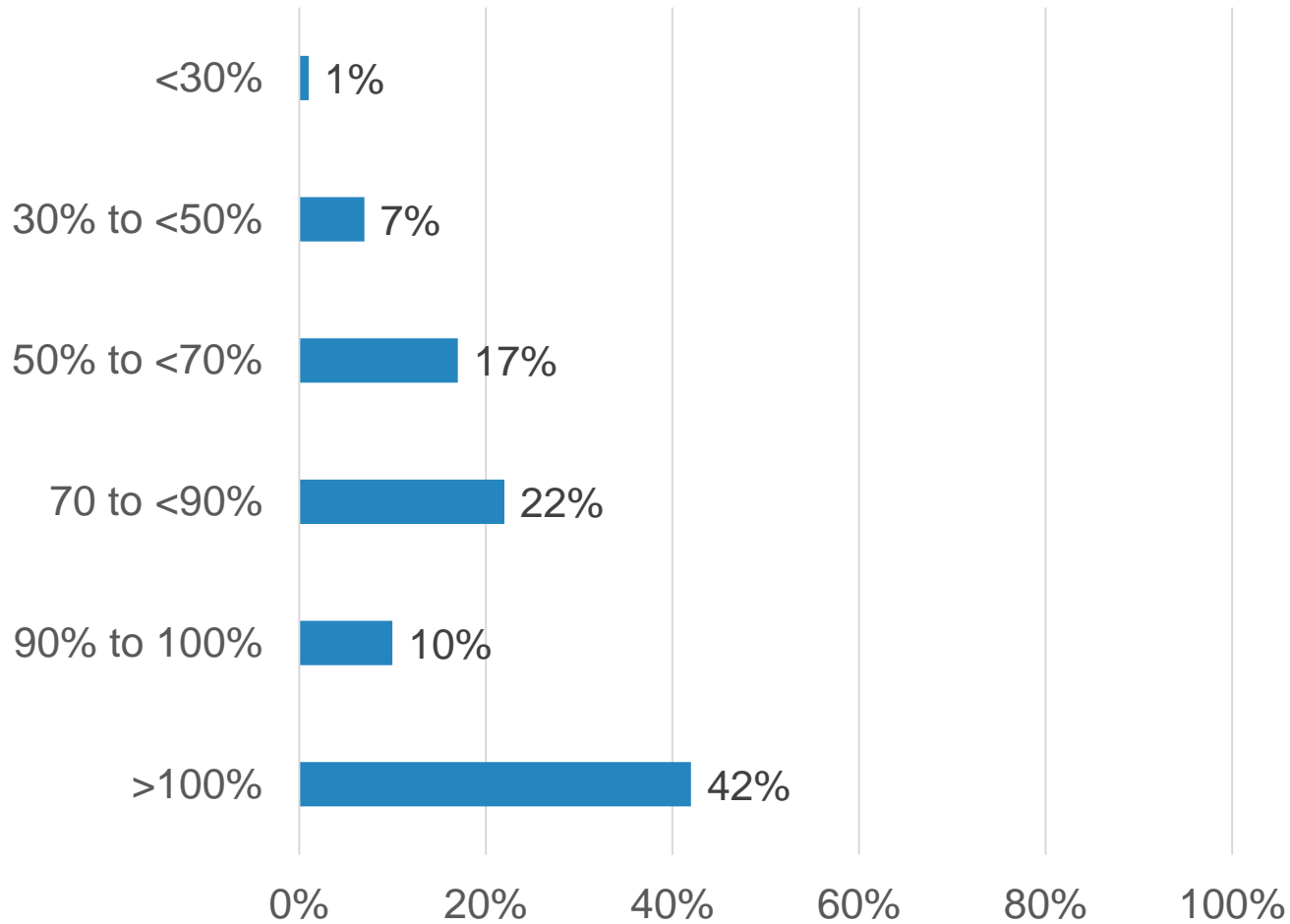
# Percent change in average worship attendance (Fall 2022 compared to Jan 2020)



**Lifeway**research

Q16/Q17: "What is your congregation's average worship attendance in-person on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" n=652

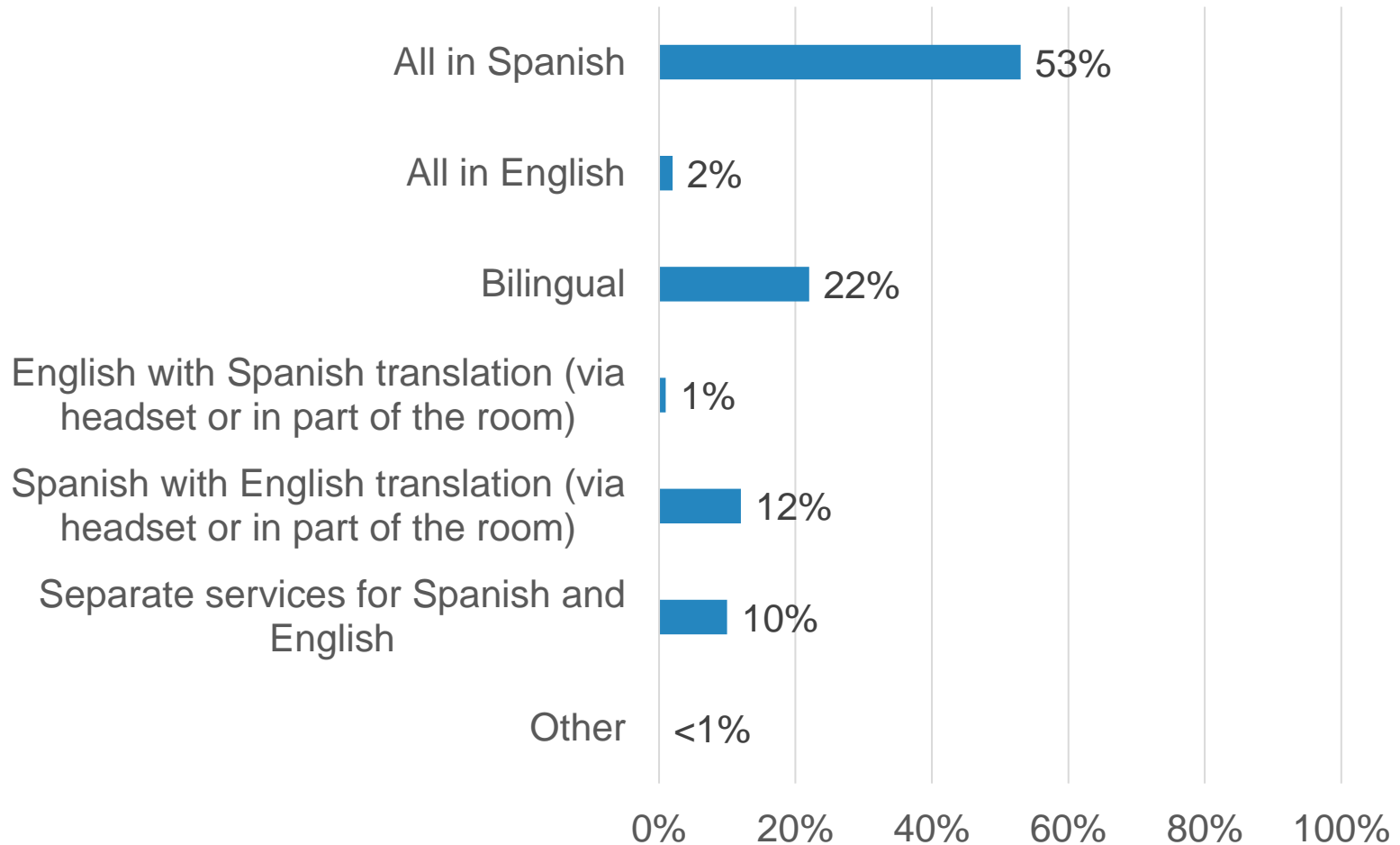
# Percent change in average worship attendance (Fall 2022 compared to Fall 2017)



**Lifeway**research

Q16/18: "What is your congregation's average worship attendance in-person on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" n=578

# 53% conduct worship services in Spanish; 22% conduct bilingual services



# More Acculturated $\geq 5$ Less Acculturated $< 5$

**Acculturation Score = Immigration Score + Language Score**

## **Immigration Score**

Congregation % Born Outside US \*1

Congregation % Born in US but parent(s) born outside US\*3

Congregation % Born in US and both parents born in US\*5

SUM of the above divided by 100

## **Language Score**

Worship service(s) All in Spanish = 1

Bilingual = 3

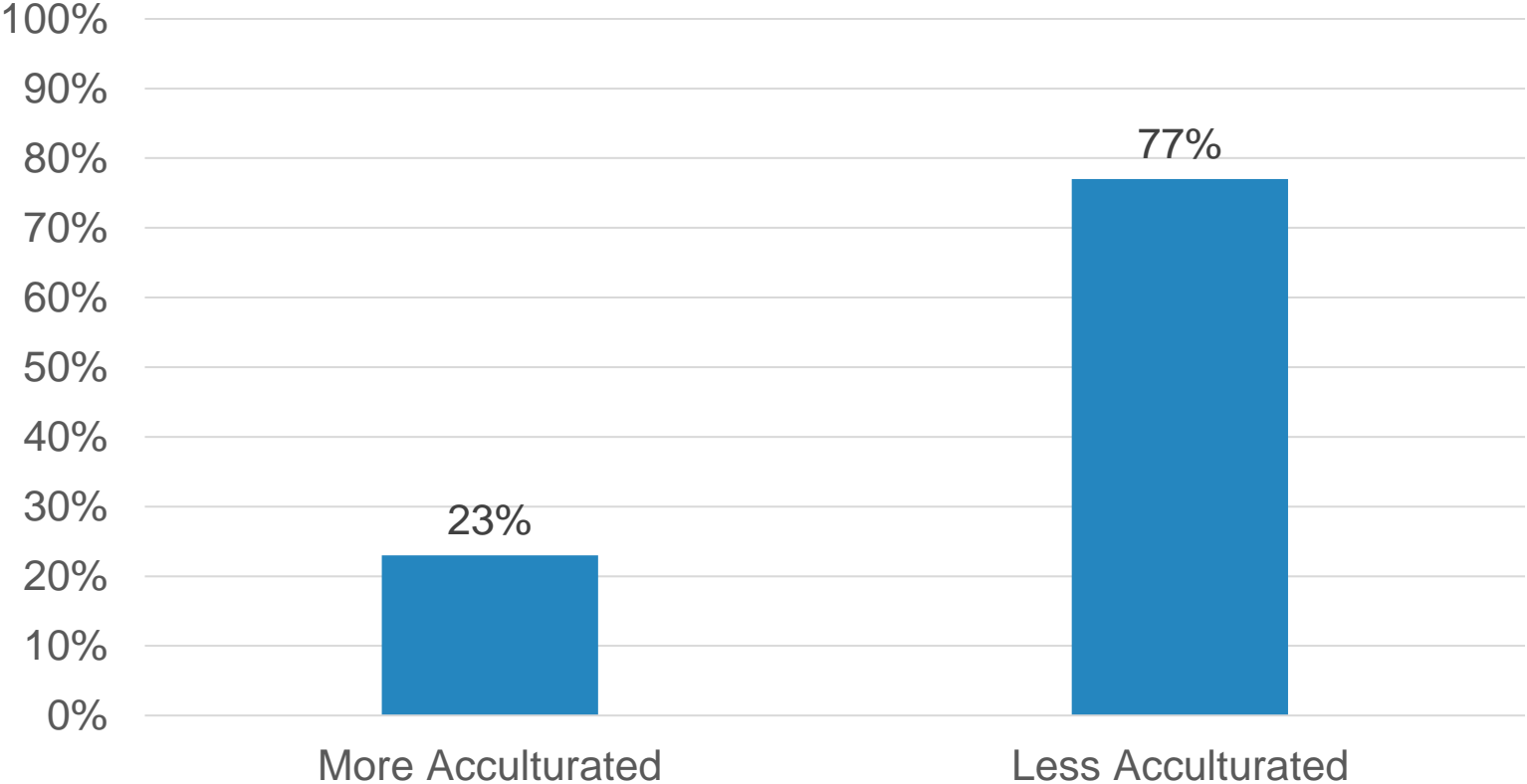
All in English =5

English with Spanish translation (via headset or in part of the room) =4

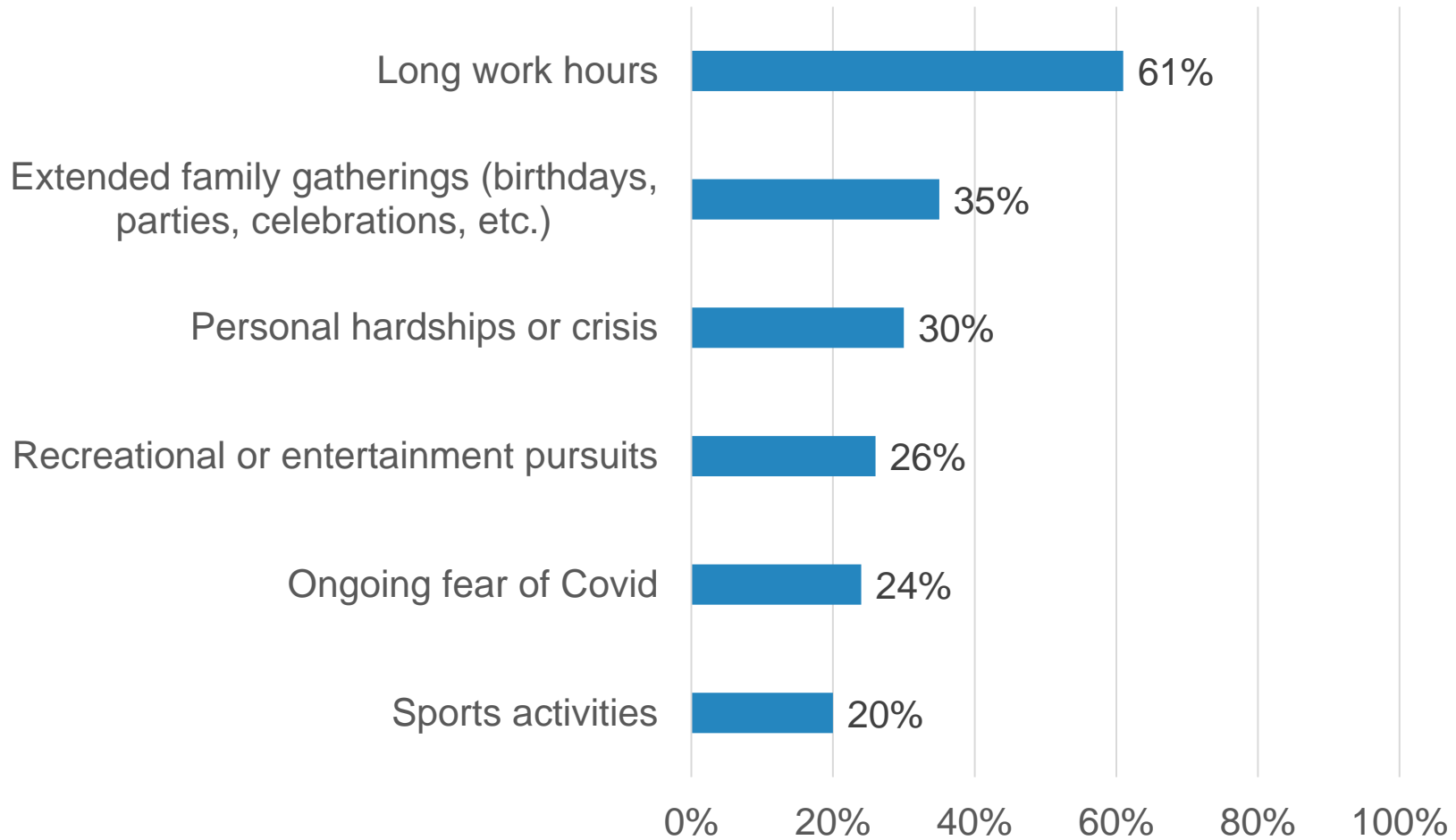
Spanish with English translation (via headset or in part of the room) =2

Separate services for English and Spanish=2

# Hispanic congregations are more than 3 times as likely to be Less Acculturated than More Acculturated

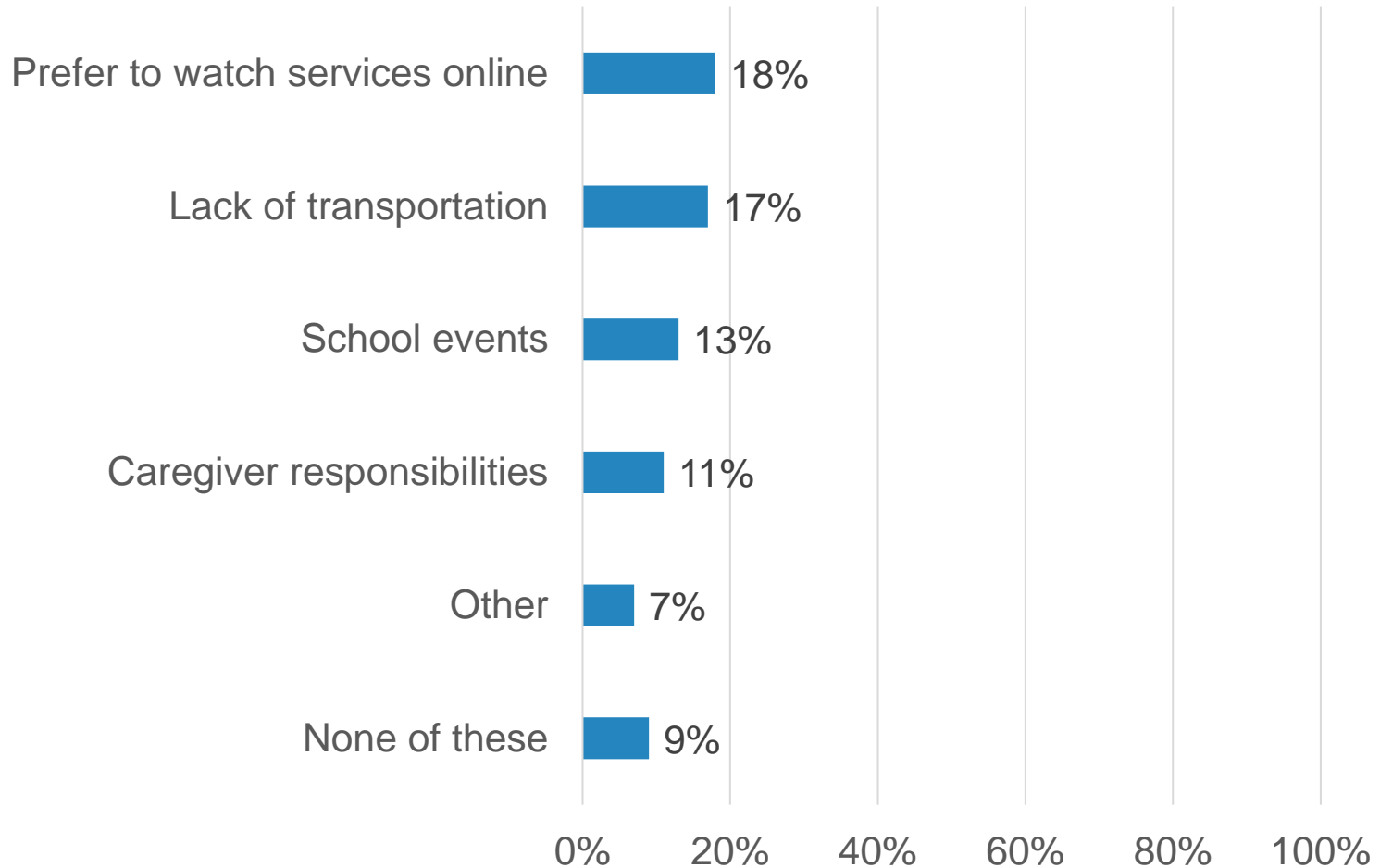


# “What keeps adults in your congregation from participating more regularly in the activities of your church?”



**Lifeway** research

# “What keeps adults in your congregation from participating more regularly in the activities of your church?” CONTINUED



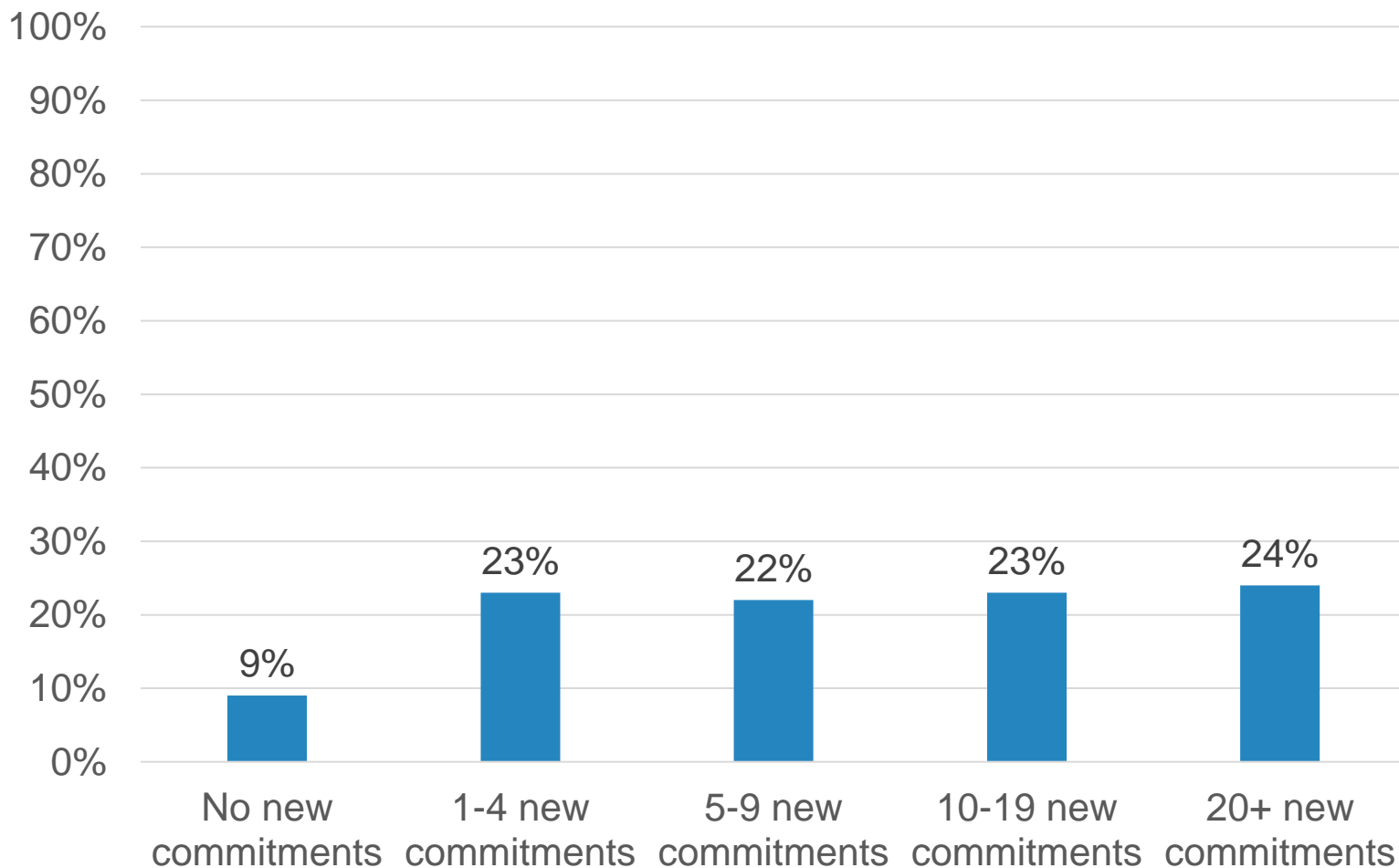
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# Evangelism

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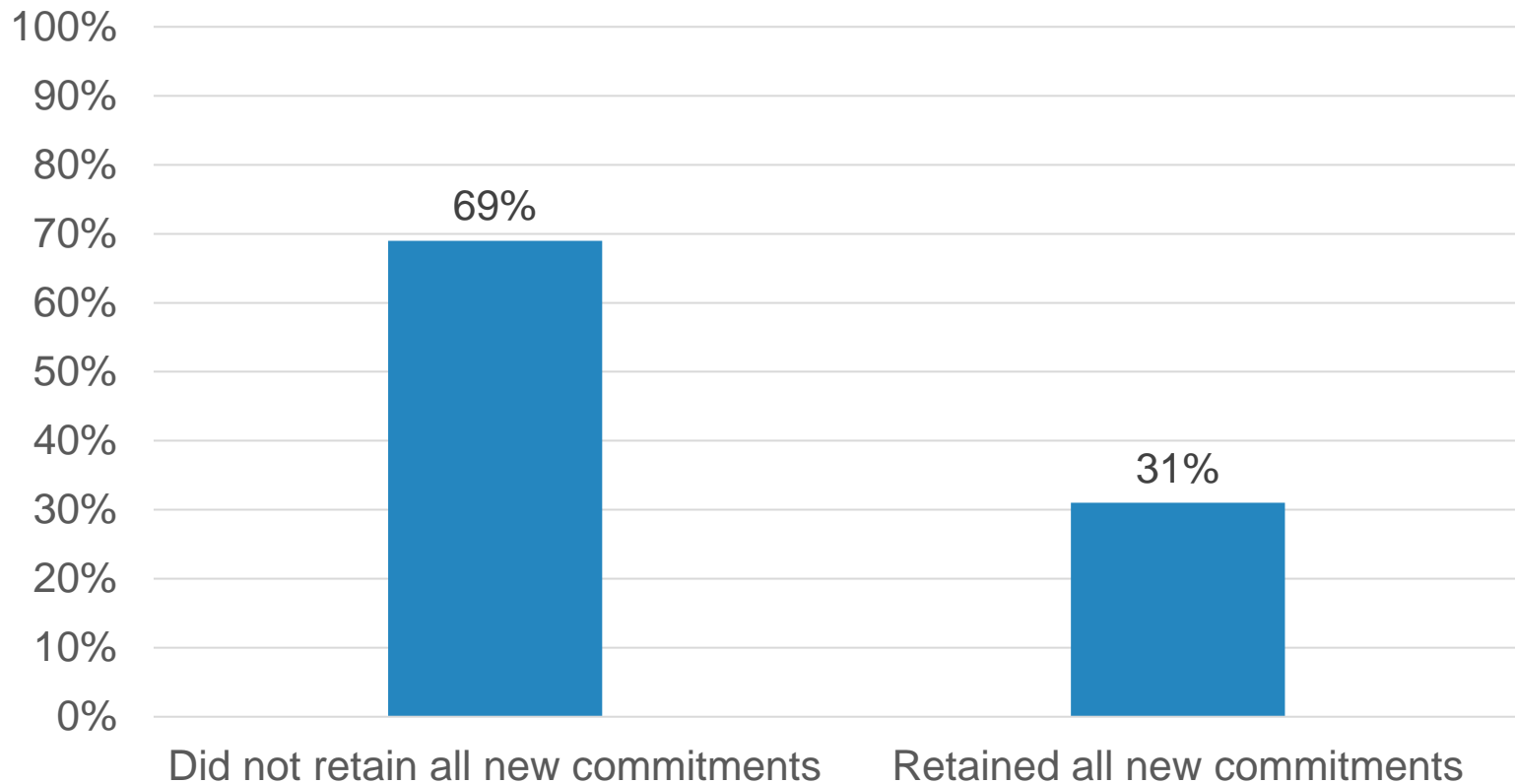
# 47% say 10 or more people have indicated a new commitment to Christ through their congregation in the past year



Lifeway research

Q21: "In the past 12 months, how many people have indicated a new commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior through your congregation?" n= 692

# On average, 73% of new commitments became active in the life of the church



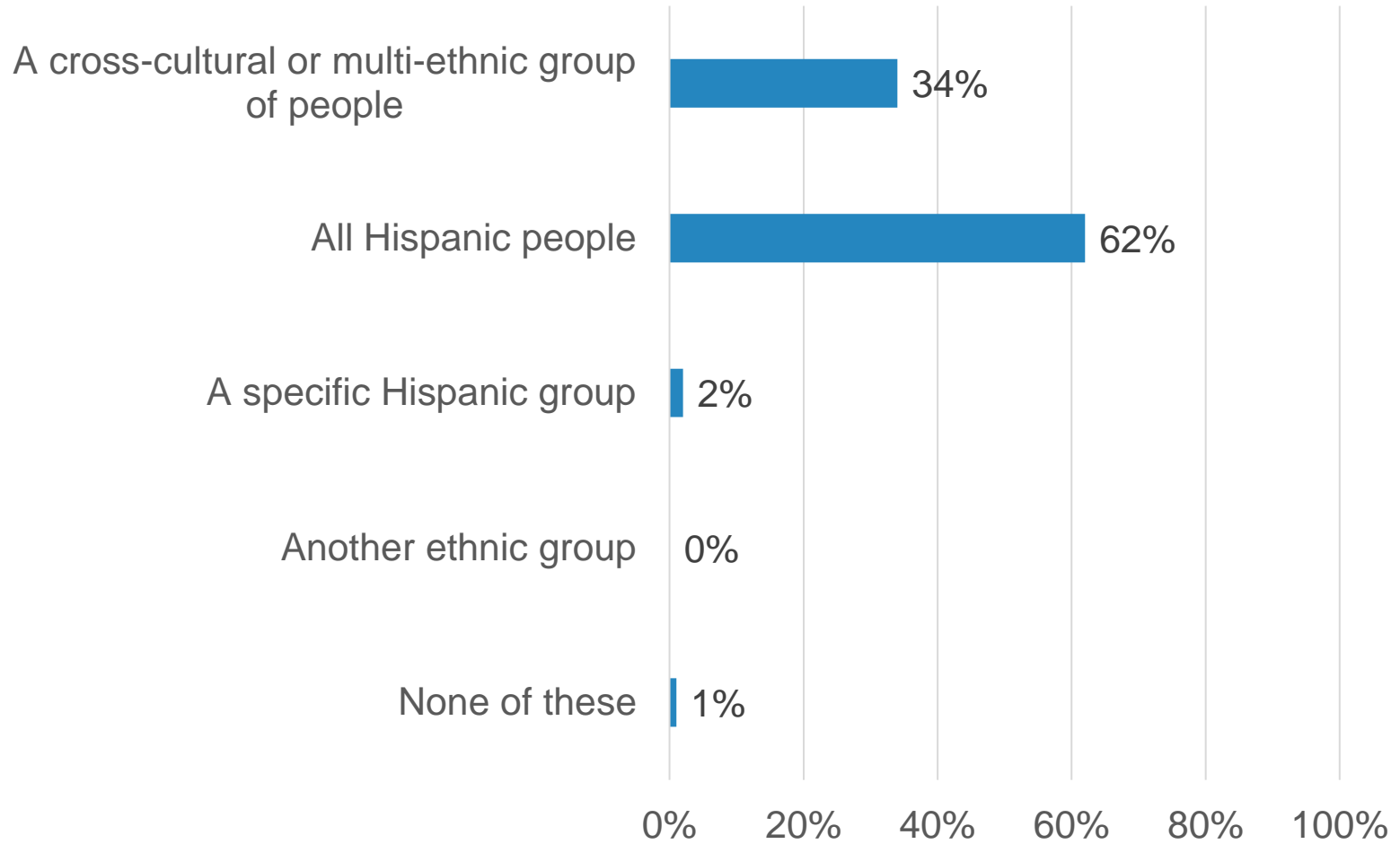
Mean percentage: 73%

Median percentage: 67%

**Lifeway**research

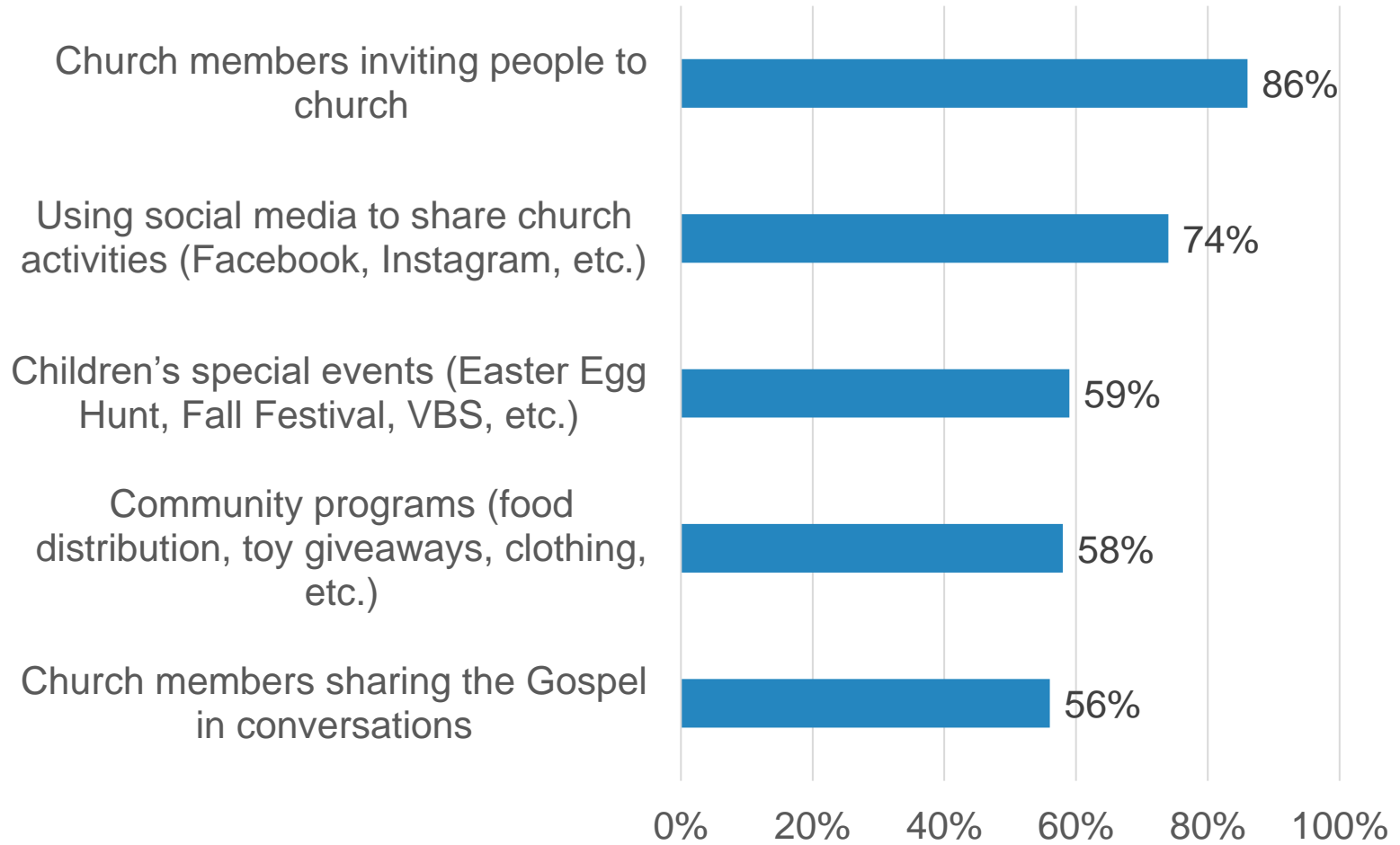
Q22: "Among these new commitments, how many ALSO became active in the life of your church?" n=616

# 62% say their church has intentionally sought to reach all Hispanic people



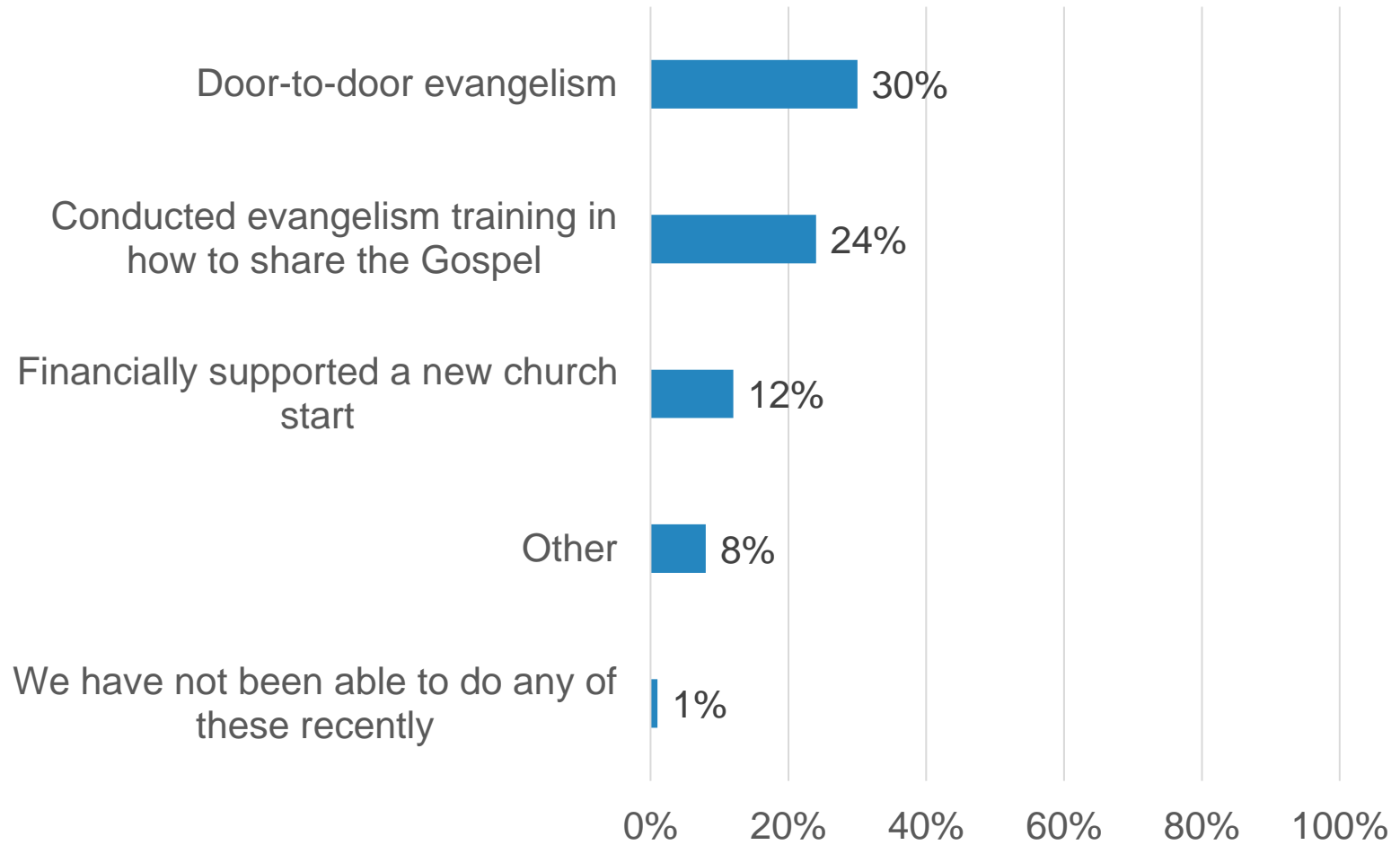
Lifeway research

# “What outreach activities has your church used in the last year to try to share the Gospel with your community?”



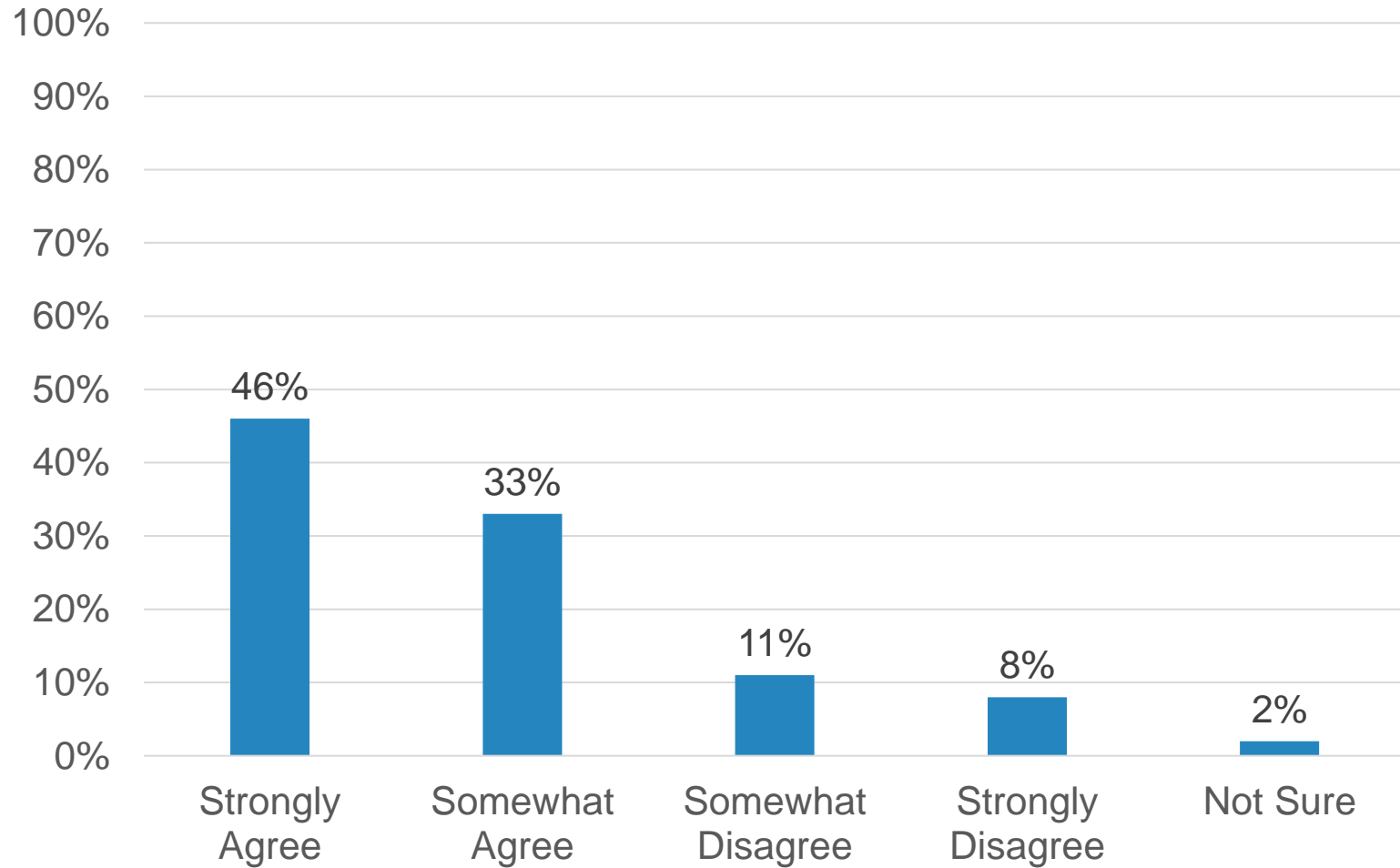
**Lifeway** research

# “What outreach activities has your church used in the last year to try to share the Gospel with your community?” CONTINUED



Lifeway research

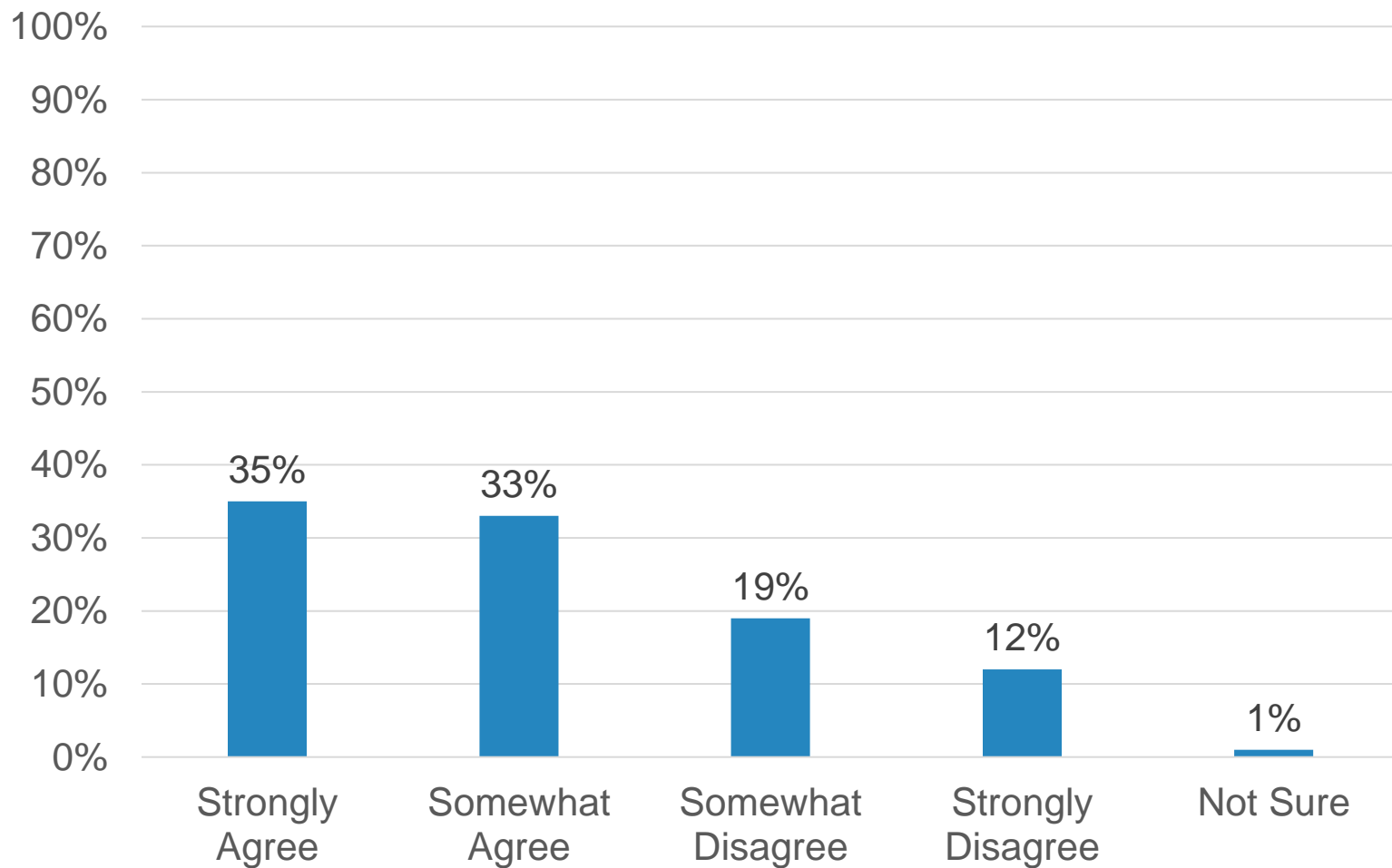
# 79% agree they regularly schedule opportunities for members to go out and share the Gospel



Lifeway research

Q25: "Our church regularly schedules opportunities for members to go out and share the Gospel" n=692

# 69% agree their church has the financial resources it needs to support ministry

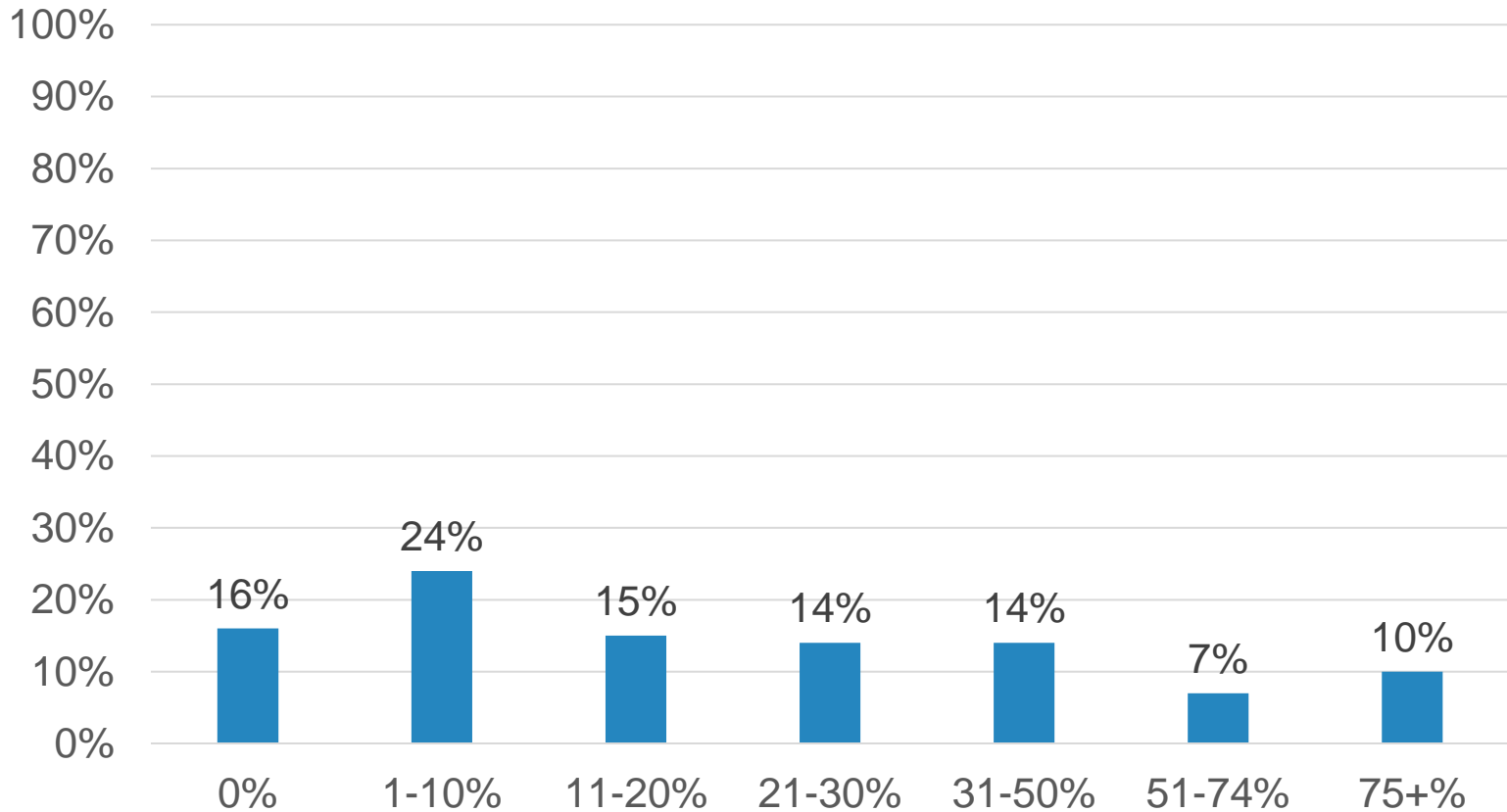


**Lifeway**research

Q26: "Our congregation always has the financial resources we need to support essential ministry." n=692



# Percentage of weekend adult worship attendance participating in outreach activities



Mean percentage: 27%

Median percentage: 20%

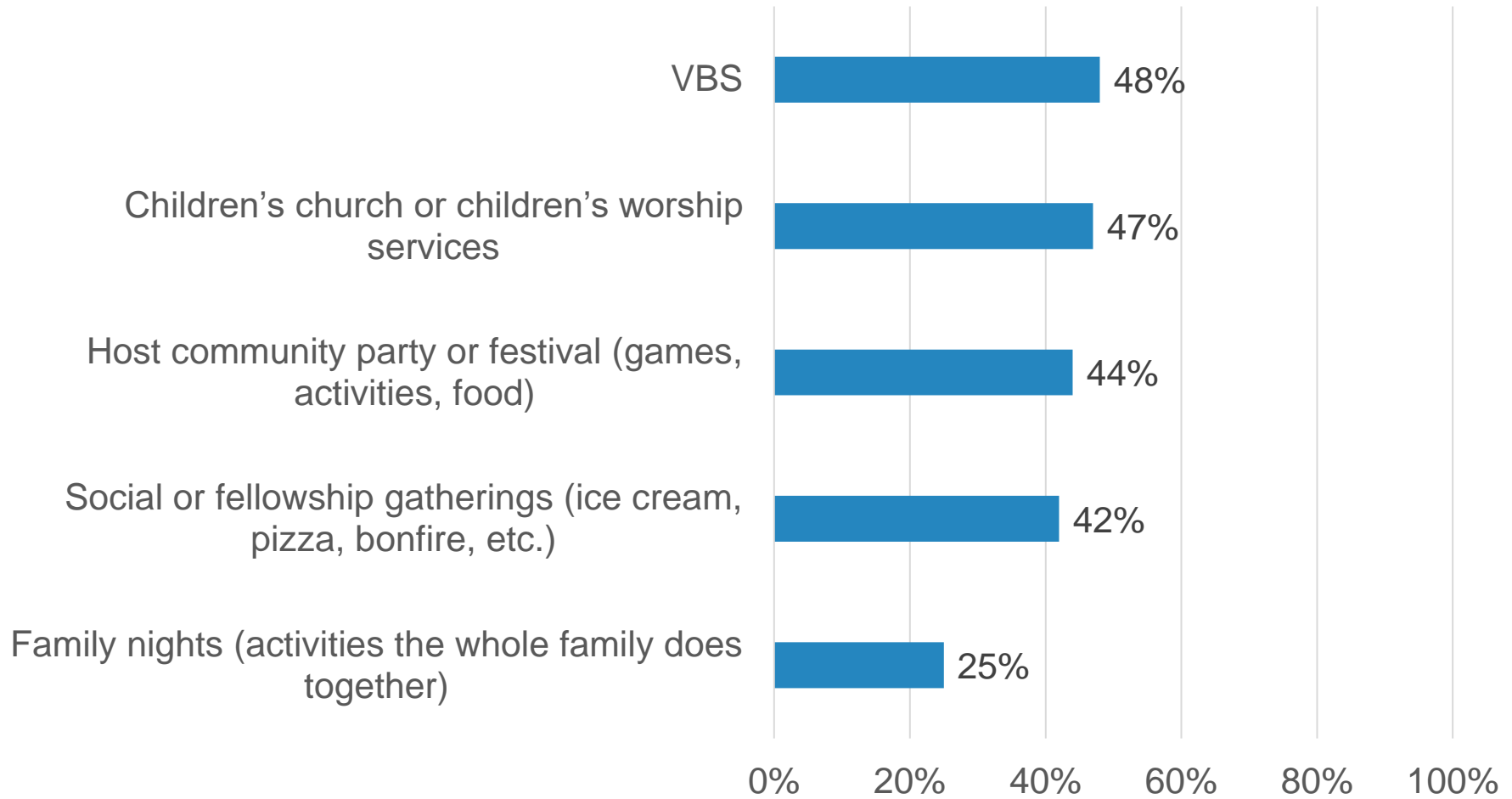
**Lifeway** research

Q39: "What percent of your current **adult** weekend worship attendance typically participates in formal outreach activities? (Enter 0 if none)" n=692

# Reaching the Next Generation

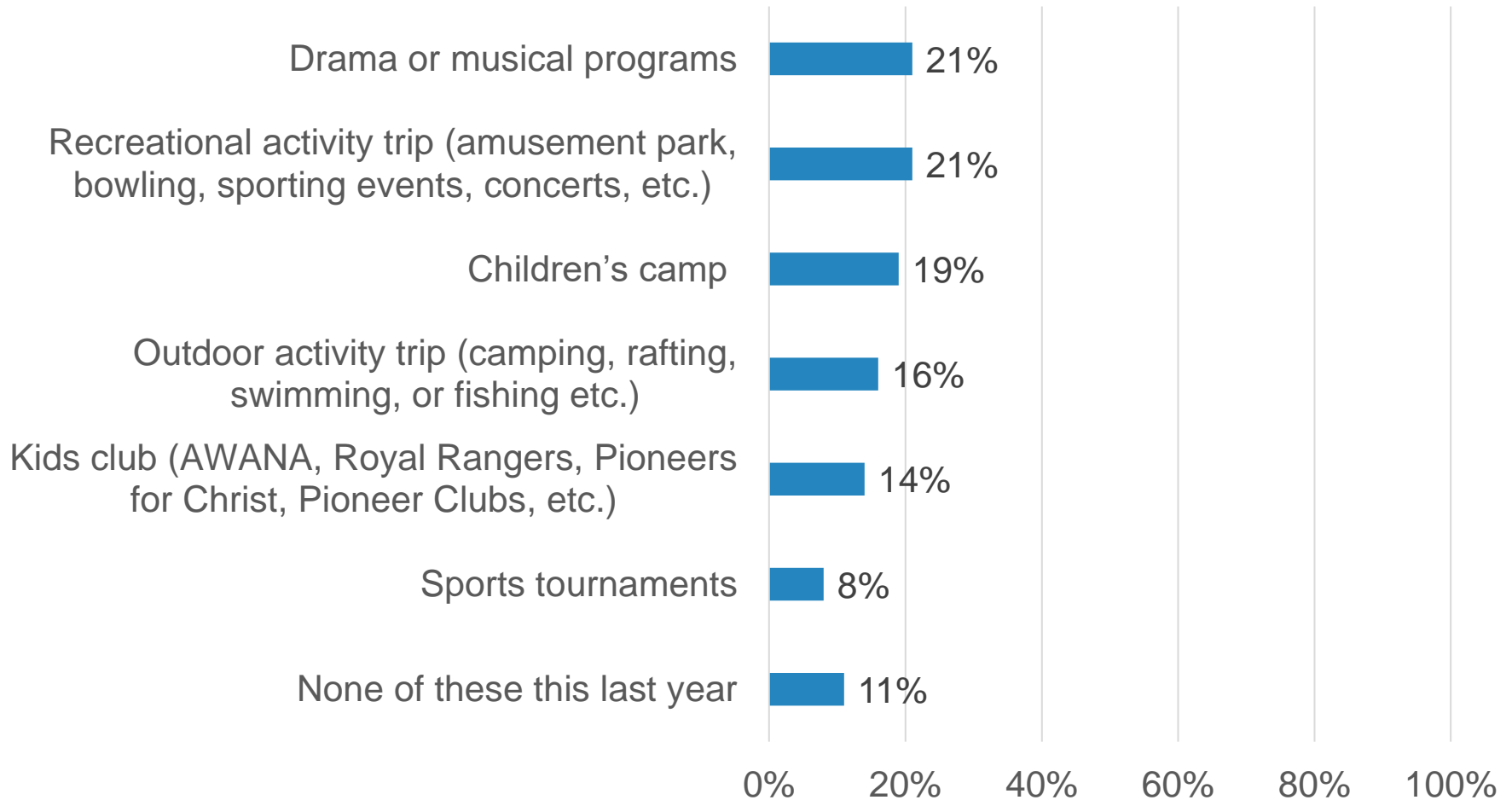
Lifeway **research**

# “Which of the following activities has your church conducted in the last year to reach children?”

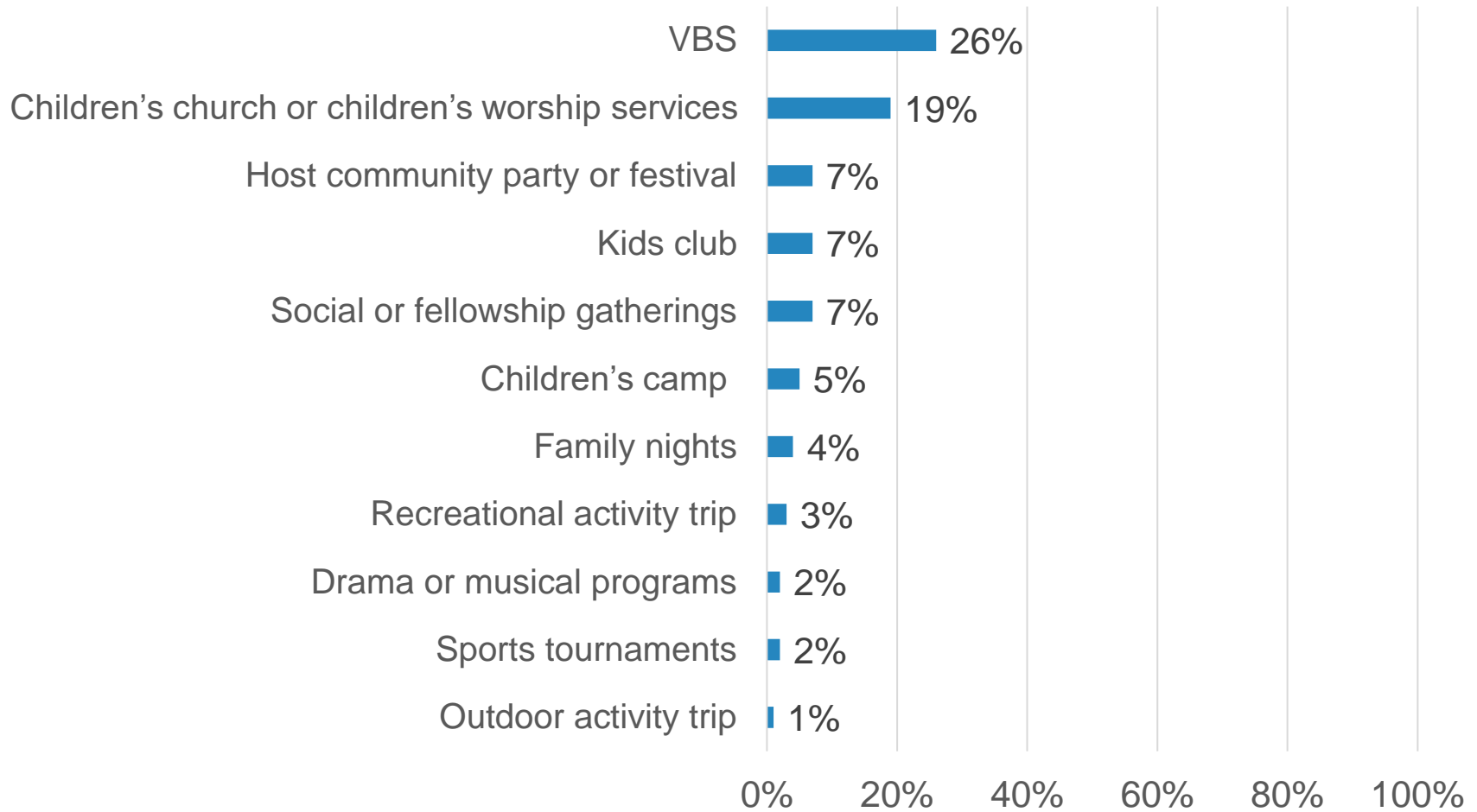


Lifeway research

# “Which of the following activities has your church conducted in the last year to reach children?” CONTINUED



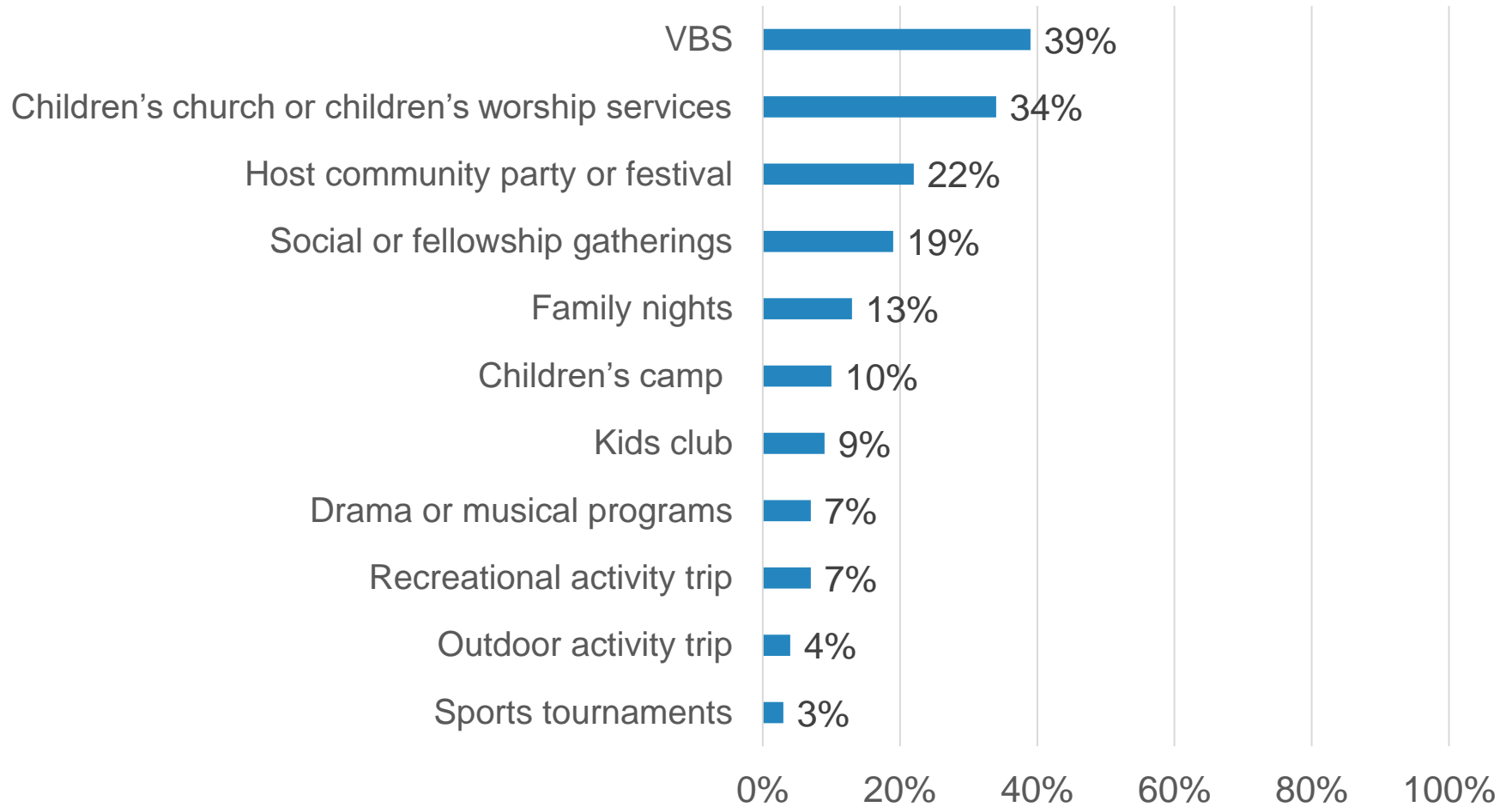
# Top Choice Children's Activities



Lifeway research

Q28: "Among the **children's** activities you have conducted in the last year, please **rank the top 2** that have been most effective at fostering meaningful spiritual growth? (Enter "1" for the most effective and "2" for the second most effective)" n=610

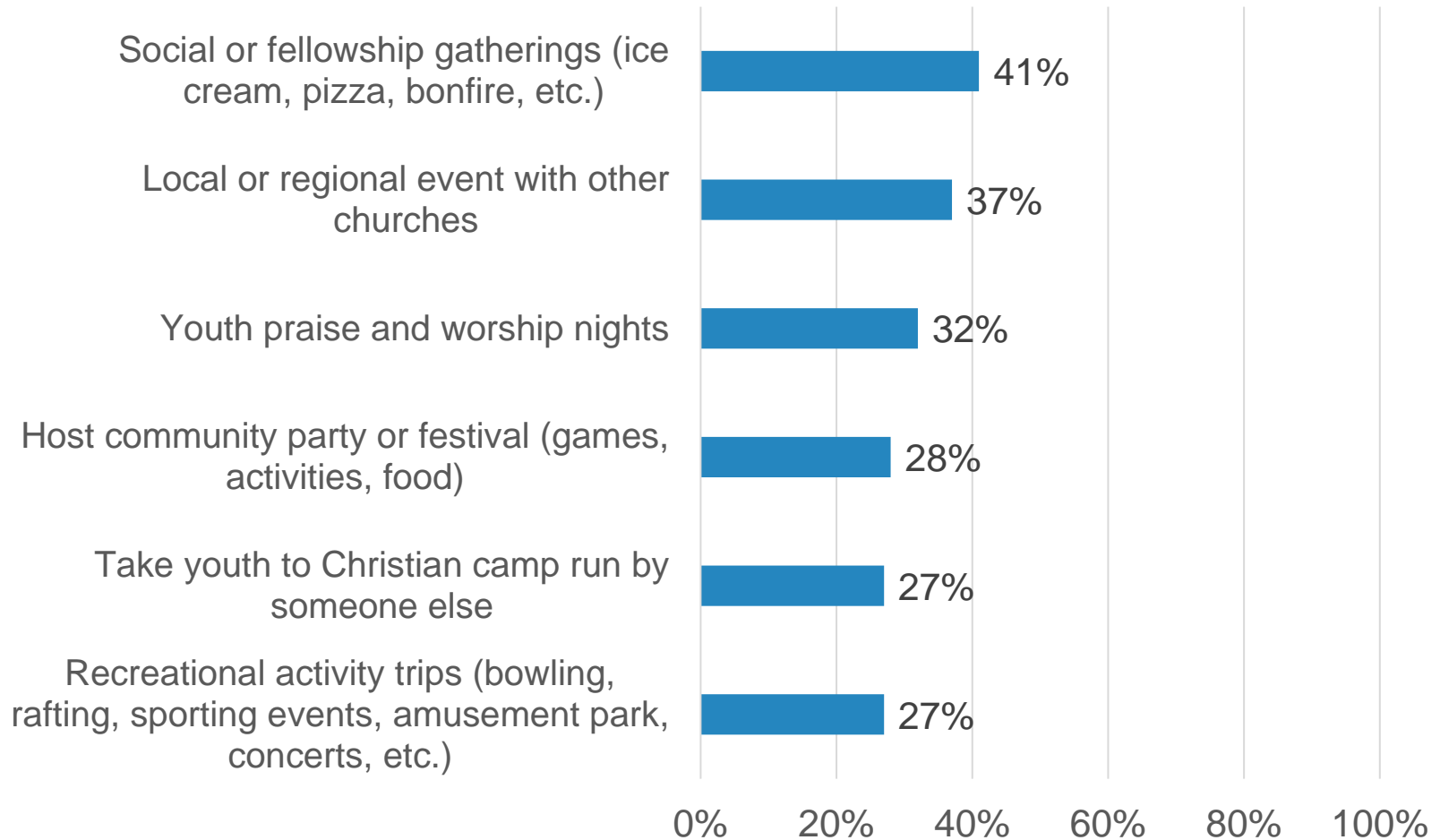
# Top Two Children's Activities



Lifeway research

Q28: "Among the **children's** activities you have conducted in the last year, please **rank the top 2** that have been most effective at fostering meaningful spiritual growth? (Enter "1" for the most effective and "2" for the second most effective)" n=610

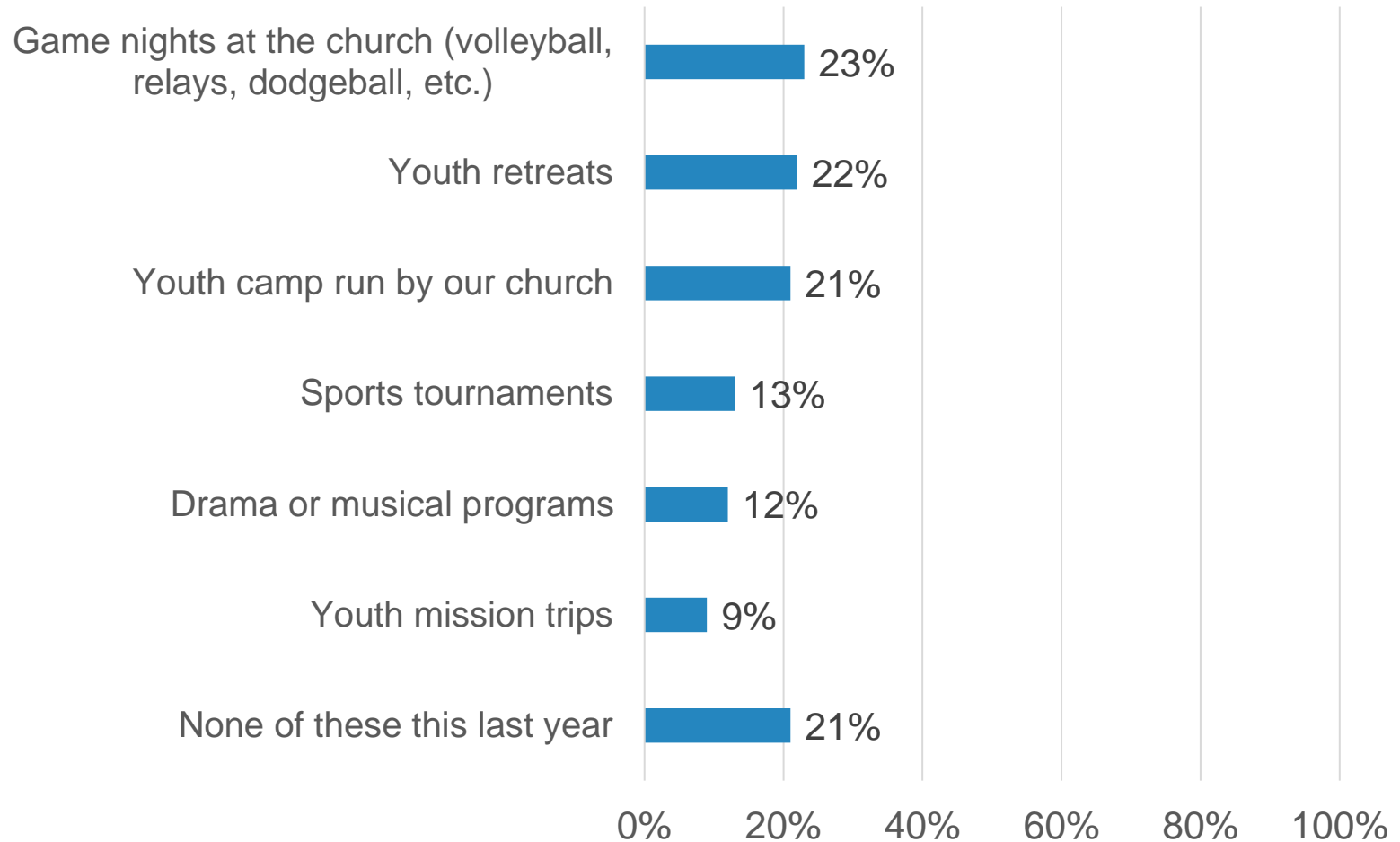
# “Which of the following activities has your church conducted in the last year to reach youth?”



Lifeway research

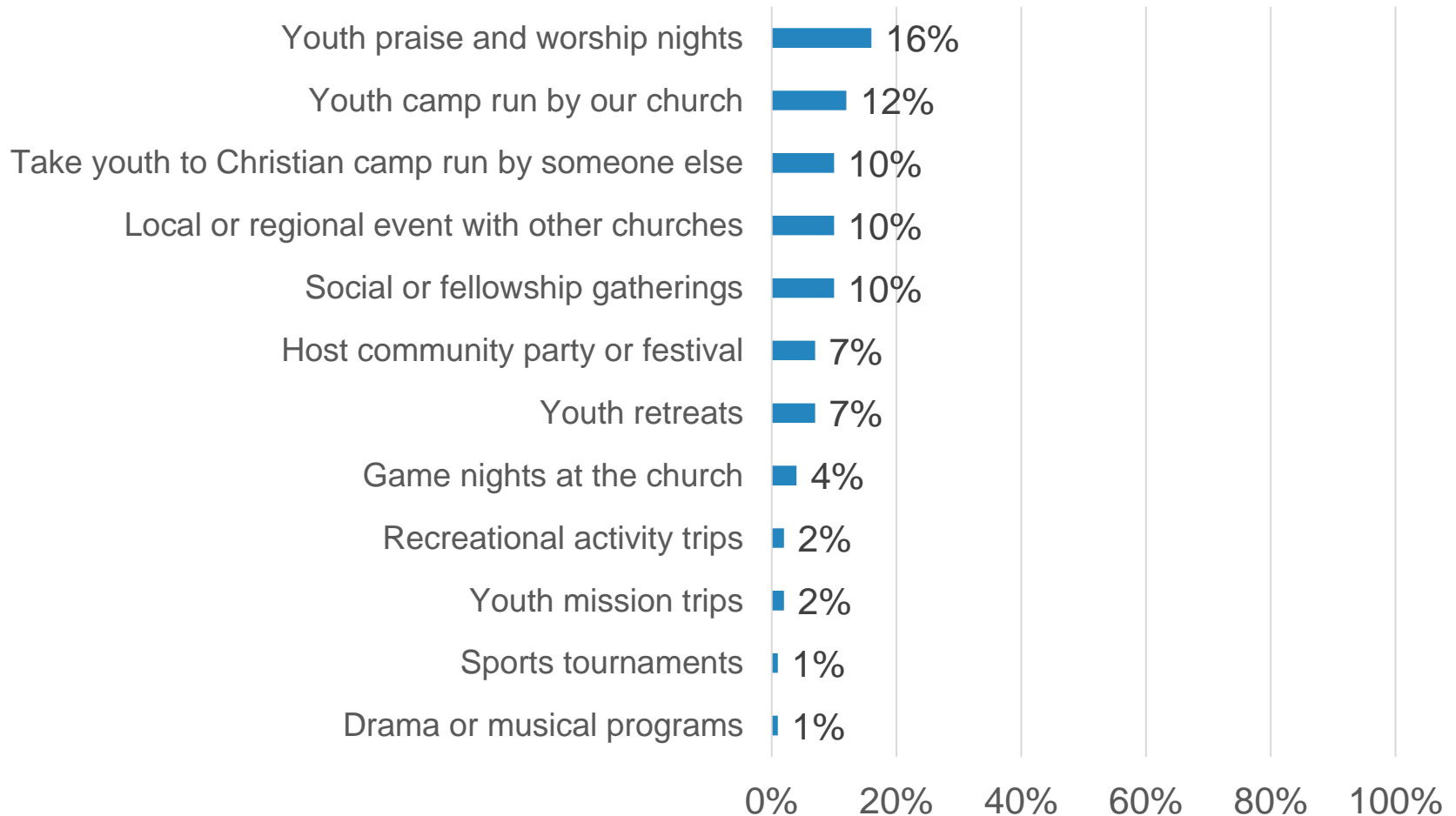
Q29: “Which of the following activities has your church conducted in the last year to reach youth? (Select all that apply)” n=692

# “Which of the following activities has your church conducted in the last year to reach youth?” CONTINUED





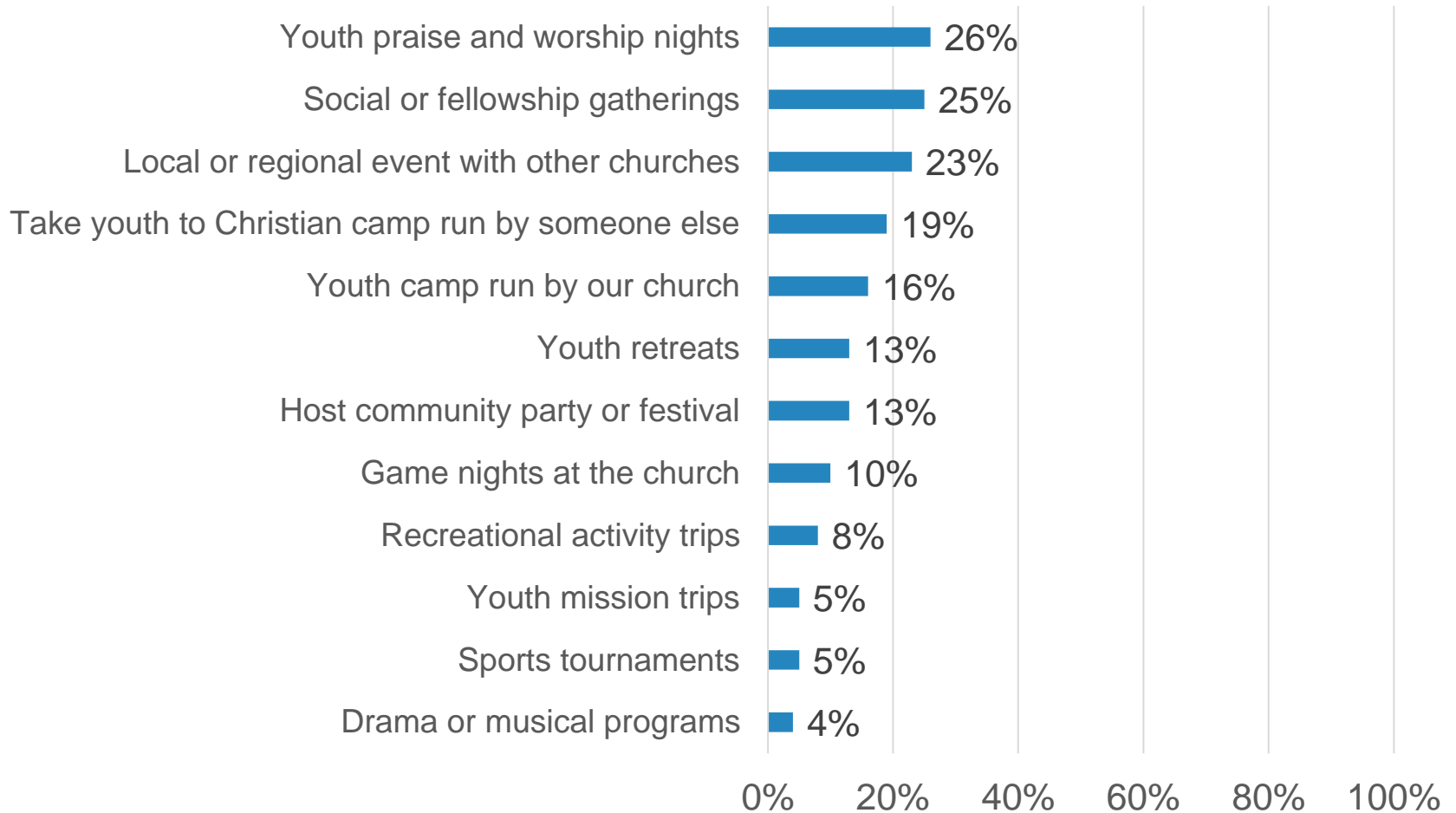
# Top Choice Youth Activities



Lifeway research

Q30: "Among the **youth** activities you have conducted in the last year, please **rank the top 2** that have been most effective at fostering meaningful spiritual growth? (Enter "1" for the most effective and "2" for the second most effective)" n=547

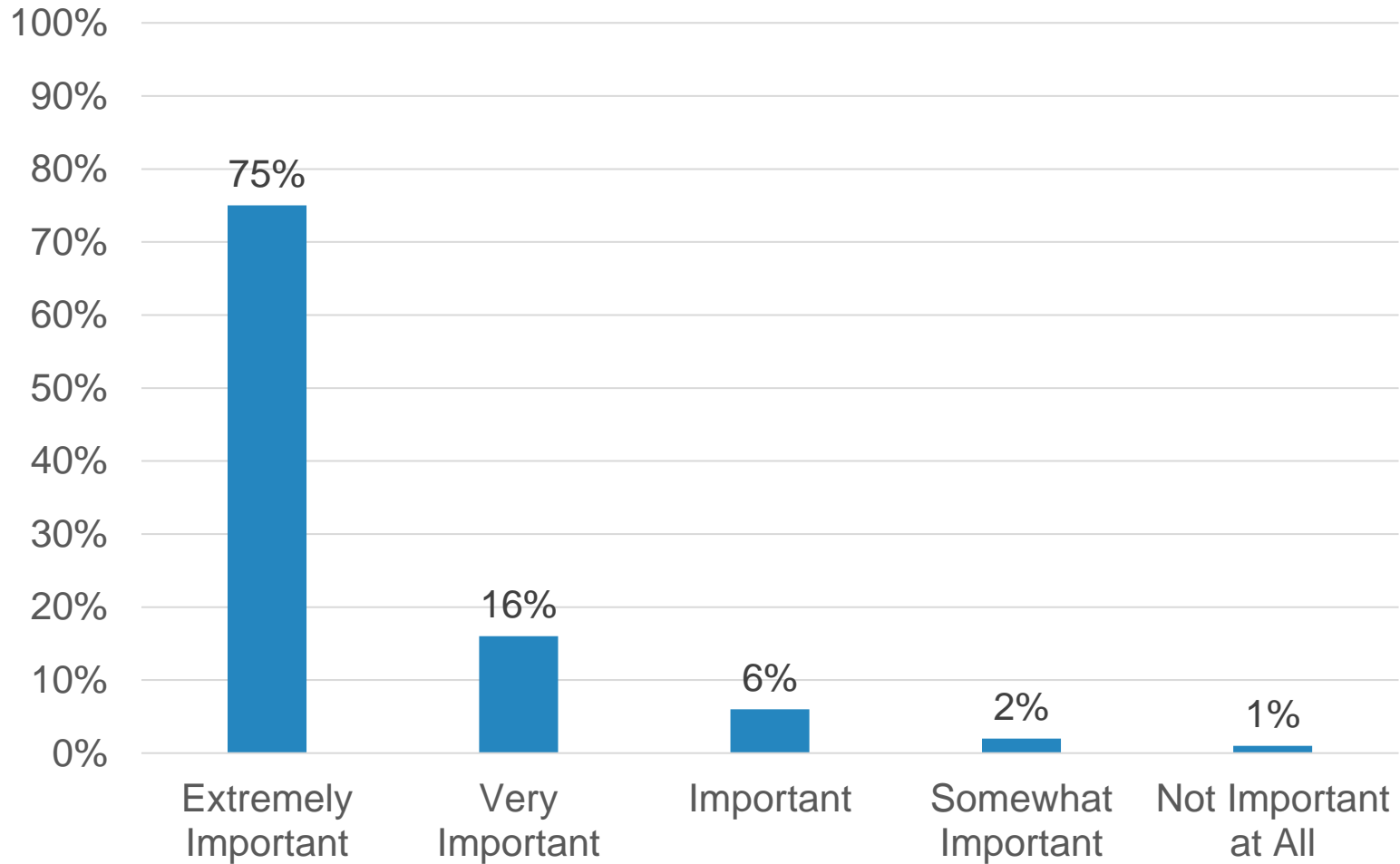
# Top Two Youth Activities



Lifeway research

Q30: "Among the **youth** activities you have conducted in the last year, please **rank the top 2** that have been most effective at fostering meaningful spiritual growth? (Enter "1" for the most effective and "2" for the second most effective)" n=547

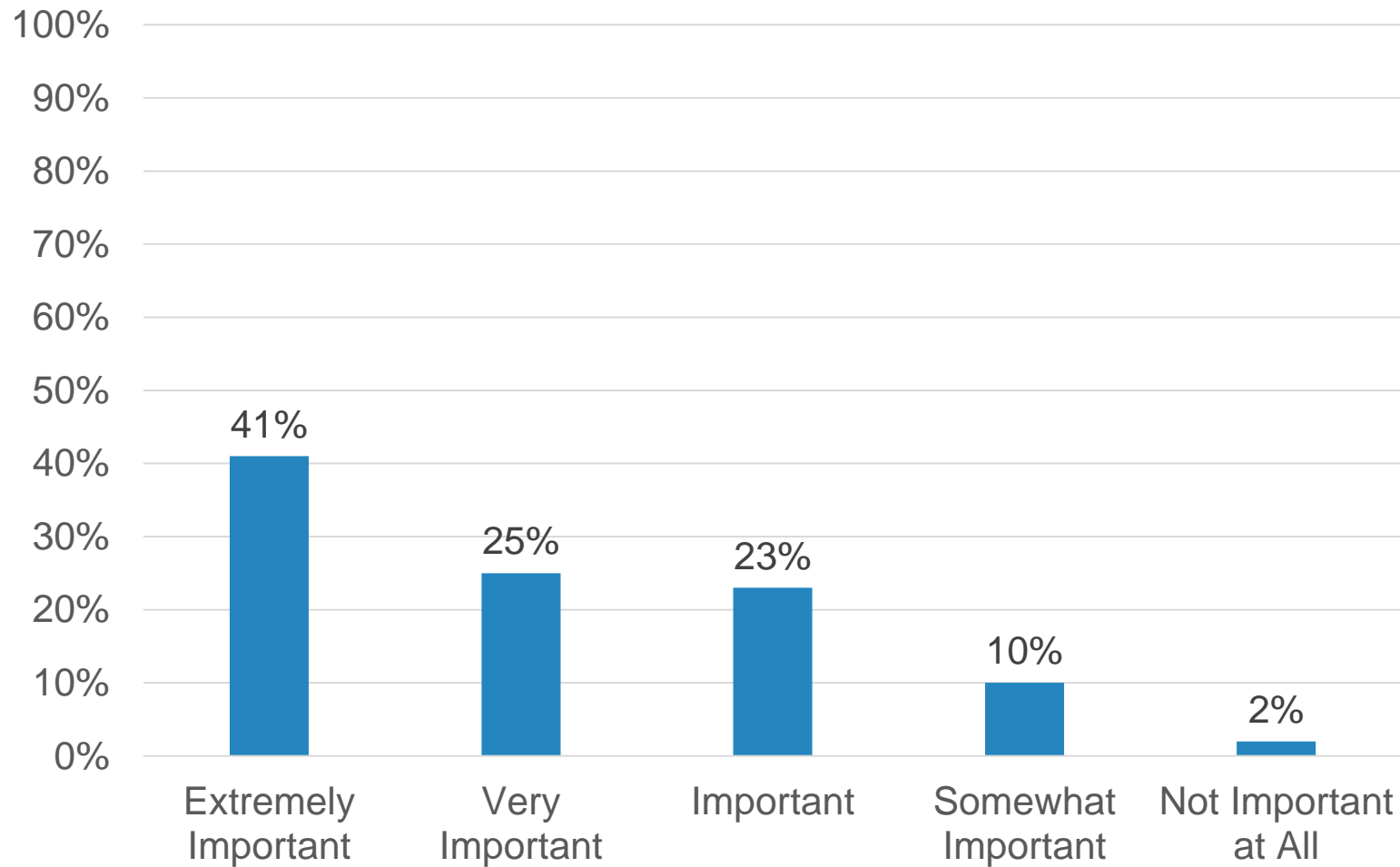
# Developing friendships with Christian peers at church



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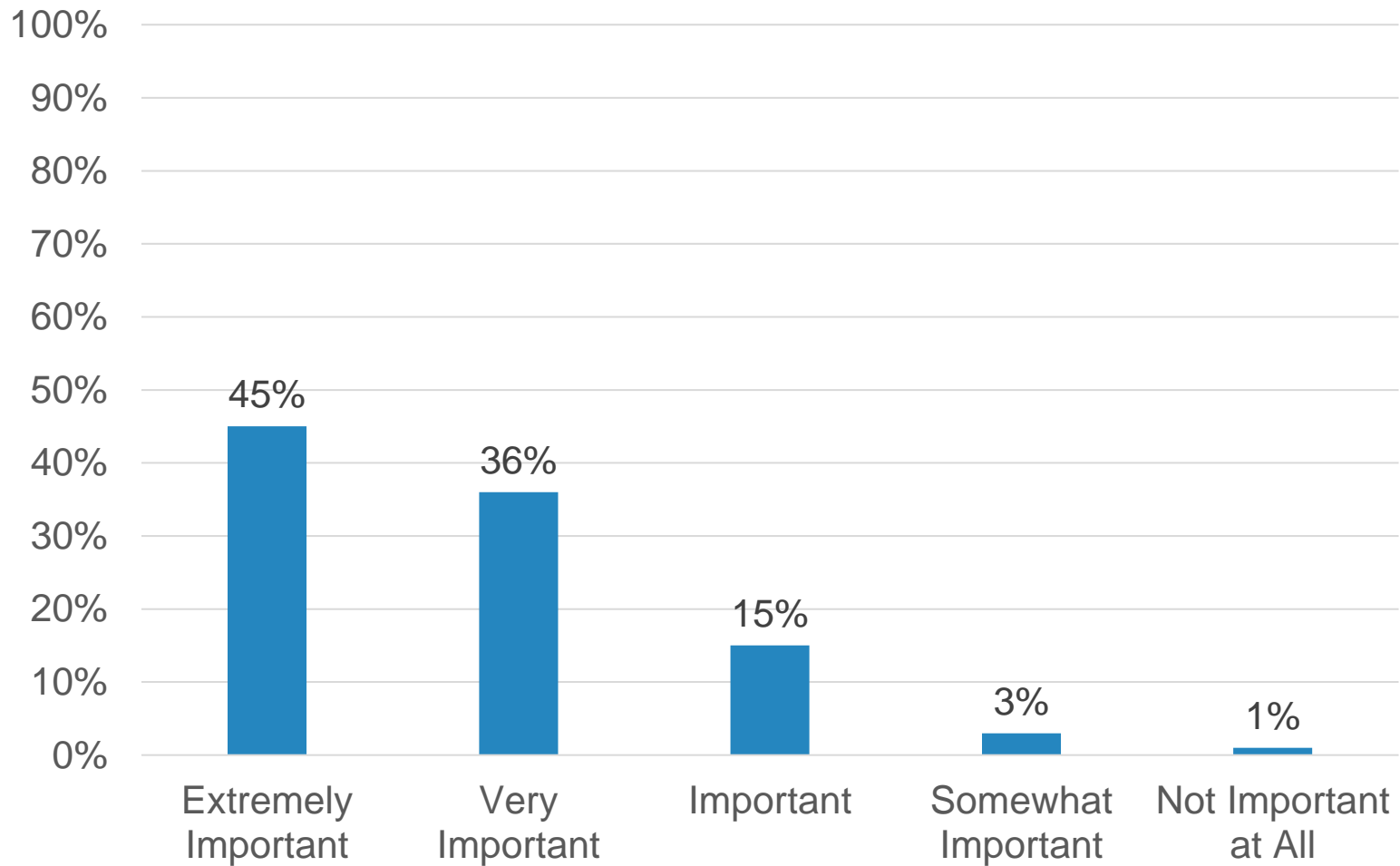
Q31\_1: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) **Developing friendships with Christian peers at church**" n=370

# 1-on-1 time with the pastor to answer questions



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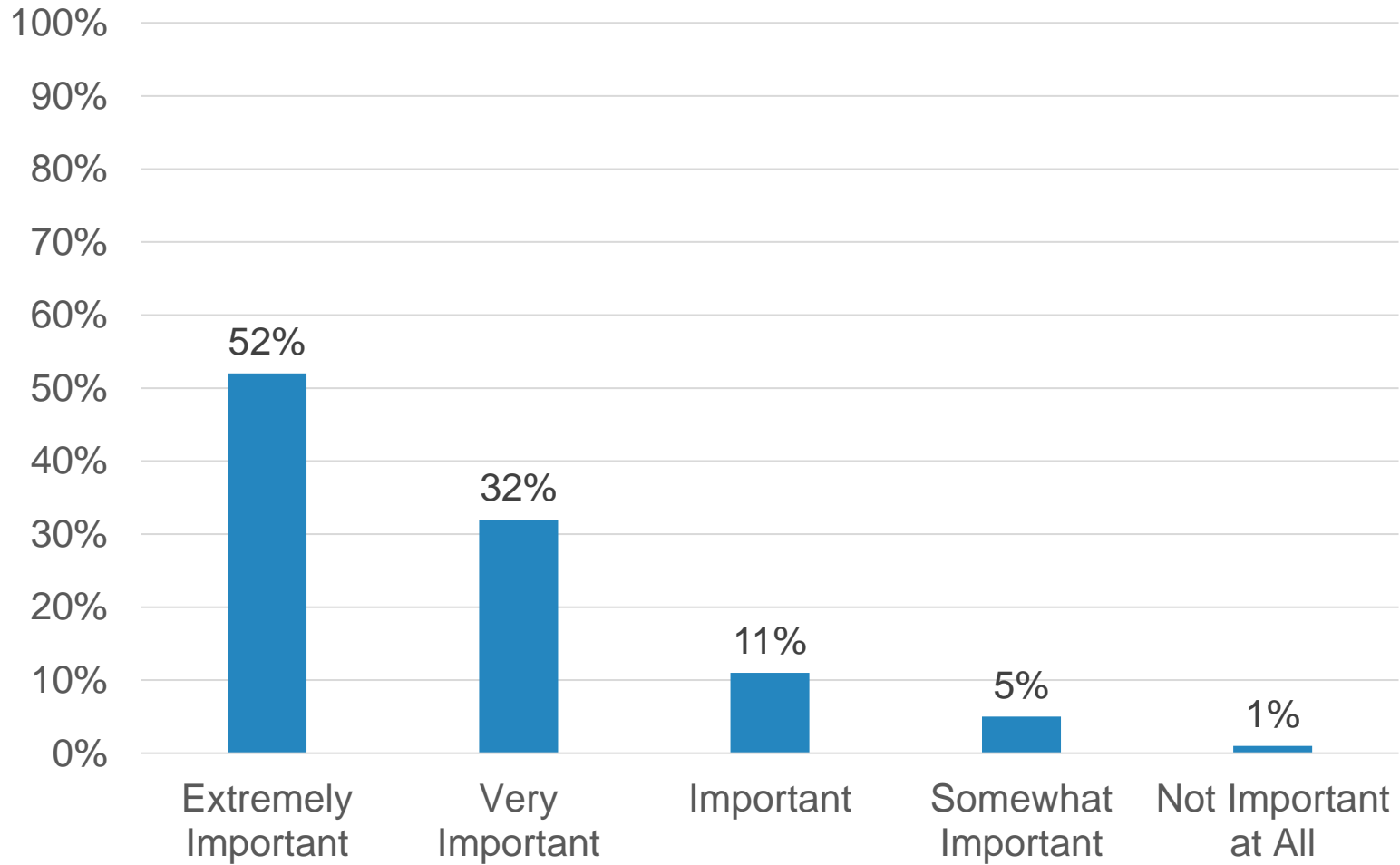
# Tangible help from members of the church during a personal crisis



Lifeway research

Q31\_3: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) Tangible help from members of the church during a personal crisis" n=370

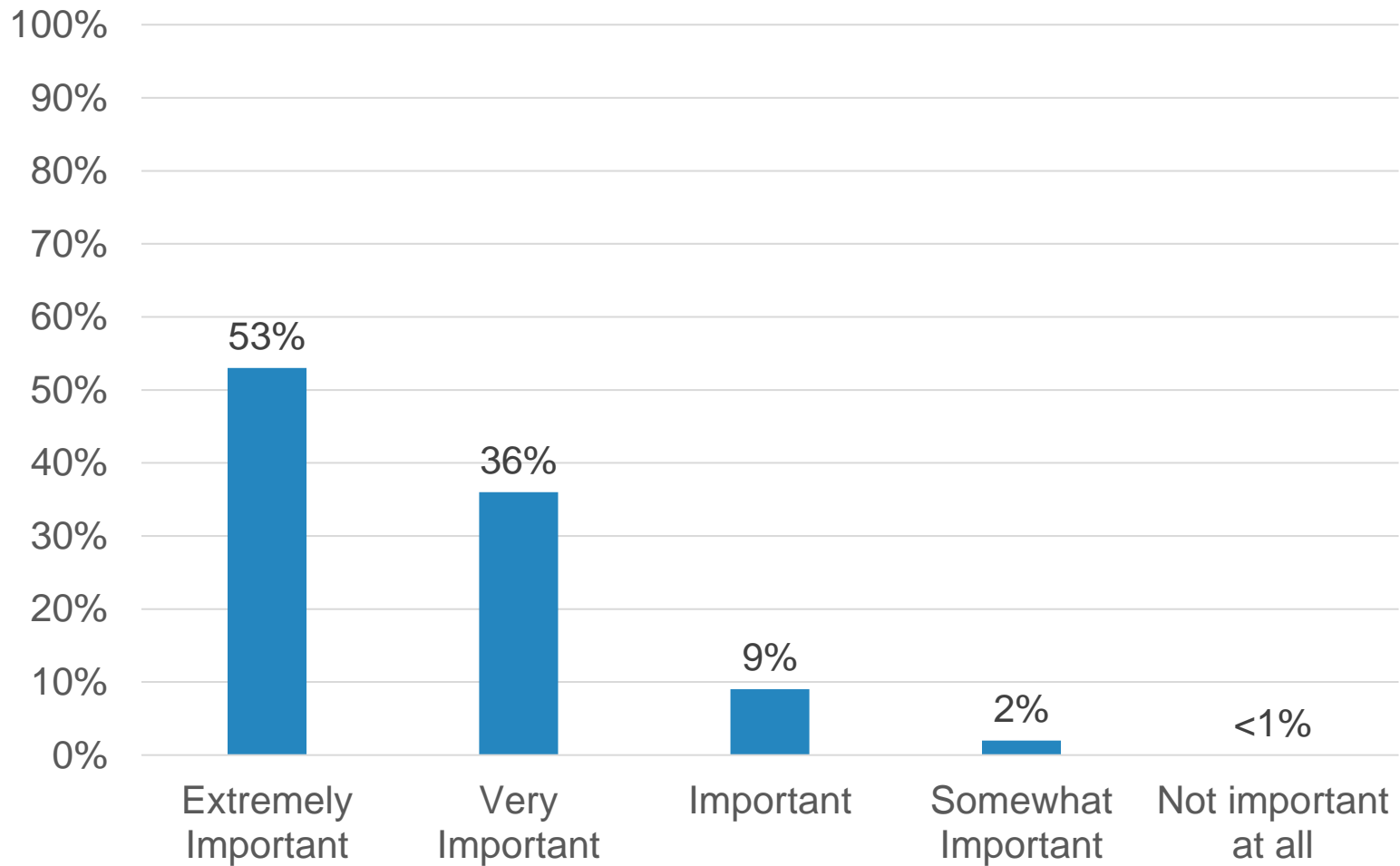
# Joining a small group Bible study or Sunday School class



Lifeway research

Q31\_4: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) **Joining a small group Bible study or Sunday School class**" n=370

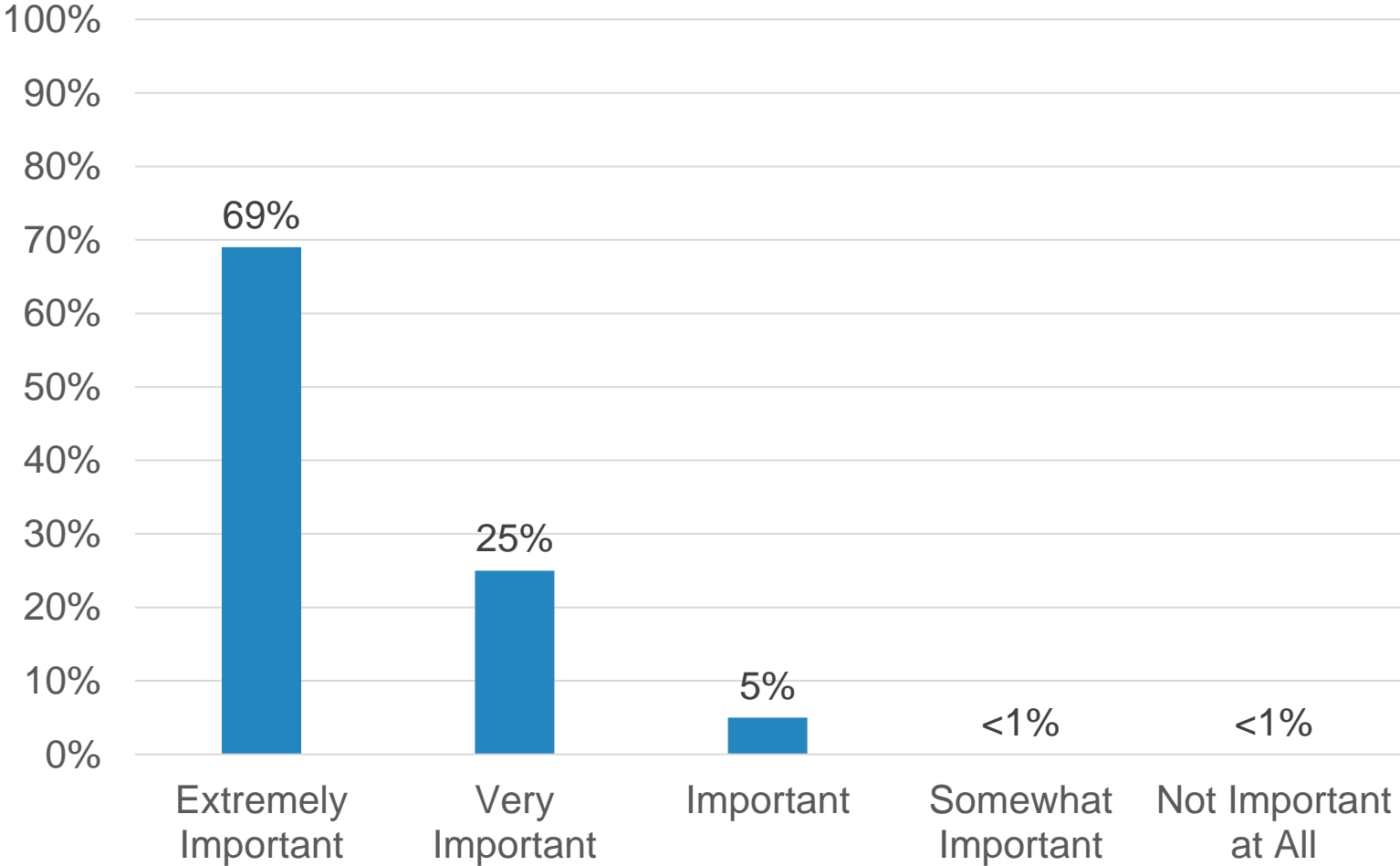
# Participating regularly in fellowships



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Q31\_5: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) Participating regularly in fellowships" n=370

# Attending worship services regularly

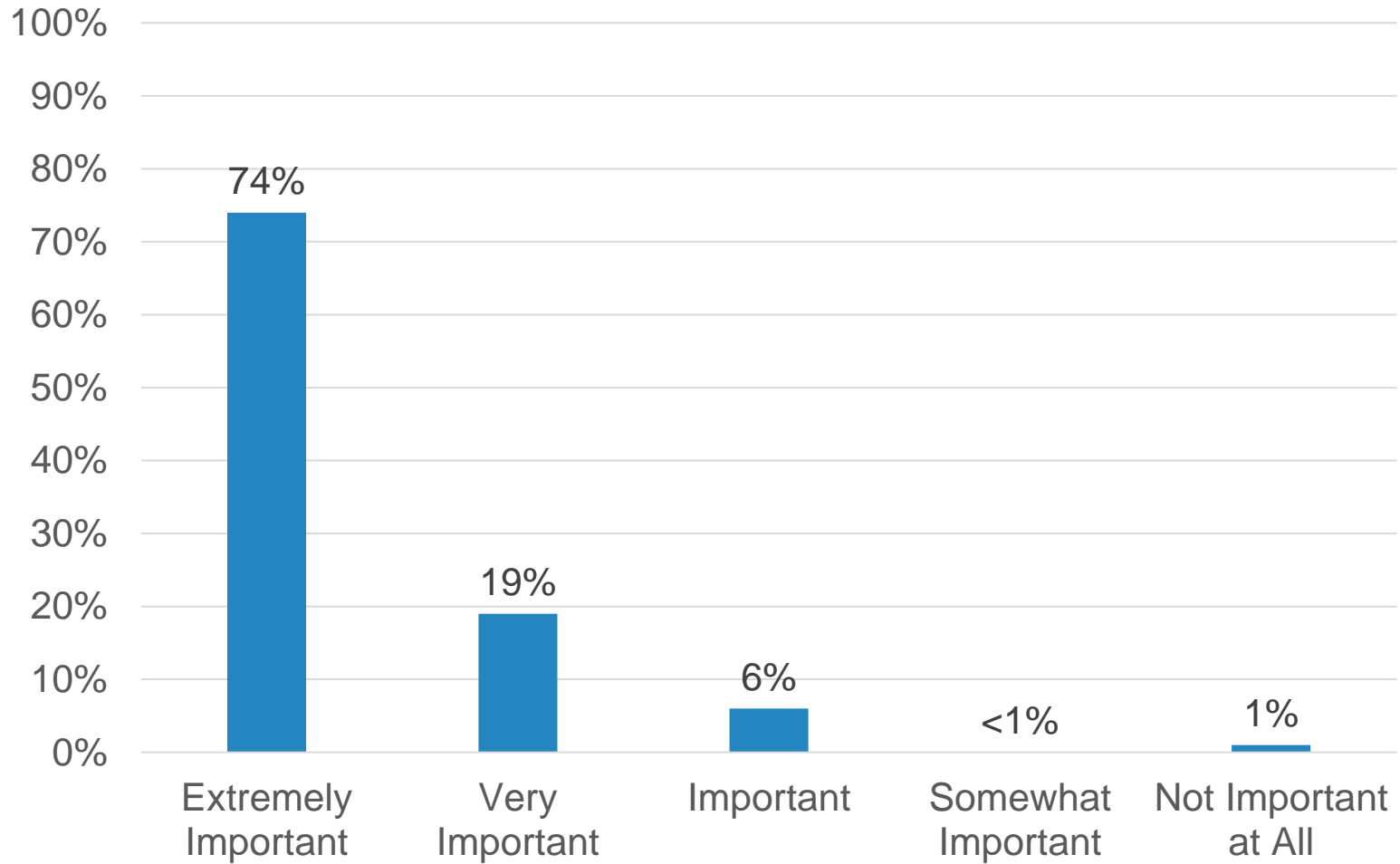


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Q31\_6: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) **Attending worship services regularly**" n=370

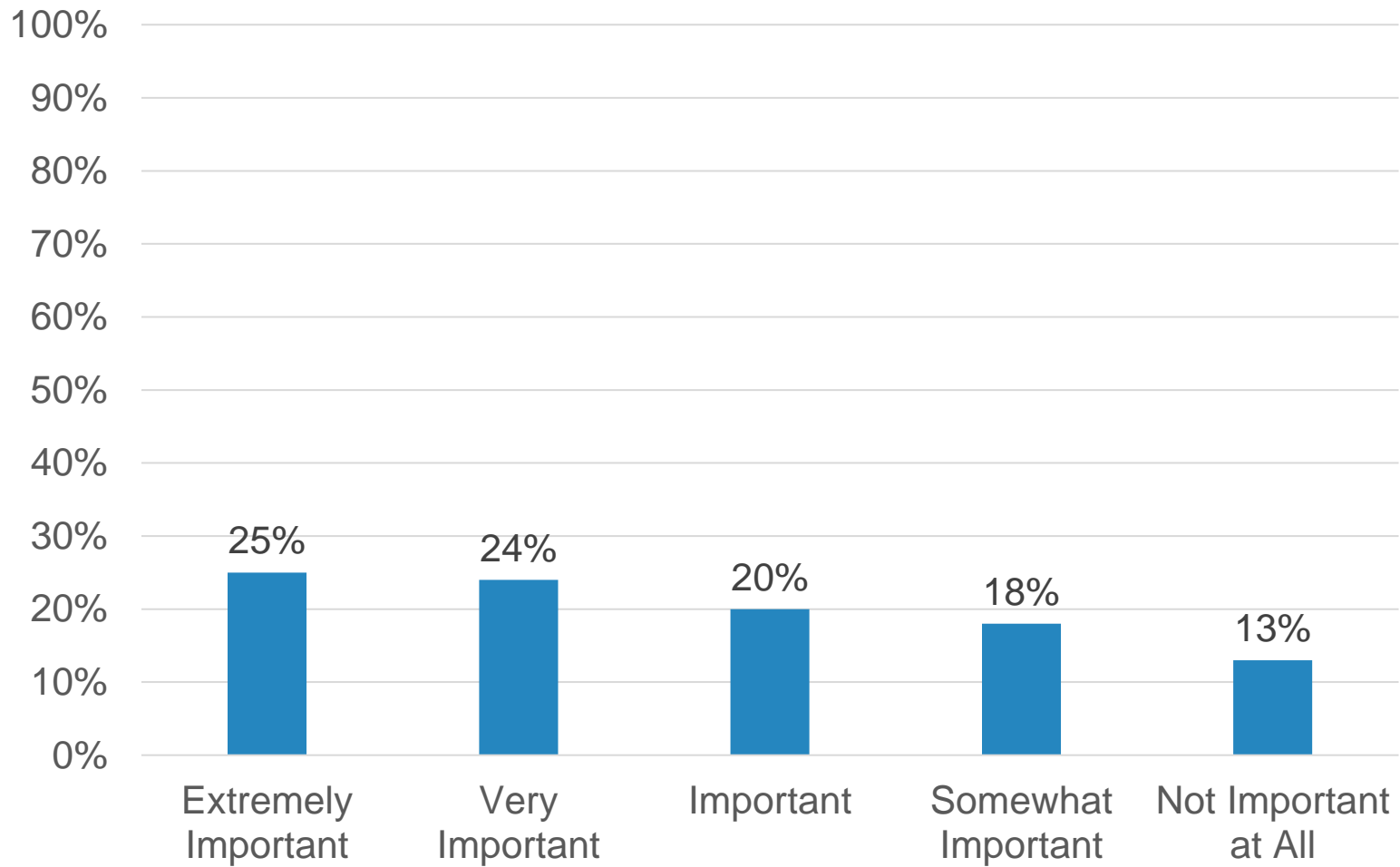


# Being received with acceptance and not judgement



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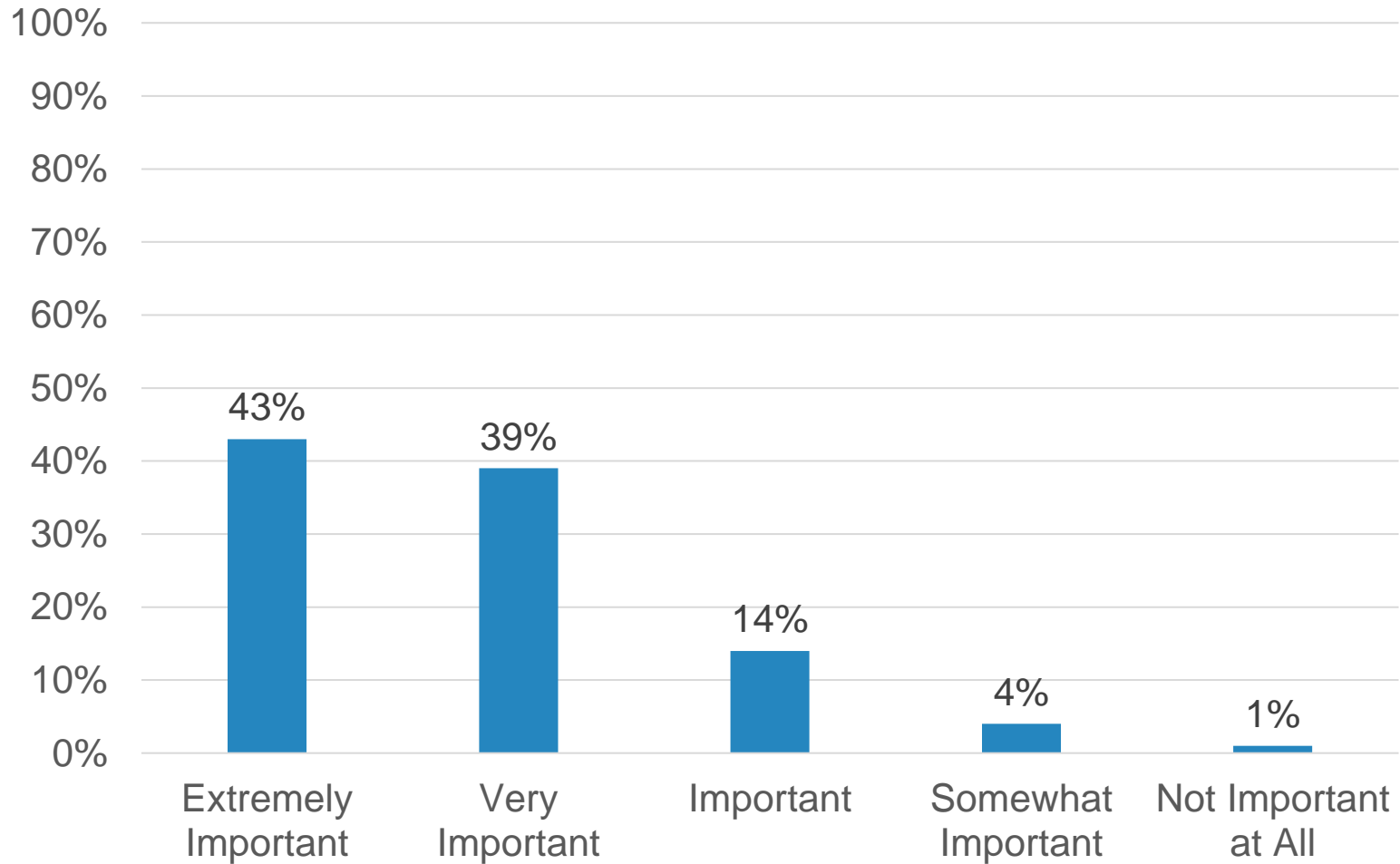
# Activities are conducted in English



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Q31\_8: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) **Activities are conducted in English**" n=370

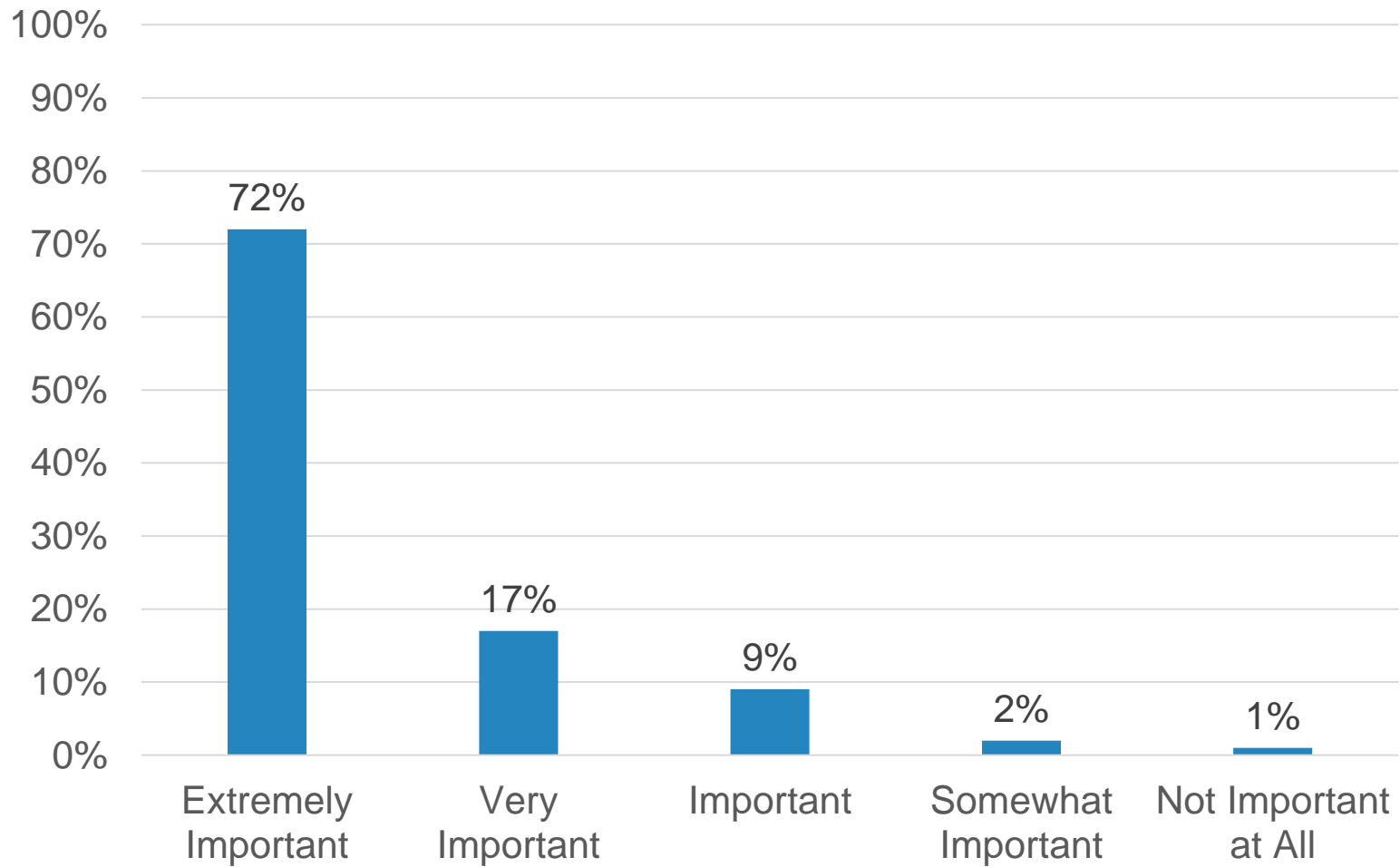
# Developing friendships with caring adults at church



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Q31\_9: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) Developing friendships with caring adults at church" n=370

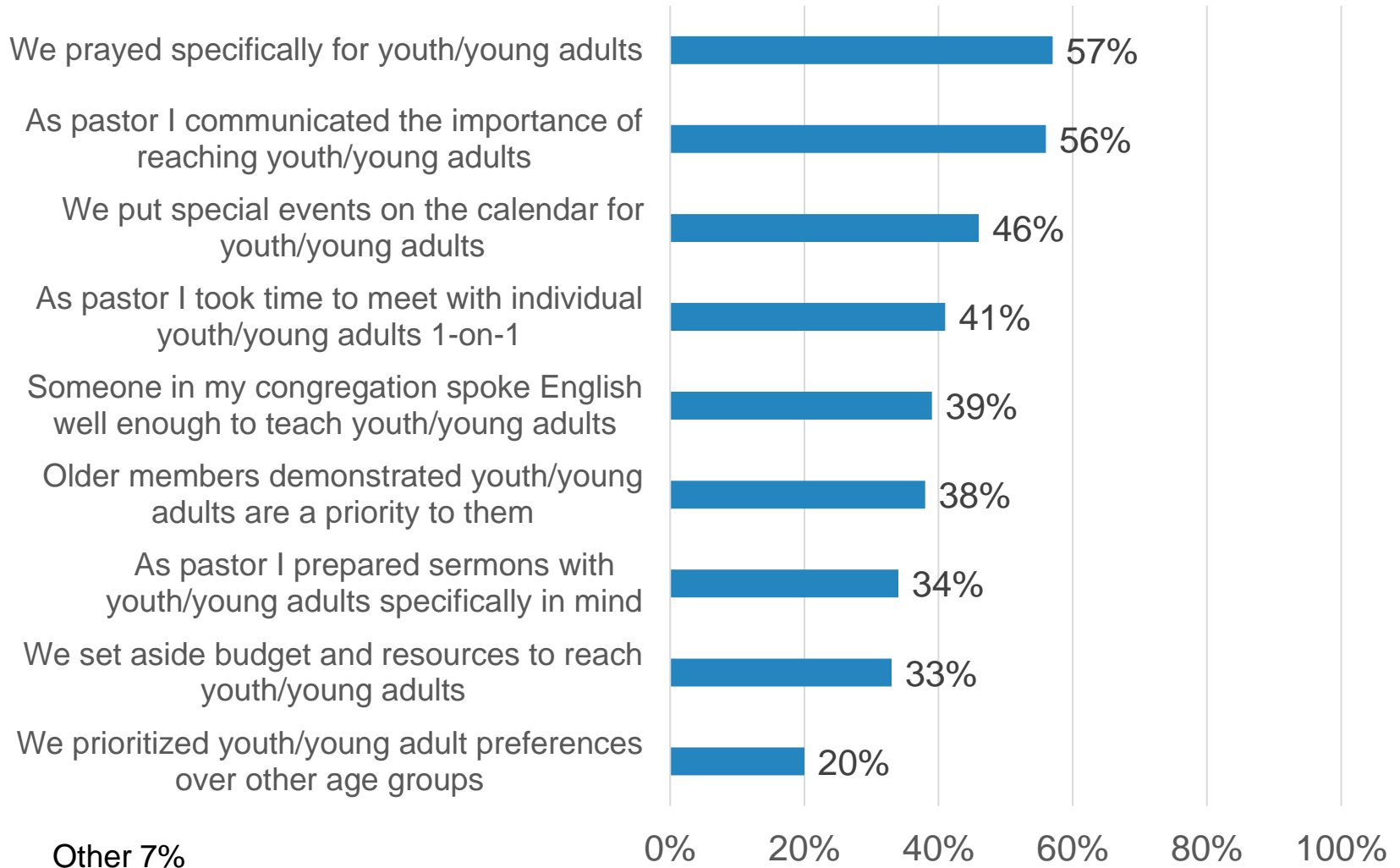
# Have parents who love the Lord



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Q31\_10: "From what you have observed, how important are the following in helping youth and young adults stay involved in your church and grow spiritually? (Select one answer for each row) **Have parents who love the Lord**" n=370

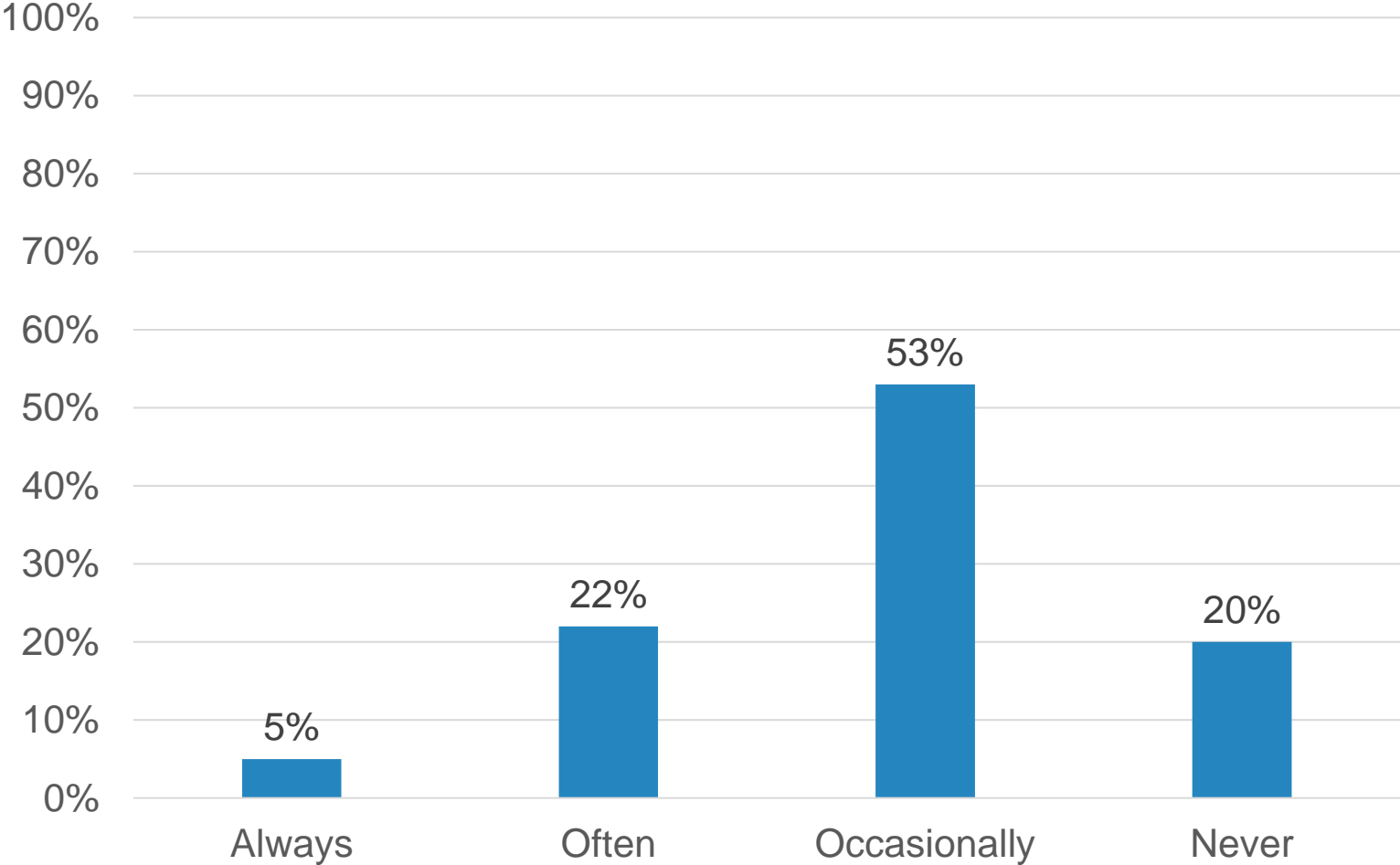
# Most important reasons your church has been able to reach youth and young adults



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Q32: "When your congregation has been successful in reaching youth and young adults, what would you say have been the most important reasons? (Select up to 5)" n=370

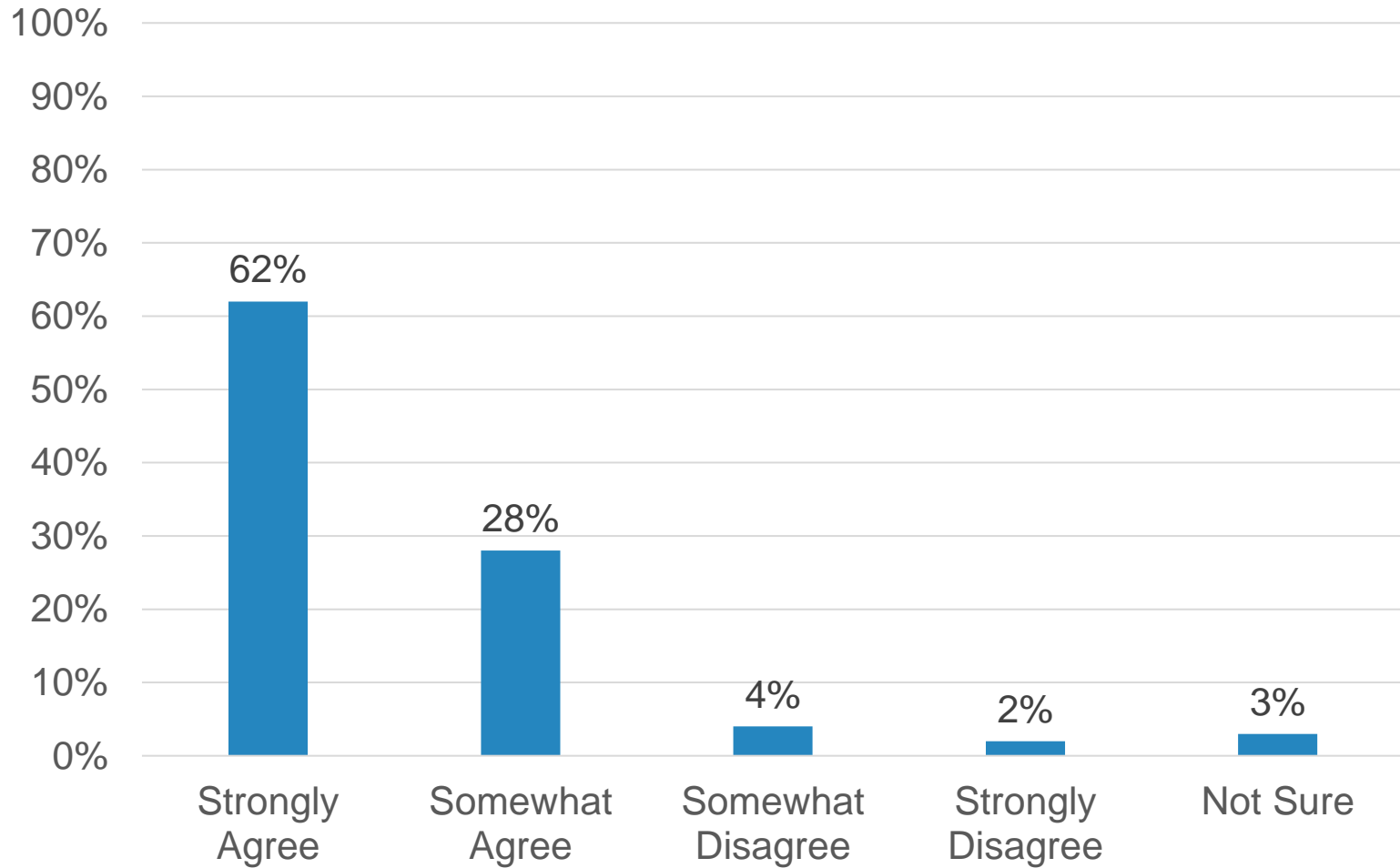
# 53% occasionally conduct youth activities with another church



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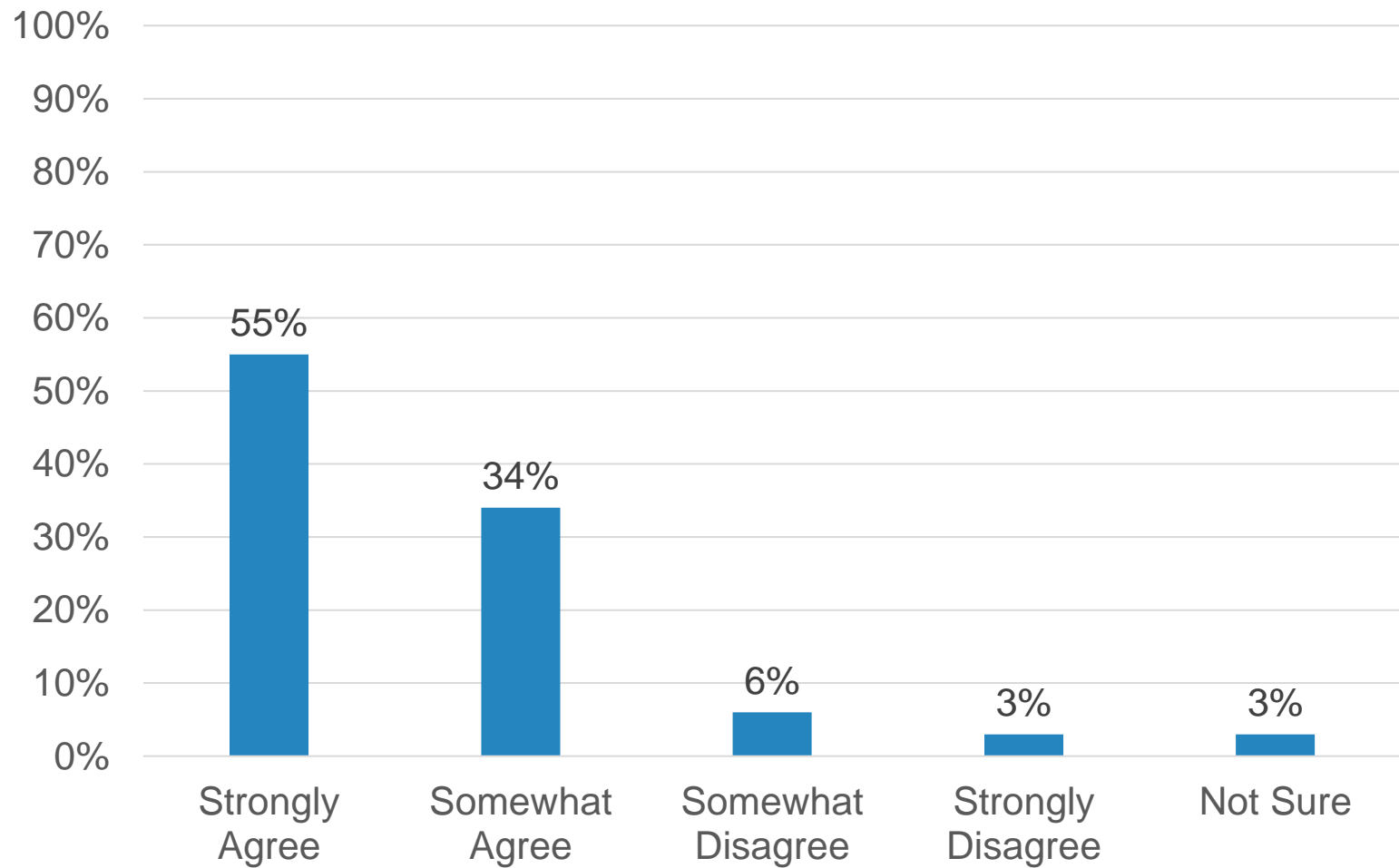
Q33: "How often does your congregation conduct youth activities in partnership with another congregation?" n=370

# 90% involve young adults in teaching, serving, and leading areas of ministry



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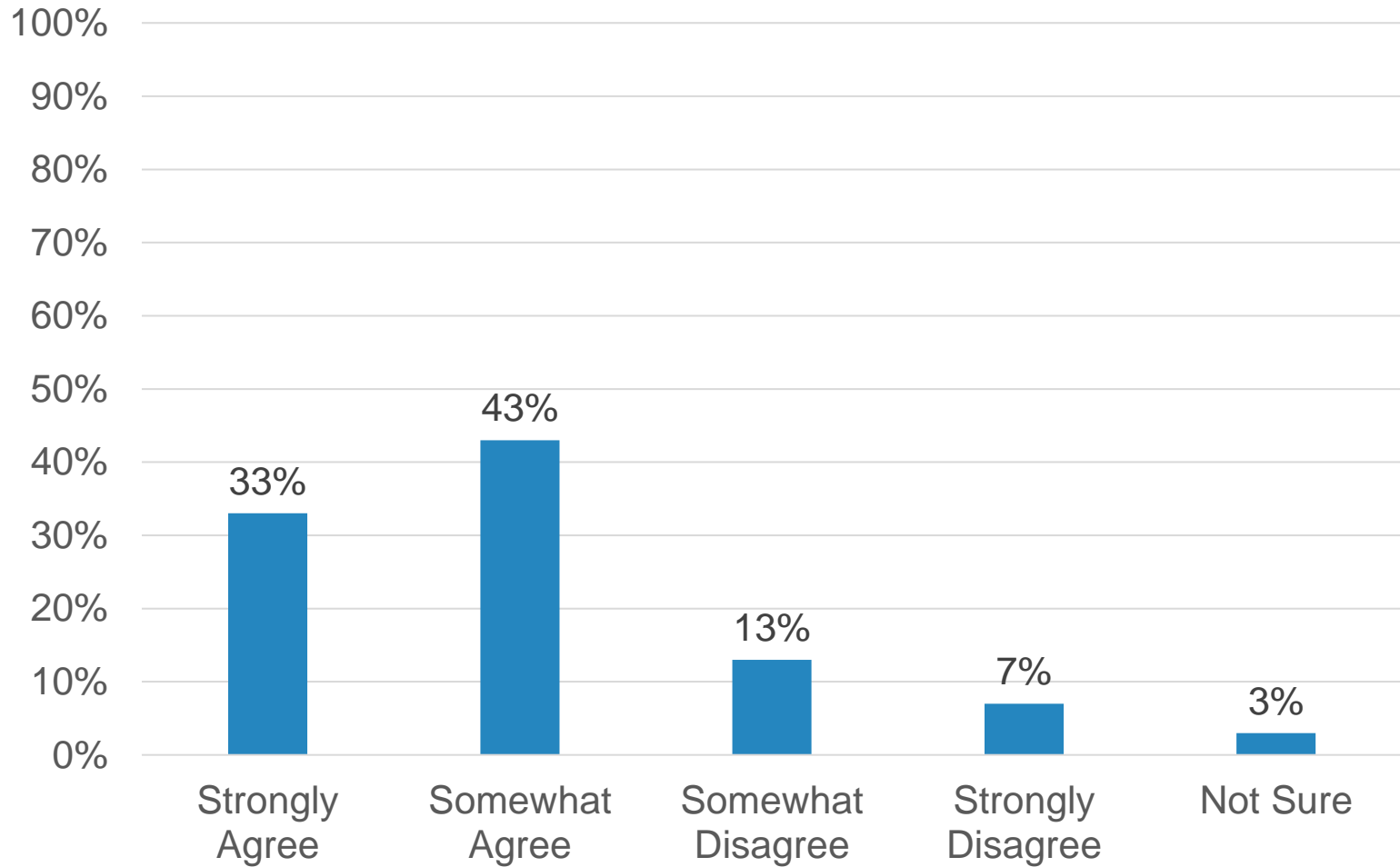
# 88% involve youth in teaching, serving, and leading areas of ministry



Lifeway research



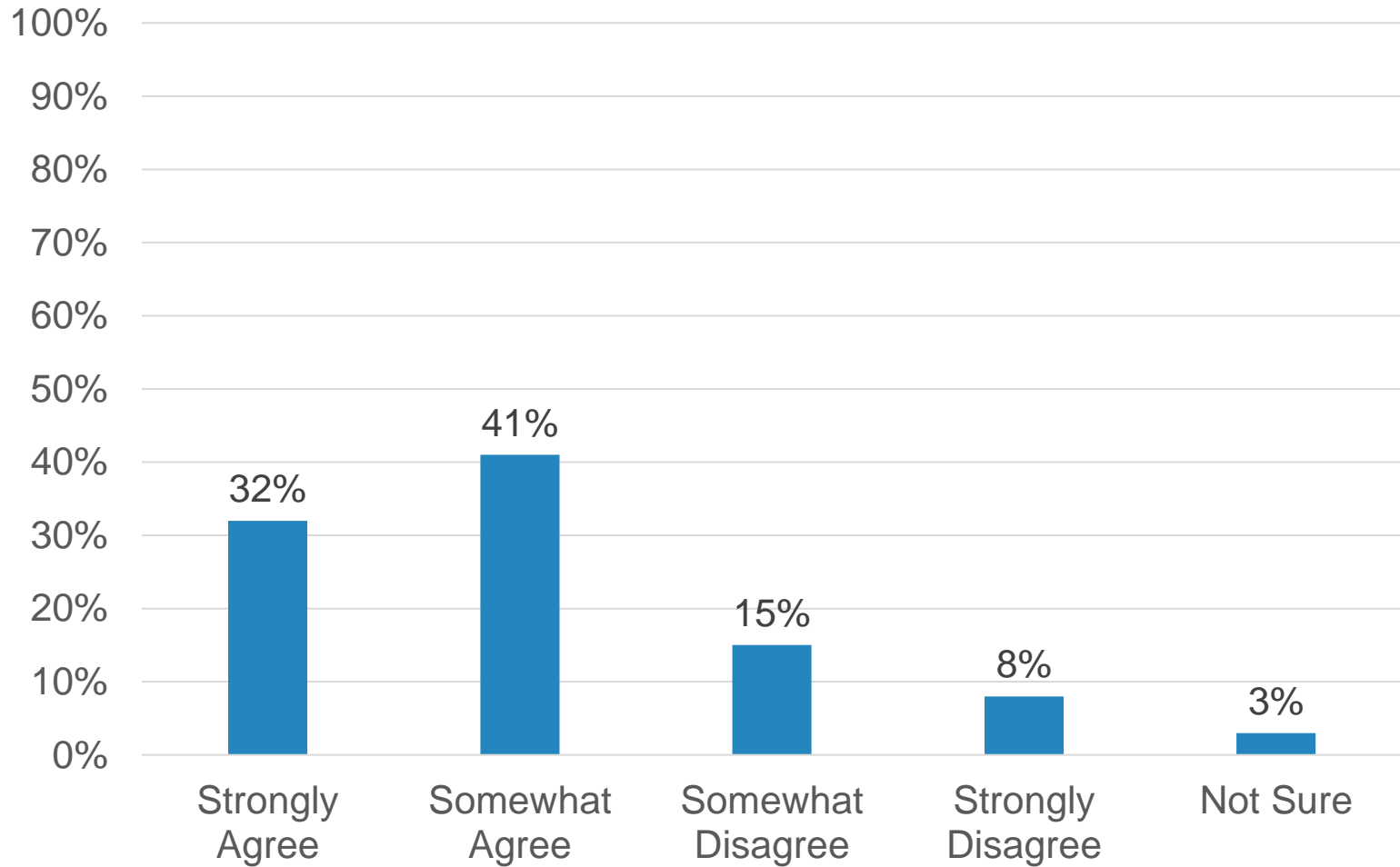
# 77% agree their church intentionally conducts youth and young adult outreach



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Q36: "Our congregation intentionally conducts youth and young adult outreach." n=370

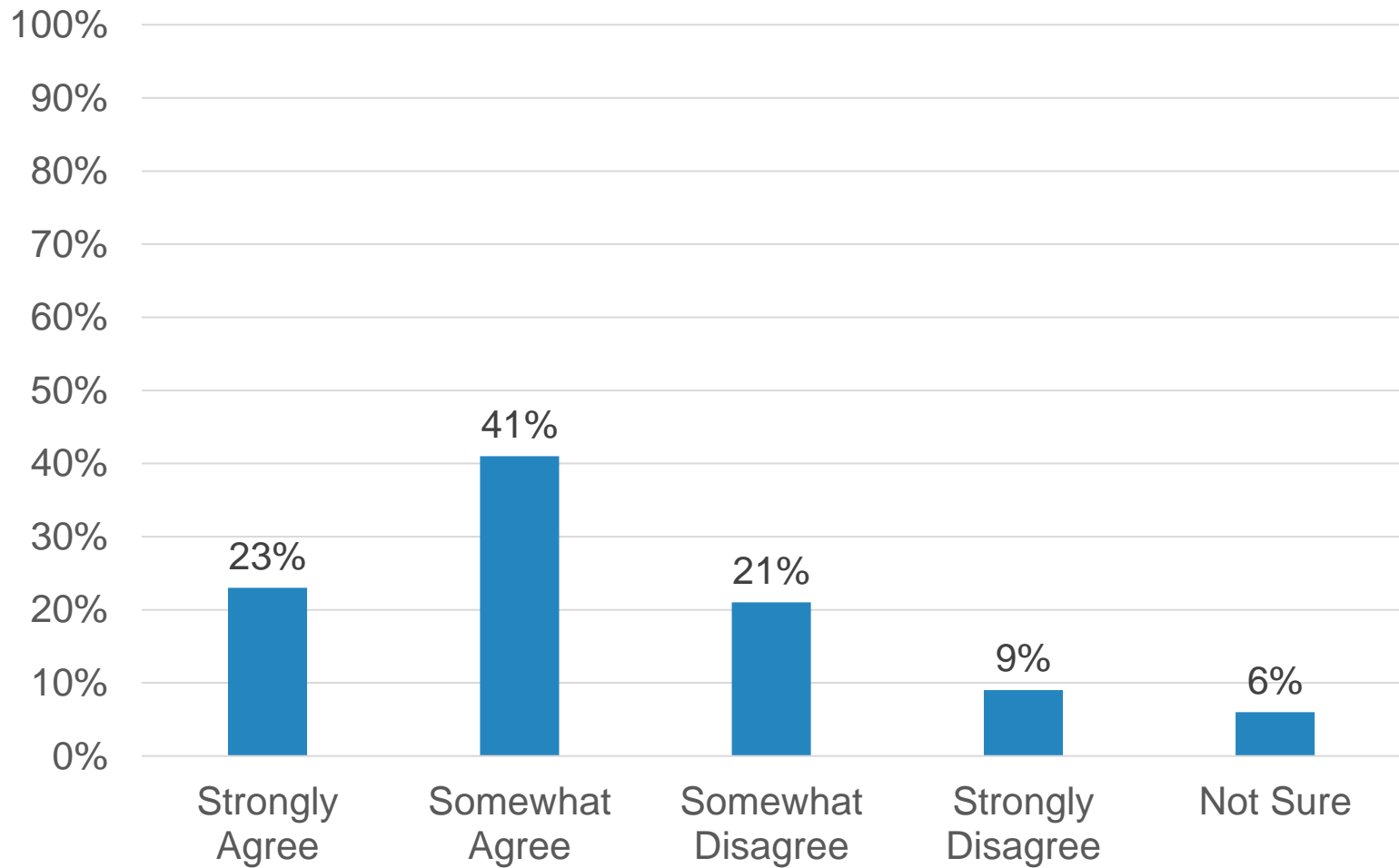
# 73% agree that their youth regularly invite friends to church activities



**Lifeway**research

Q37: "Our youth regularly invite friends to church activities." n=370

# 63% agree they have strategies to reach new youth and young adults



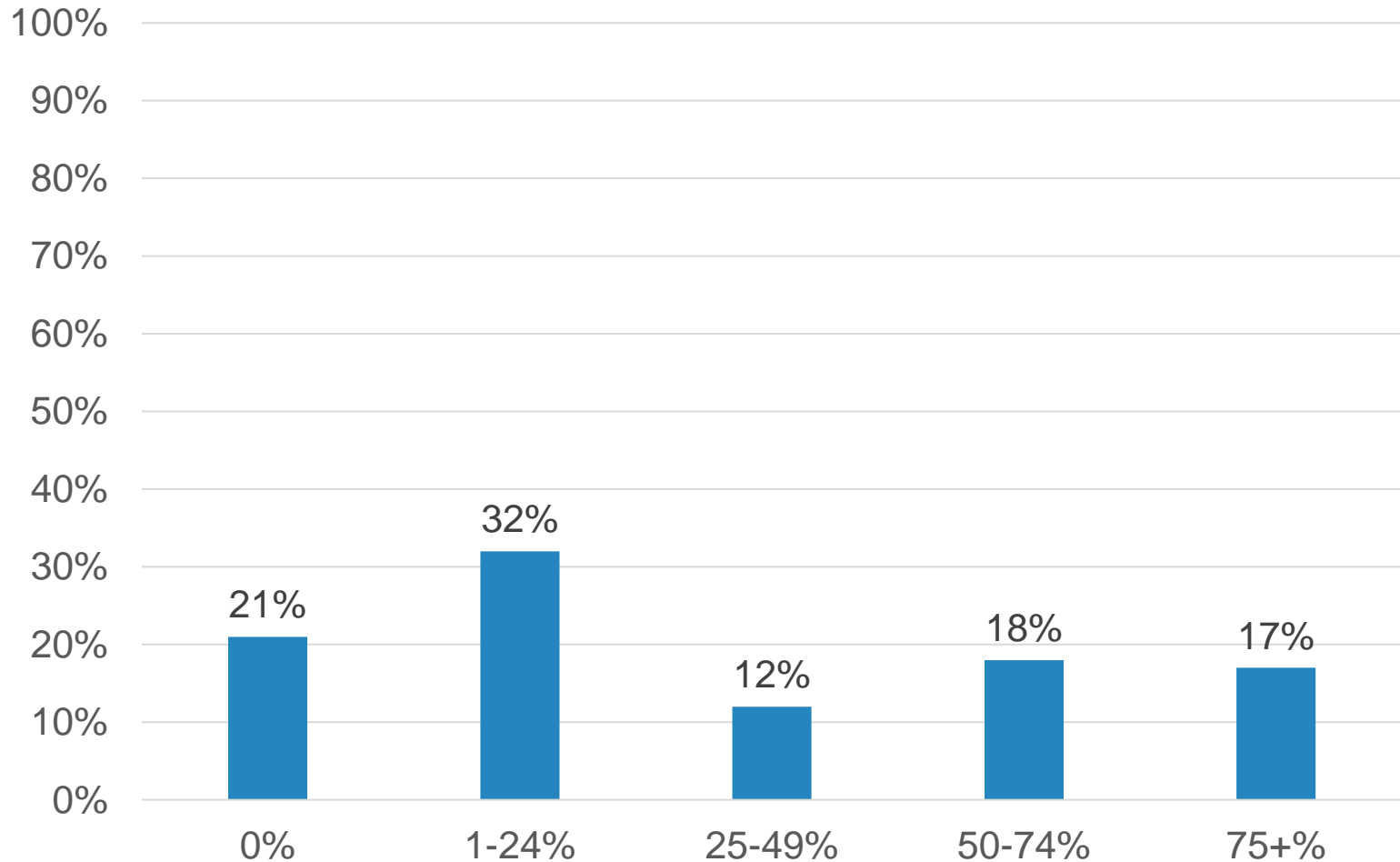
**Lifeway**research

Q38: "We have strategies in place to reach new youth and young adults." n=370

# Discipleship

Lifeway research

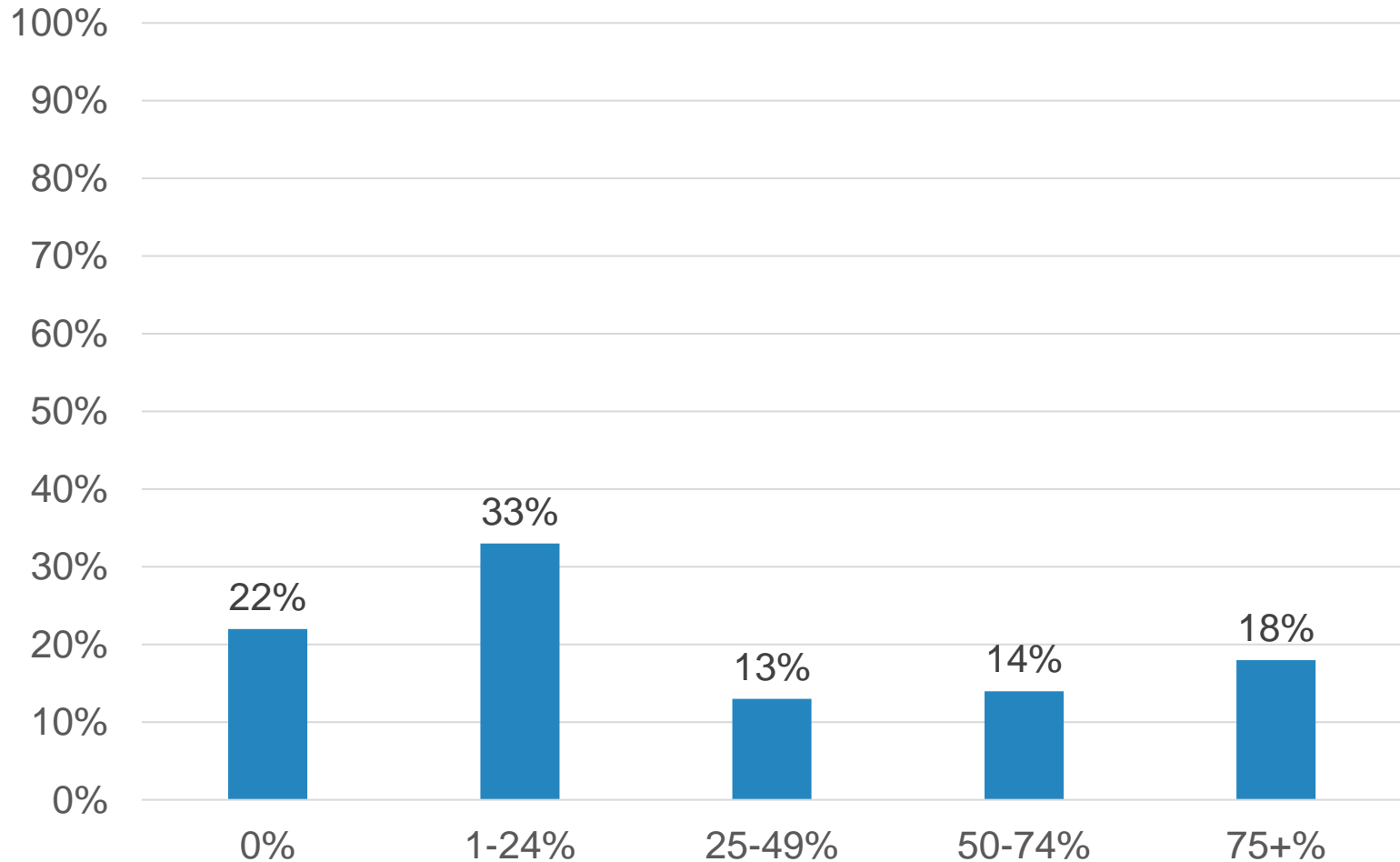
# Percentage of weekend youth worship attendance involved in small group Bible study or Sunday school



Lifeway research

Q40: "What percent of your current **youth** weekend worship attendance is involved in some small group Bible study, Sunday school class, or similar group? (Enter 0 if none)" n=370

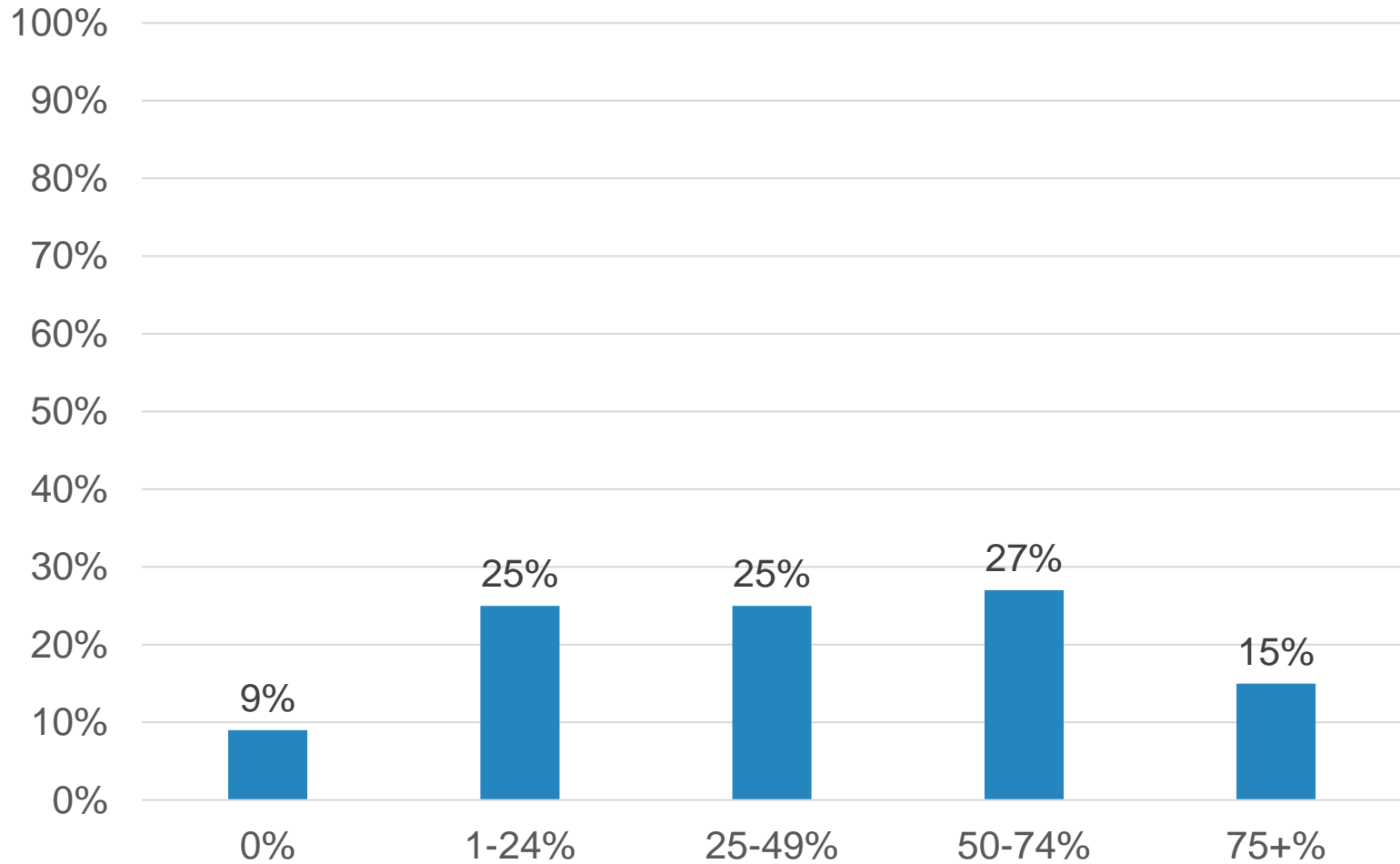
# Percentage of weekend young adult worship attendance involved in small group Bible study or Sunday school



Lifeway research

Q41: "What percent of your current **young adult** weekend worship attendance is involved in some small group Bible study, Sunday school class, or similar group? (Enter 0 if none)" n=370

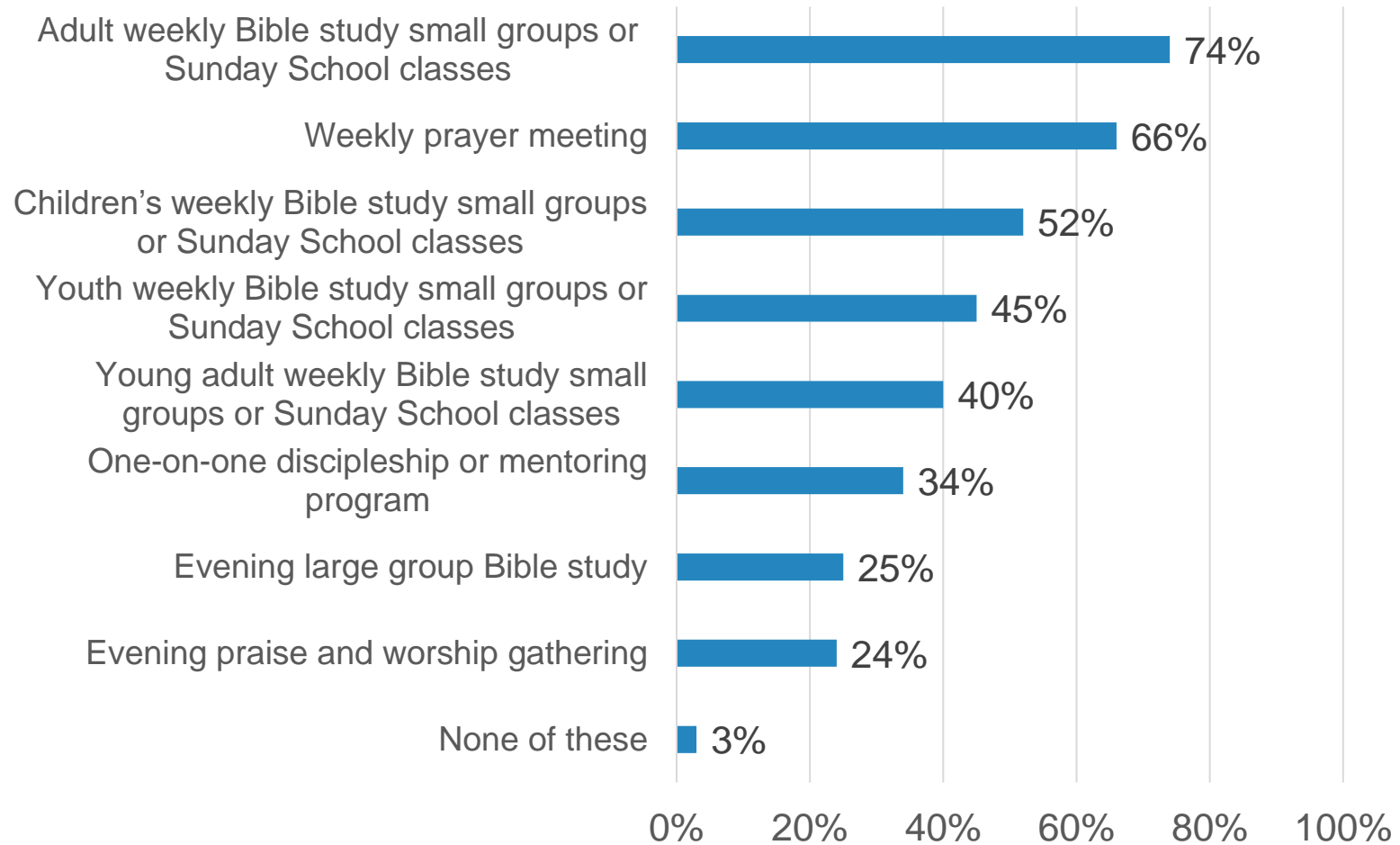
# Percentage of weekend adult worship attendance involved in small group Bible study or Sunday school



Lifeway research

Q42: "What percent of your current **adult** weekend worship attendance is involved in some small group Bible study, Sunday school class, or similar group? (Enter 0 if none)" n=692

# “What activities does your church currently offer regularly to encourage spiritual growth outside of weekly worship services?”

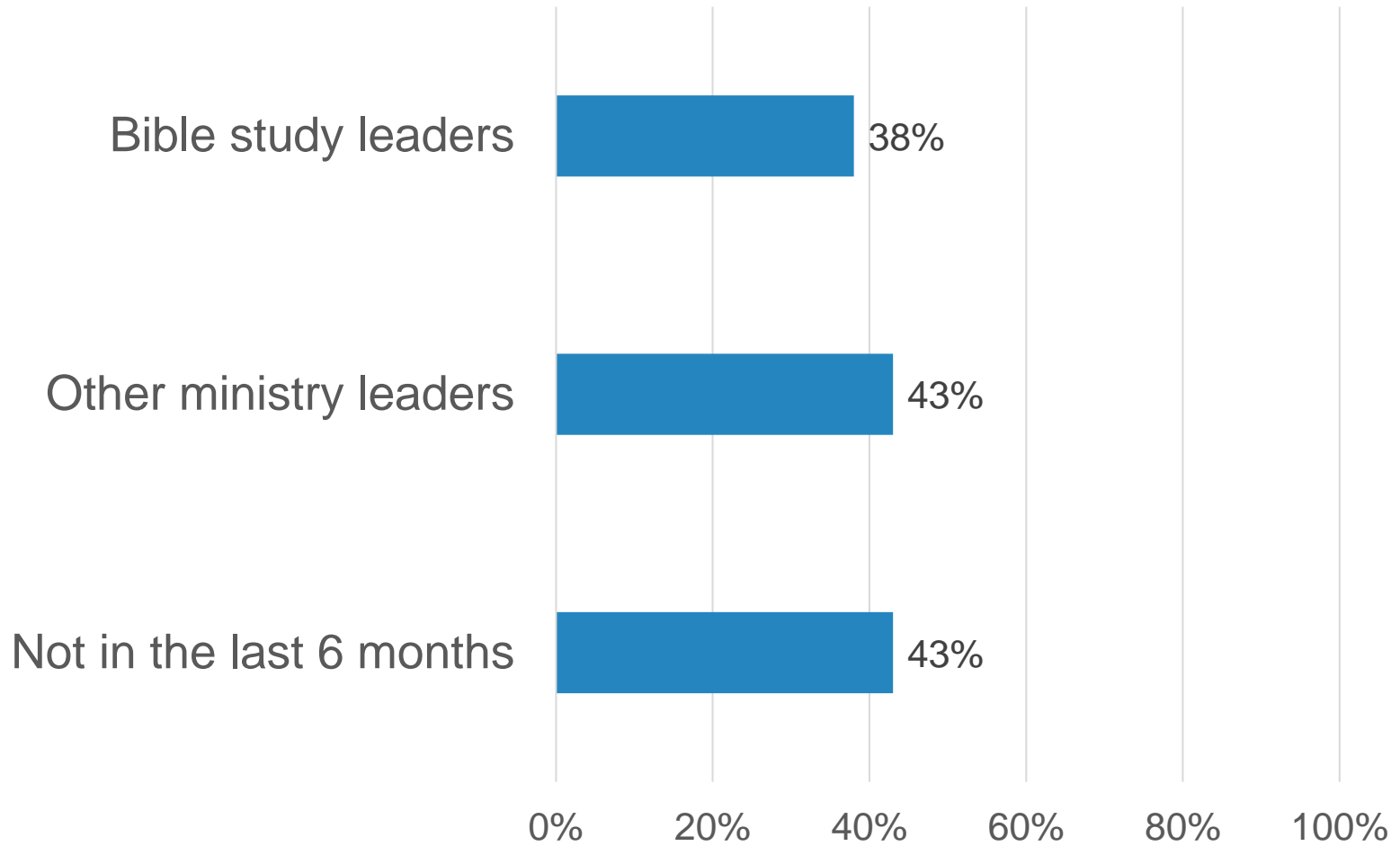


**Lifeway** research

Q43: “What activities does your church currently offer regularly to encourage spiritual growth outside of weekly worship services? (Select all that apply)” n=692

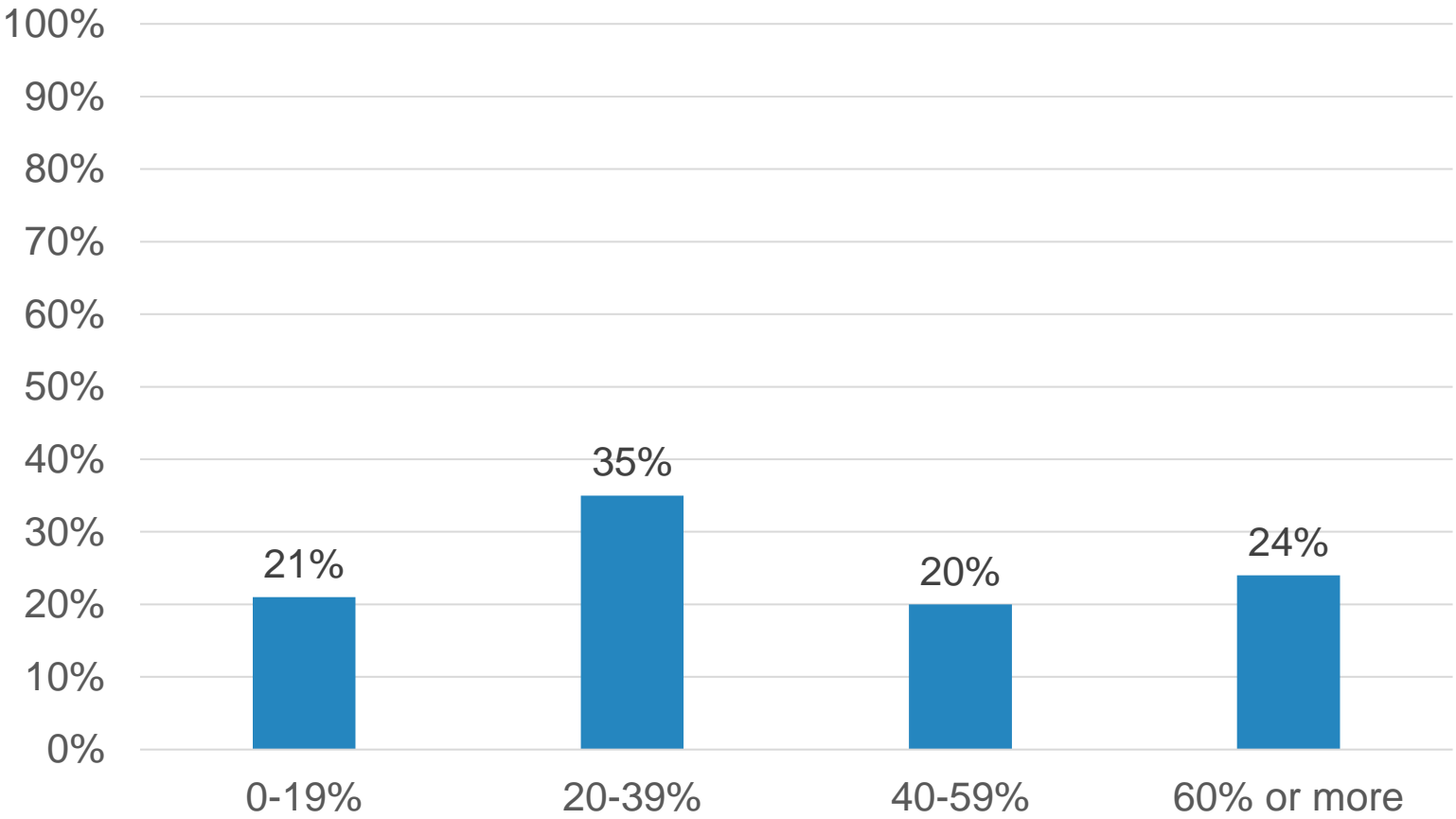


# “In the last 6 months has your church conducted training for any of these groups?”



Lifeway research

# Percentage of adults who attend at least once a month who have regular responsibilities at the church

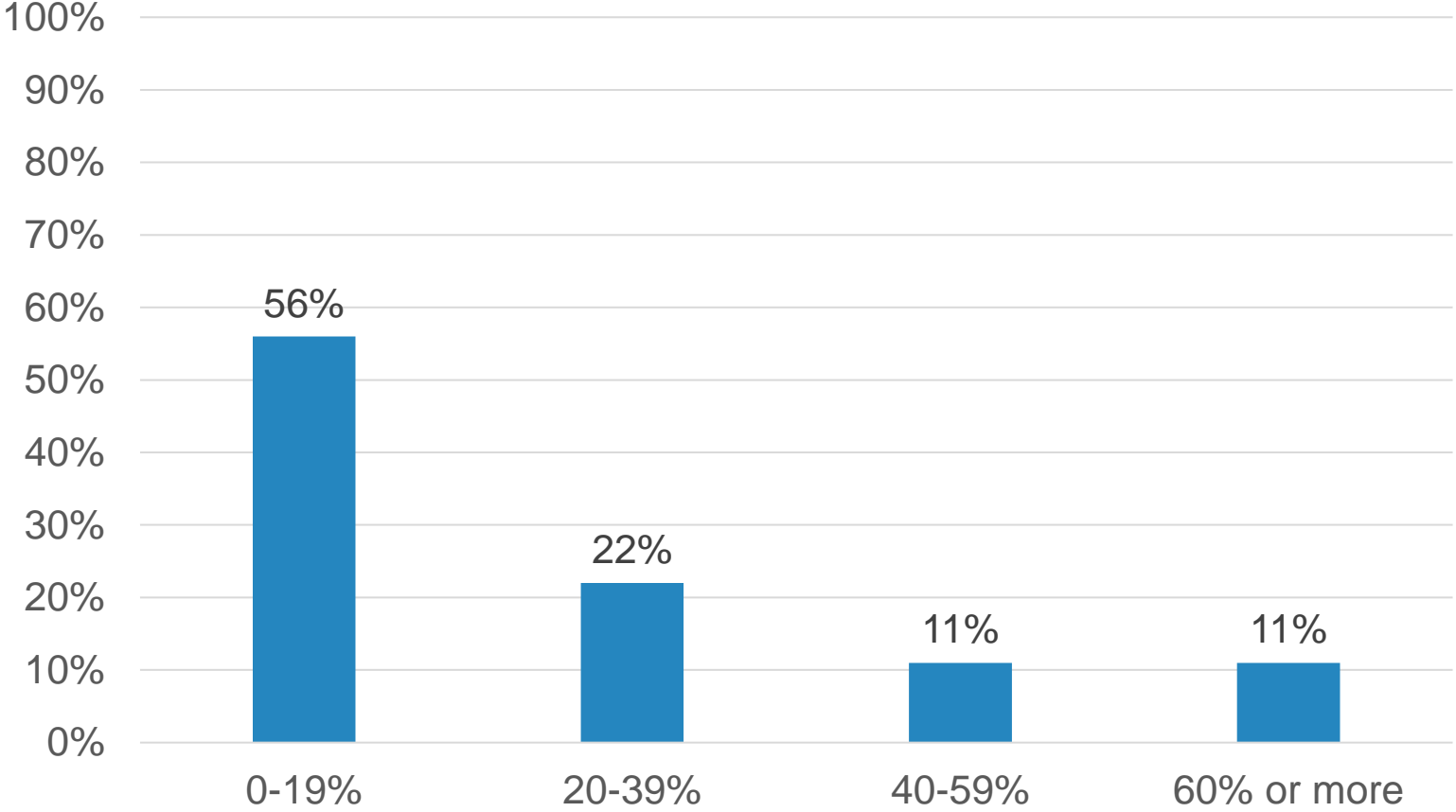


Mean percentage: 38  
Median percentage: 30

Lifeway research

Q45: "What percentage of **adults** who attend your church at least once a month have regular responsibilities at your church, for example, greeter, teacher, childcare, etc.? (If you are not sure, provide a rough estimate)" n=692

# Percentage of adults who attend at least once a month who are involved in community ministry

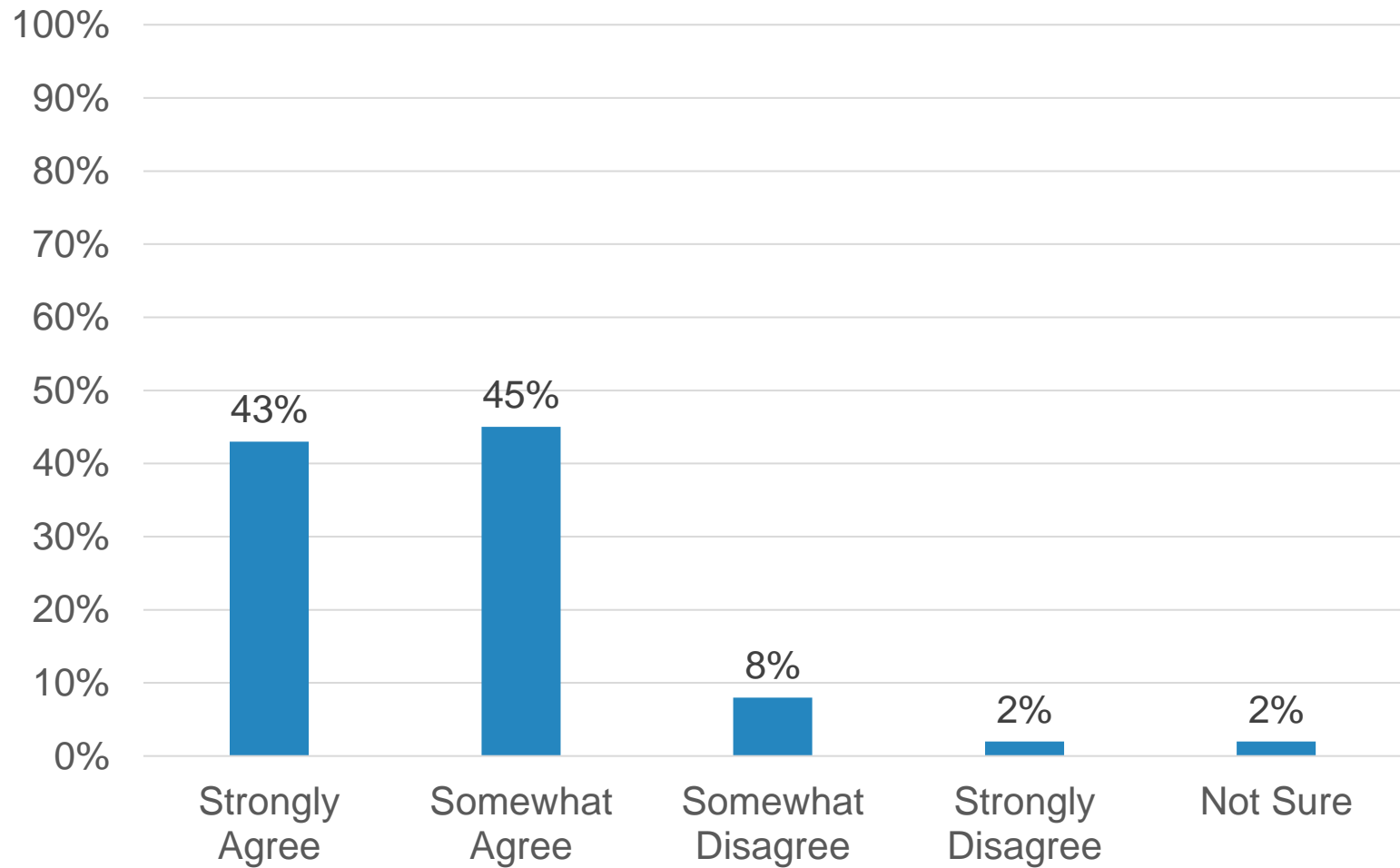


Mean percentage: 22  
Median percentage: 15

Lifeway research

Q46: "What percentage of **adults** who attend your church at least once a month are involved in ministries or projects that serve people in your community not affiliated with your church? (If you are not sure, provide a rough estimate)" n=692

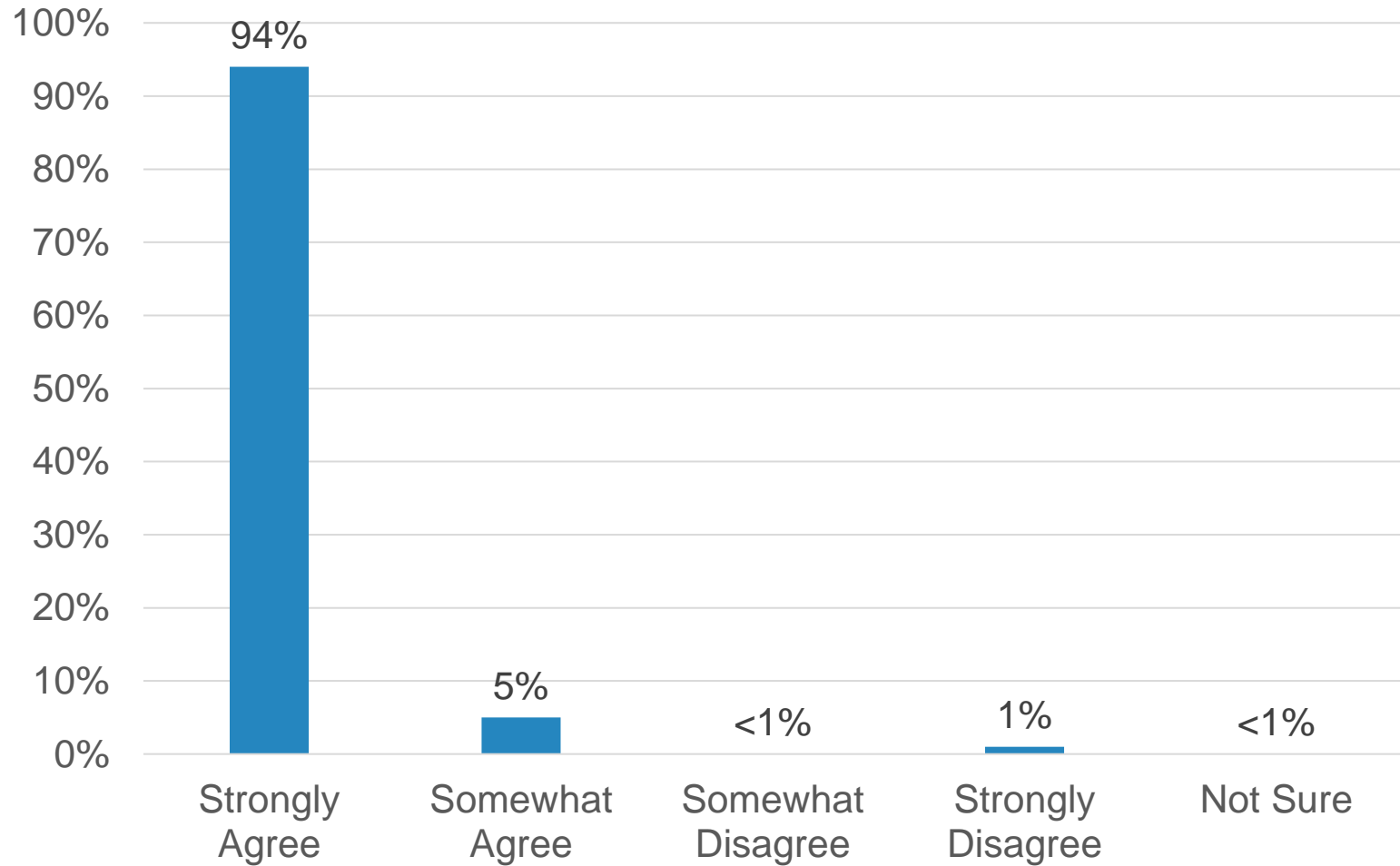
# 88% agree they consistently hear reports of changed lives at their church



Lifeway research

Q47: "We are consistently hearing reports of changed lives at our church." n=692

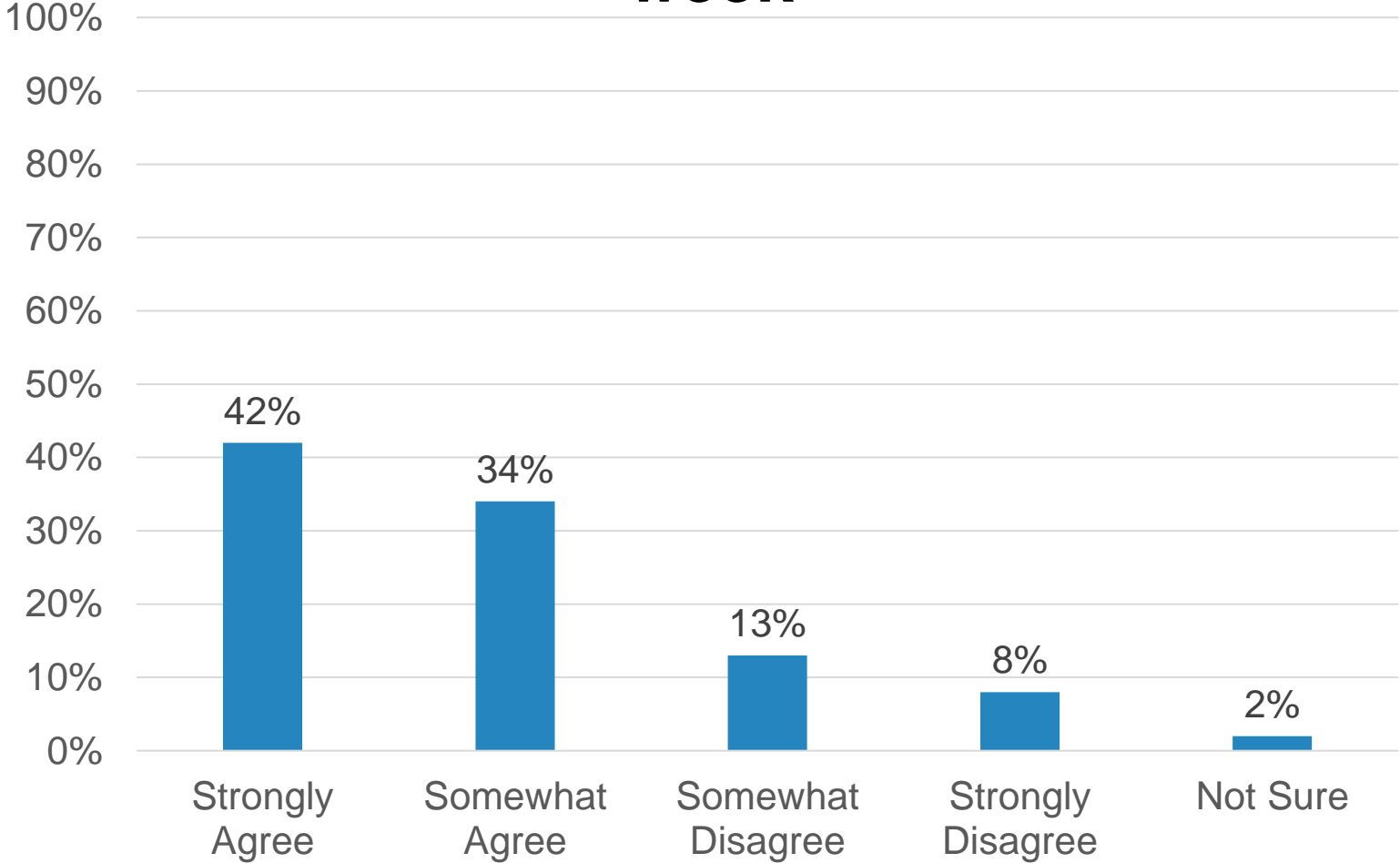
# 99% agree their church considers Scripture the authority for their church and their lives



**Lifeway**research

Q48: "Our church considers Scripture to be the authority for our church and our lives." n=692

# 77% of pastors agree they meet 1-on-1 with an individual or family for discipleship each week



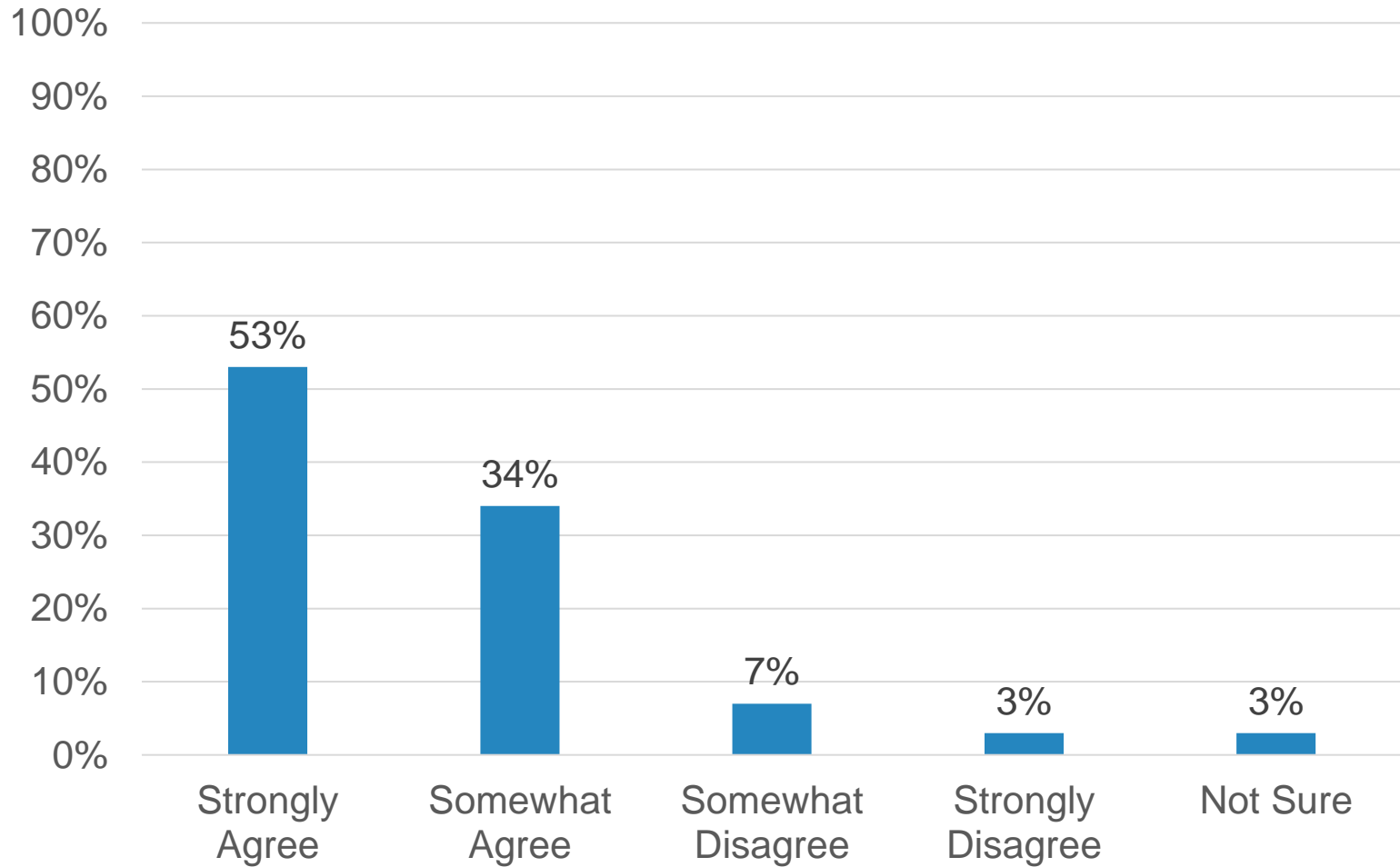
Lifeway research

Q50: "As pastor I meet 1-on-1 with an individual or family for discipleship each week." n=692

# Building Community within the Church

Lifeway research

# 88% agree their church has a plan to foster community in their church

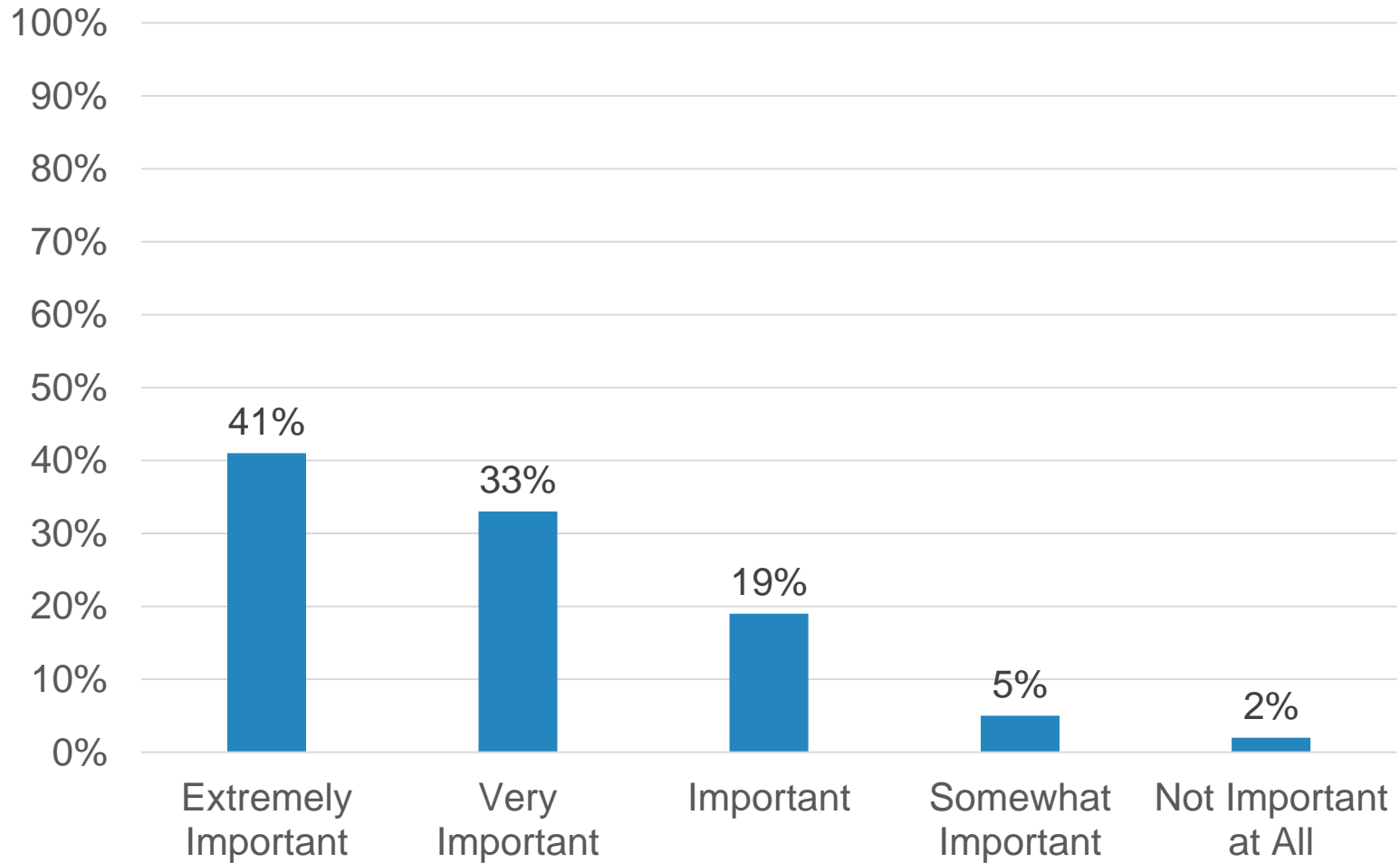


Lifeway research

Q49: "Our church has a plan or strategy to foster community in our church." n=692



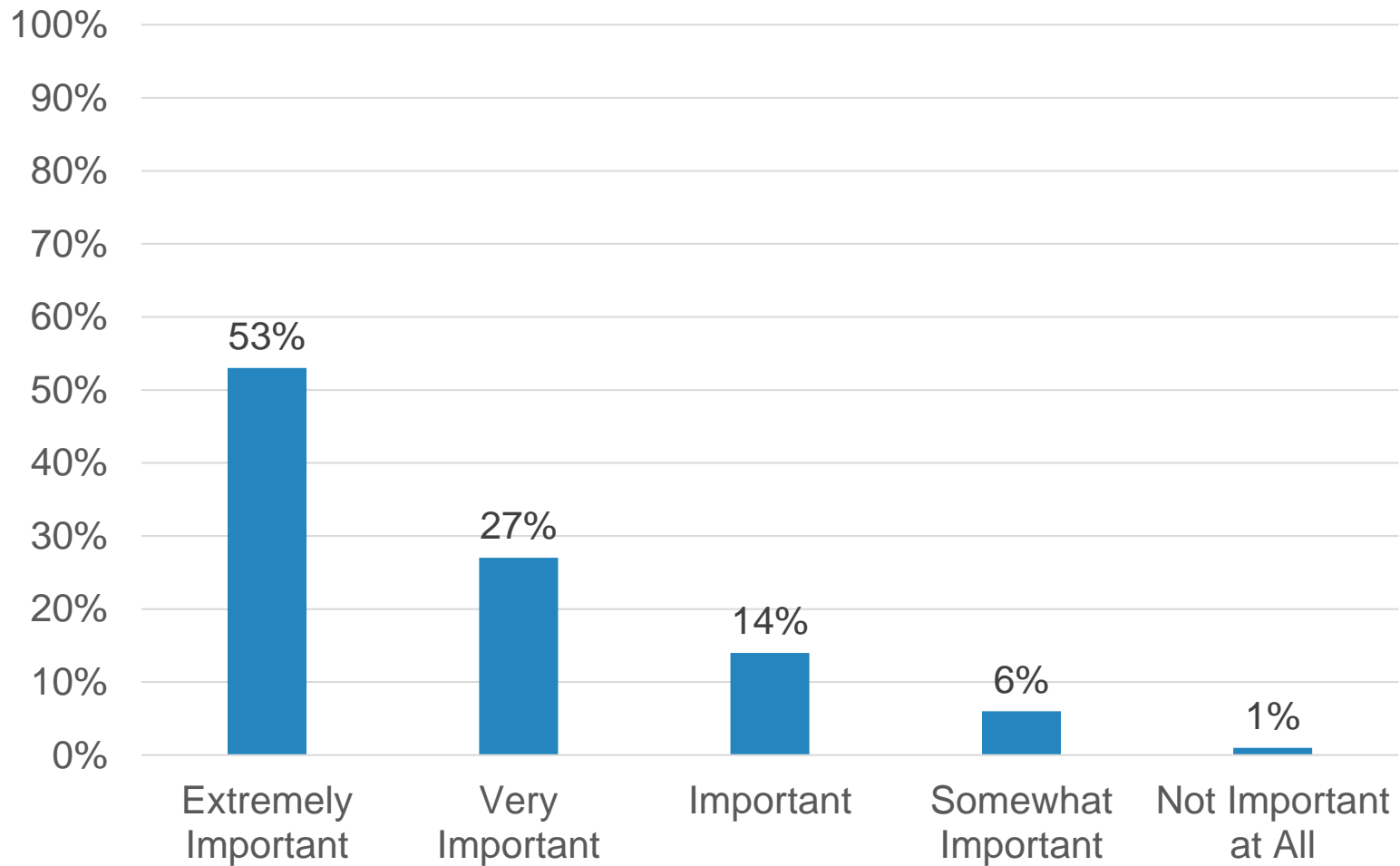
# Sharing resources with each other (food, clothing, job assistance, money for electric bill, etc.)



Lifeway research

Q51\_1: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row)  
Sharing resources with each other (food, clothing, job assistance, money for electric bill, etc.)" n=389

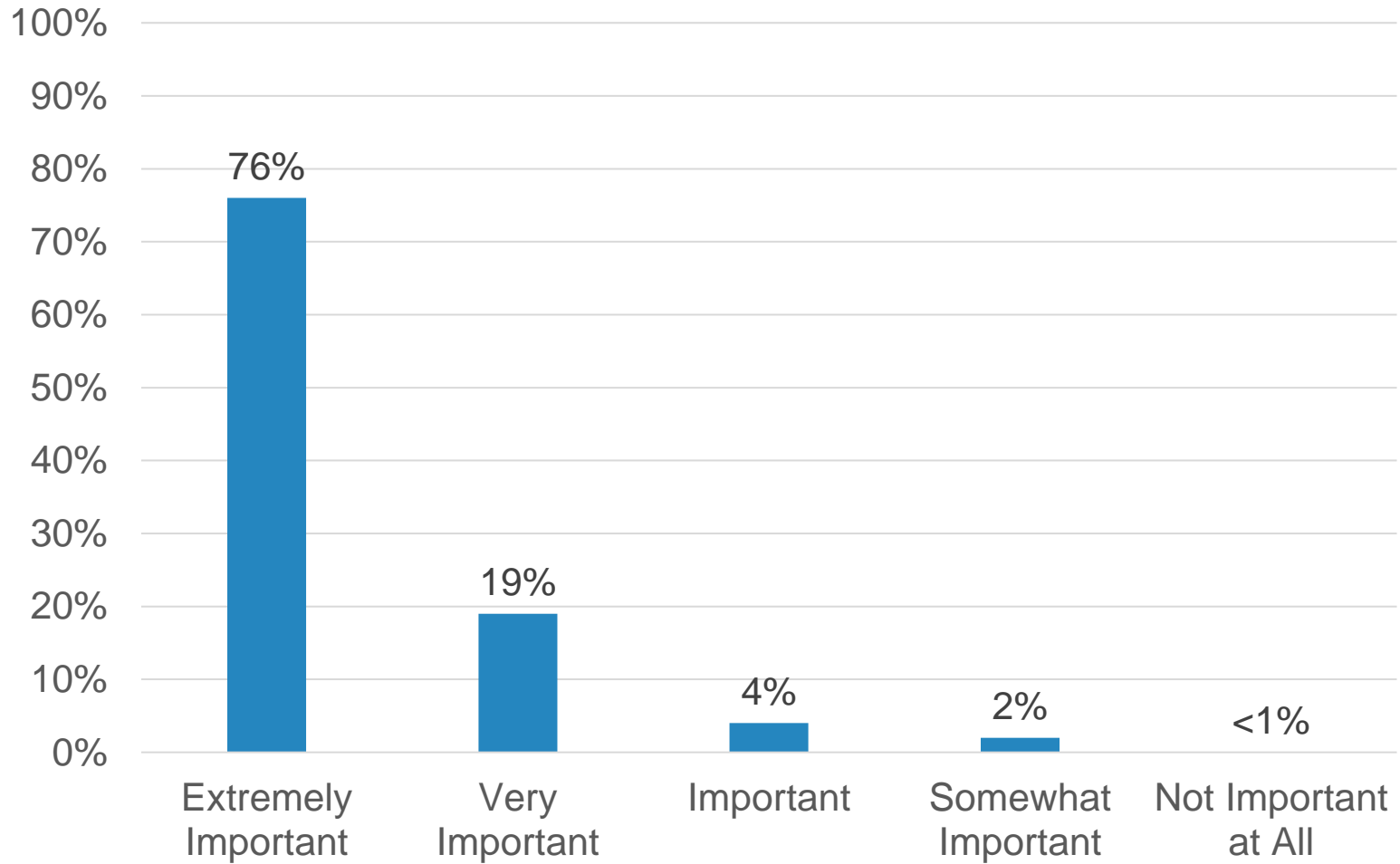
# Members working together to serve the people in their local community



**Lifeway**research

Q51\_2: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row)  
Members working together to serve the people in their local community" n=389

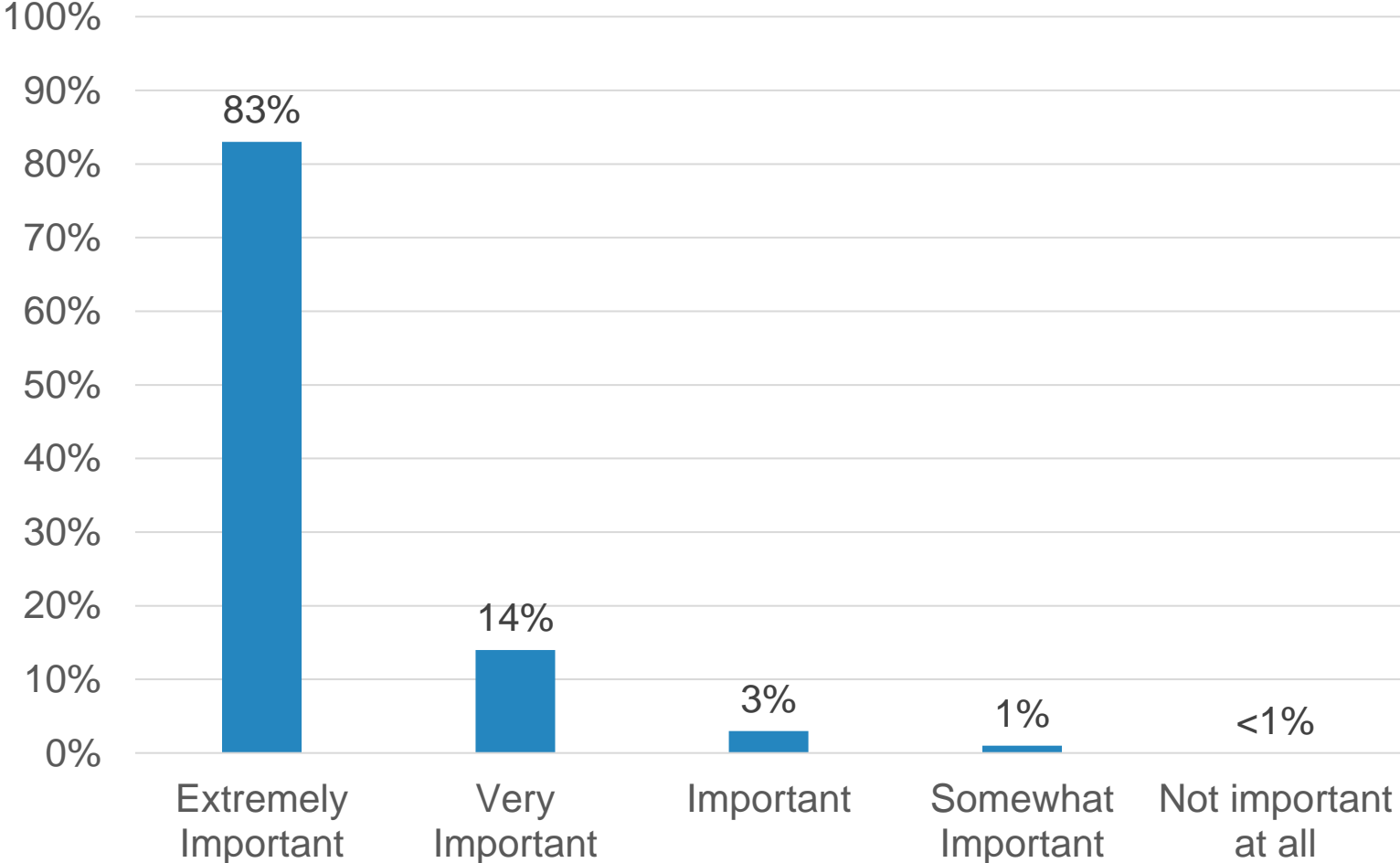
# Studying the Bible together



Lifeway research

Q51\_3: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row) Studying the Bible together" n=389

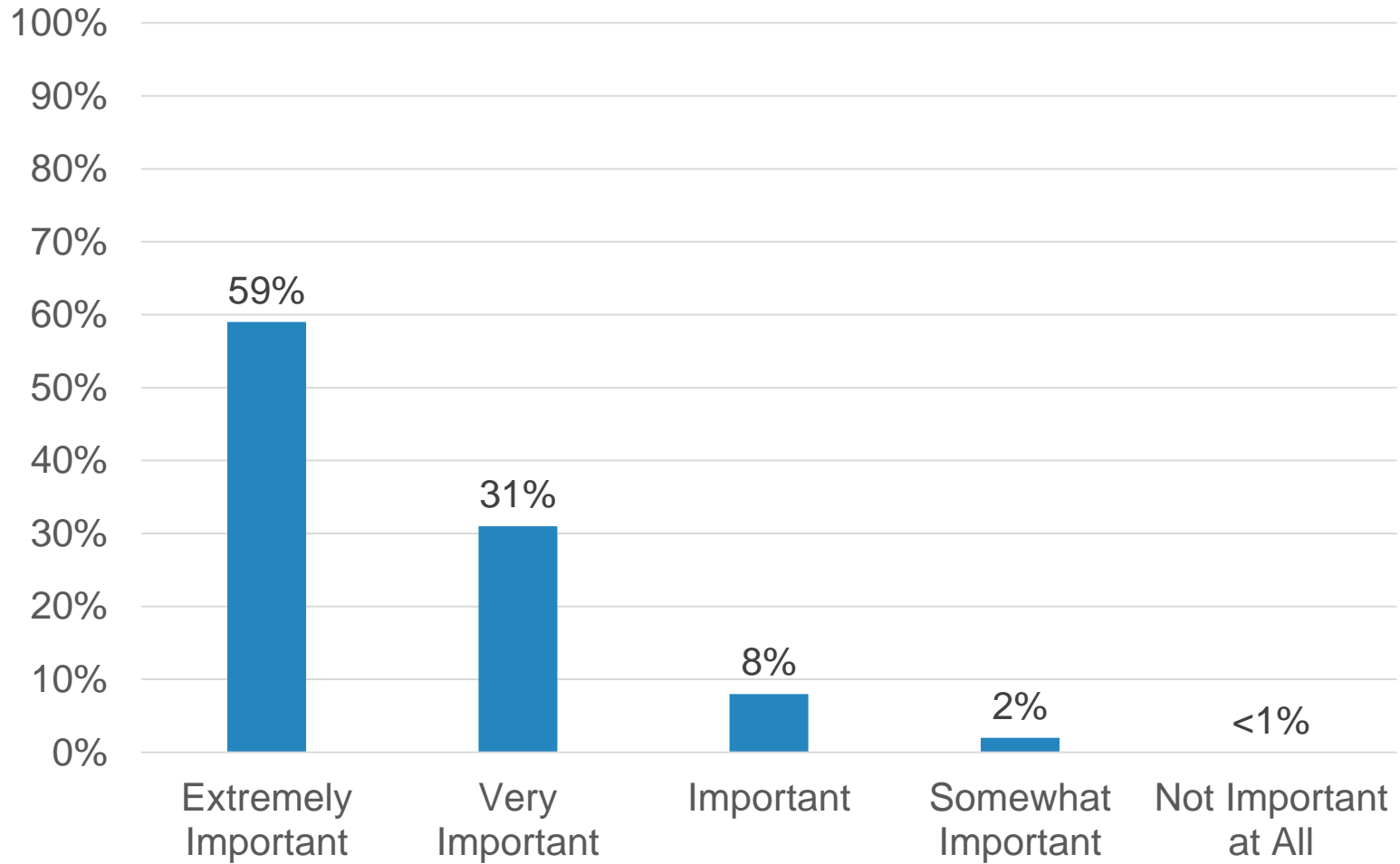
# Praying together



Lifeway research

Q51\_4: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row) Praying together" n=389

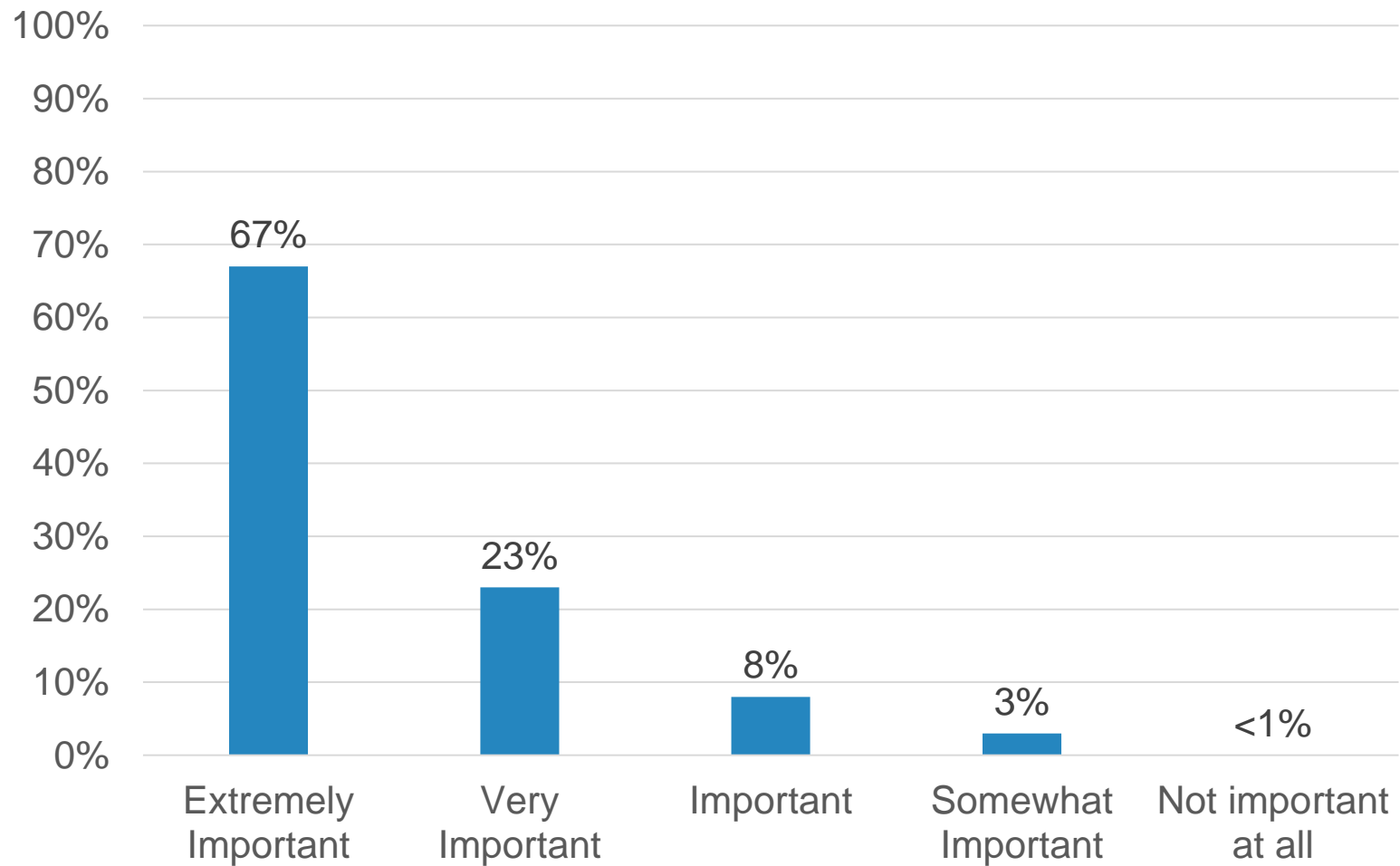
# Checking-in/noticing when others are absent



Lifeway research

Q51\_5: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row)  
Checking-in/noticing when others are absent" n=389

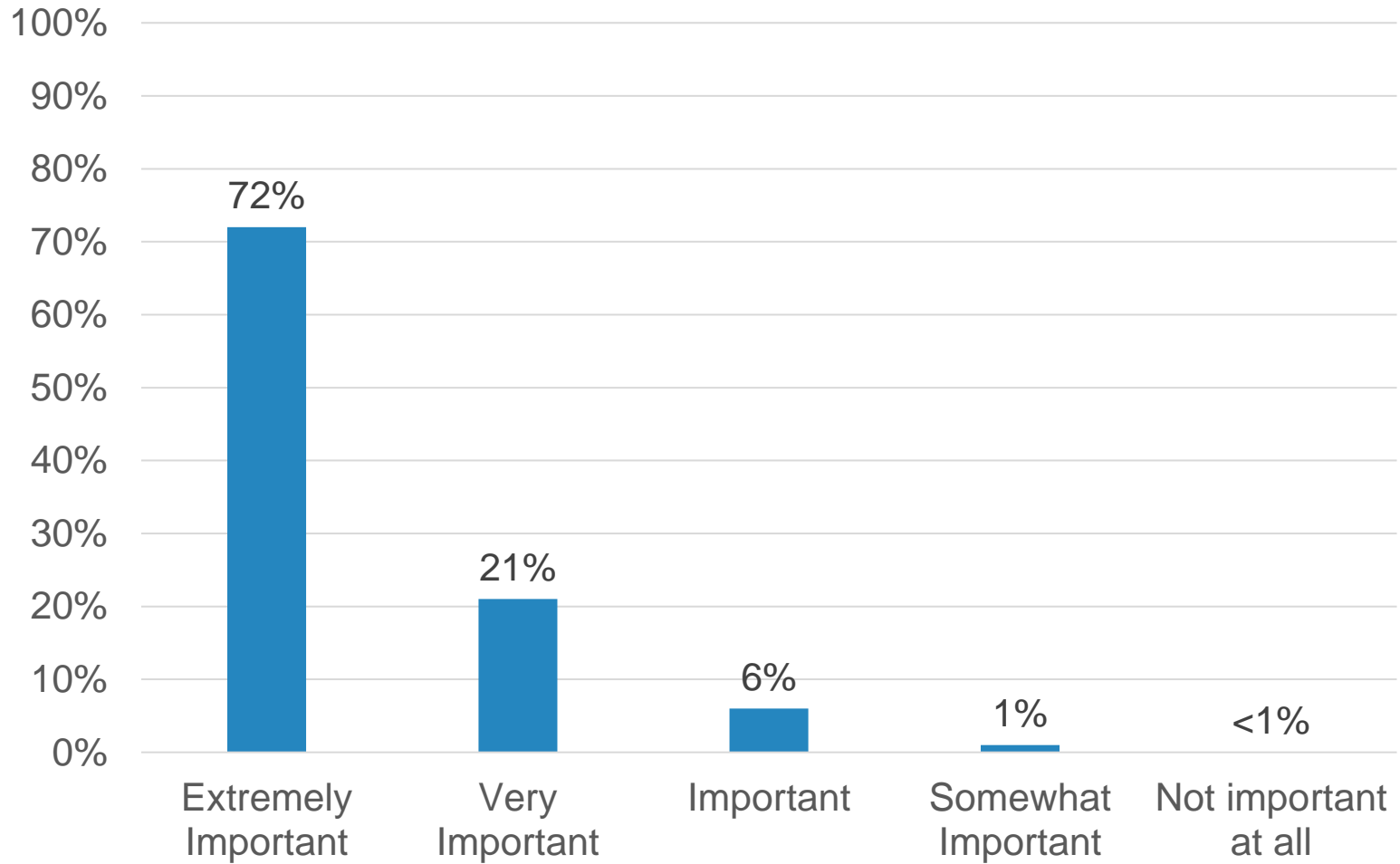
# Choosing to be transparent and accountable with one another



Lifeway research

Q51\_6: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row)  
Choosing to be transparent and accountable with one another" n=389

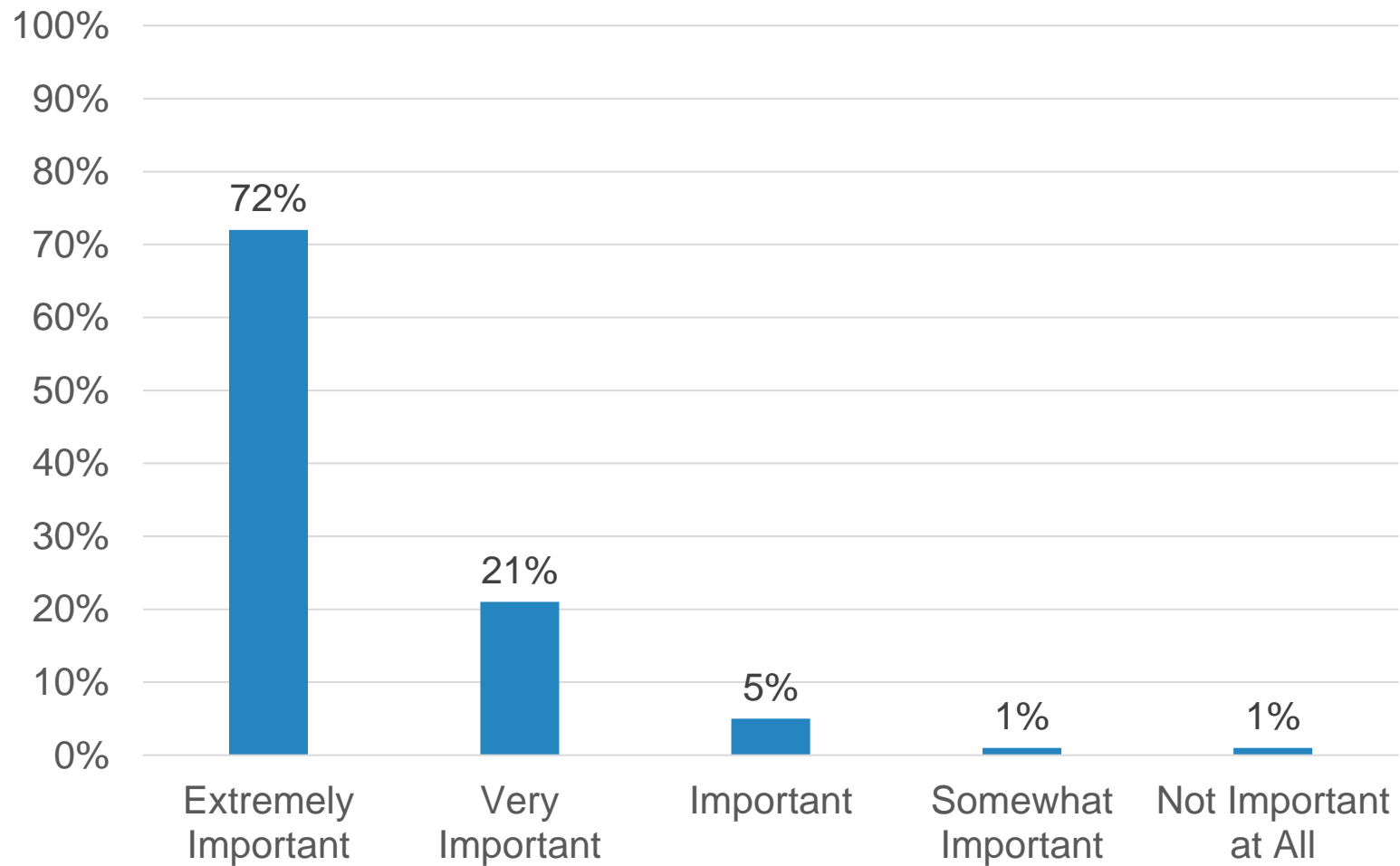
# Choosing to get along and promoting unity



**Lifeway**research

Q51\_7: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row) Choosing to get along and promoting unity" n=389

# Welcoming those from different cultures and backgrounds

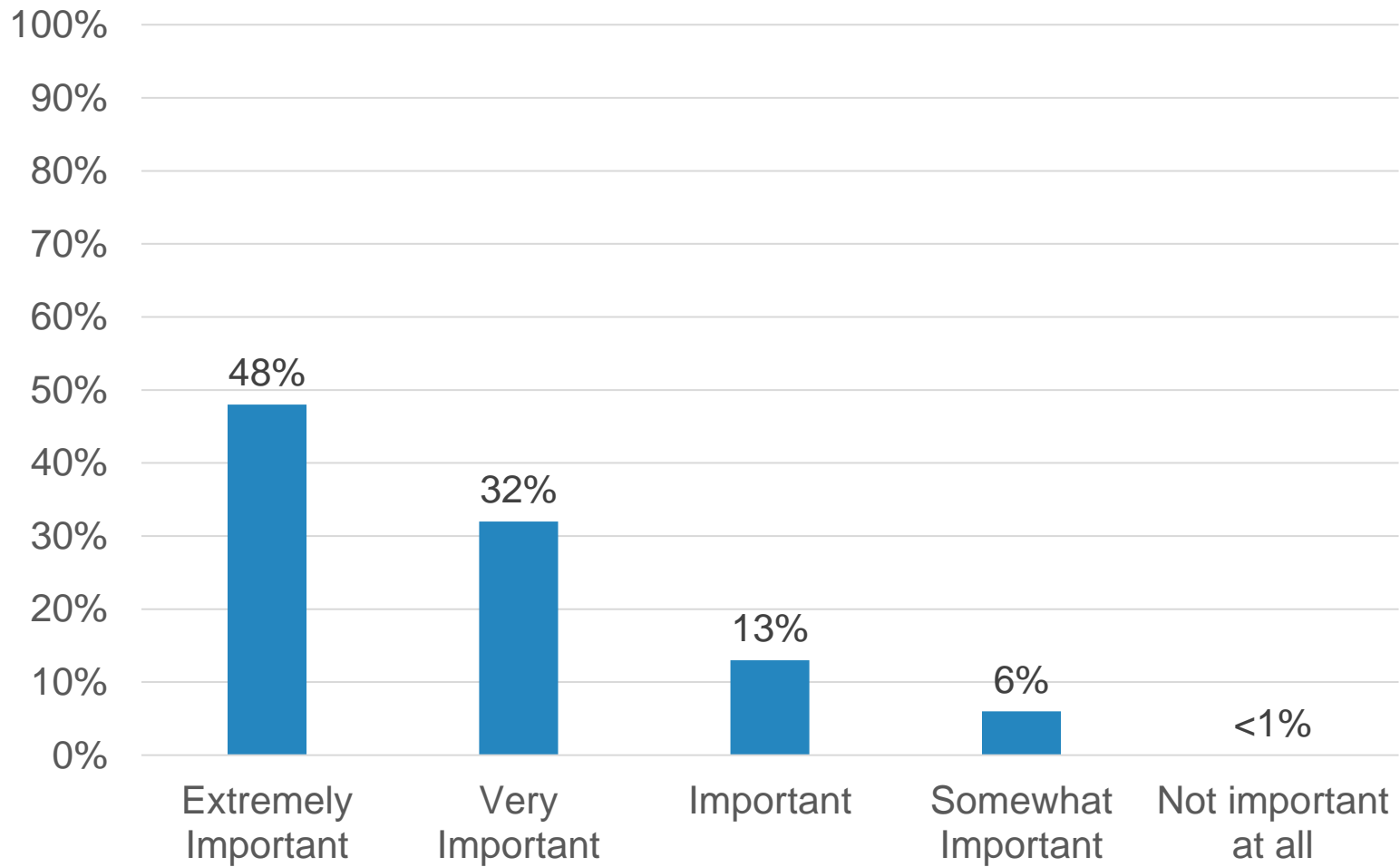


Lifeway research

Q51\_8: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row)  
Welcoming those from different cultures and backgrounds" n=389



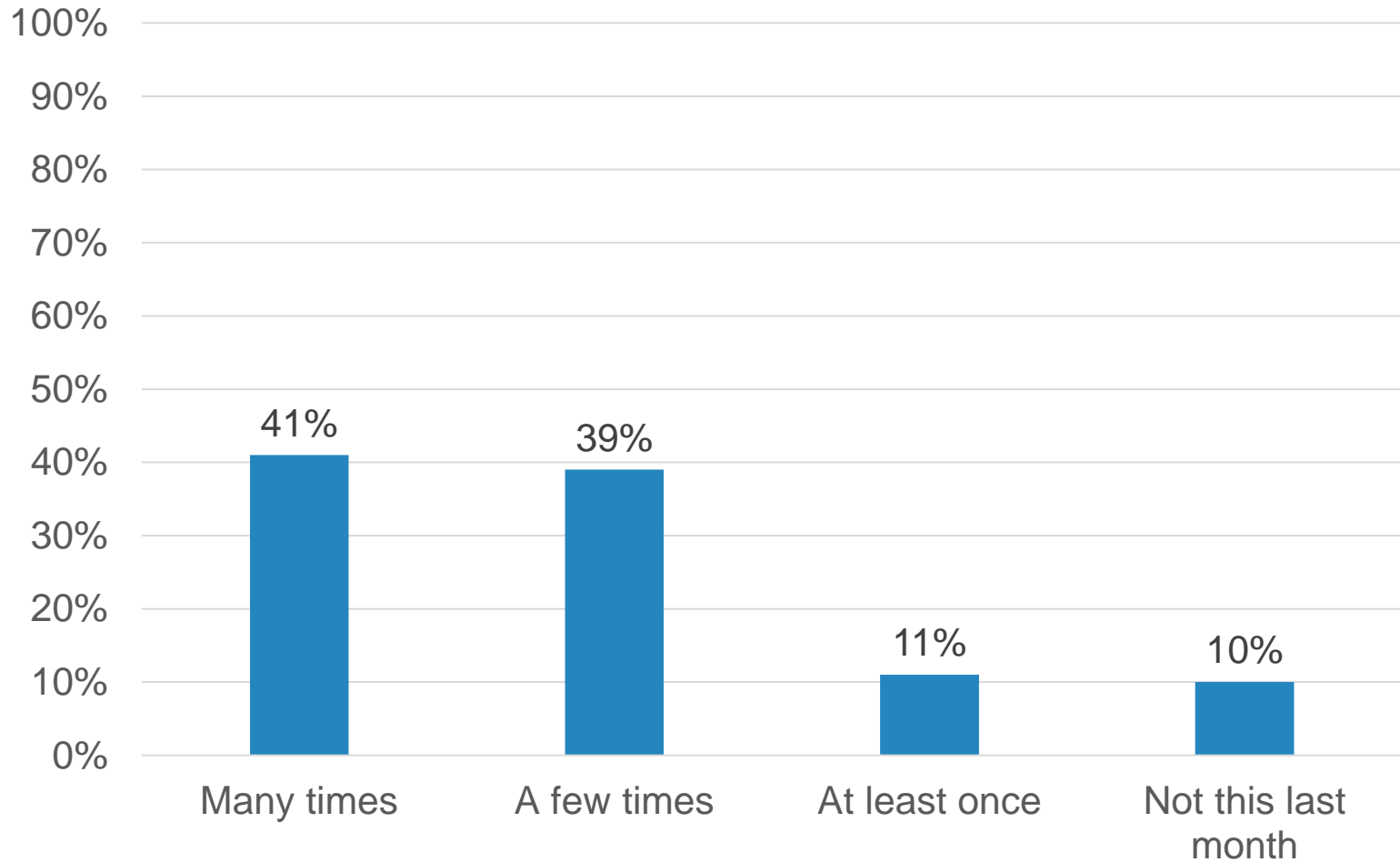
# Socializing with each other outside of church



Lifeway research

Q51\_9: "How important are each of the following to practice a strong sense of community within a local church? (Select one answer for each row)  
Socializing with each other outside of church" n=389

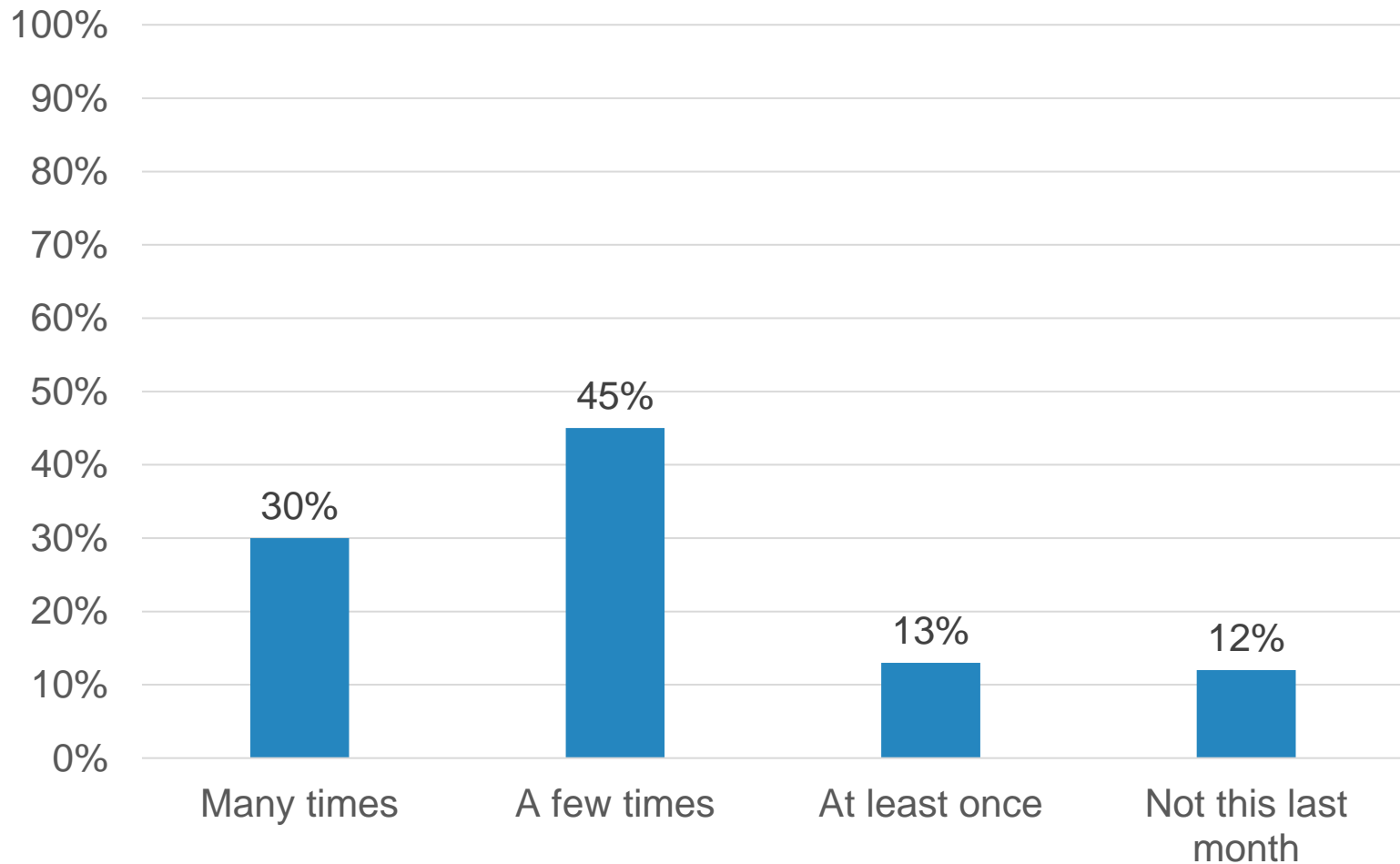
# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Sharing resources with each other



**Lifeway**research

Q52\_1: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Sharing resources with each other (food, clothing, job assistance, money for electric bill, etc.)**" n=389

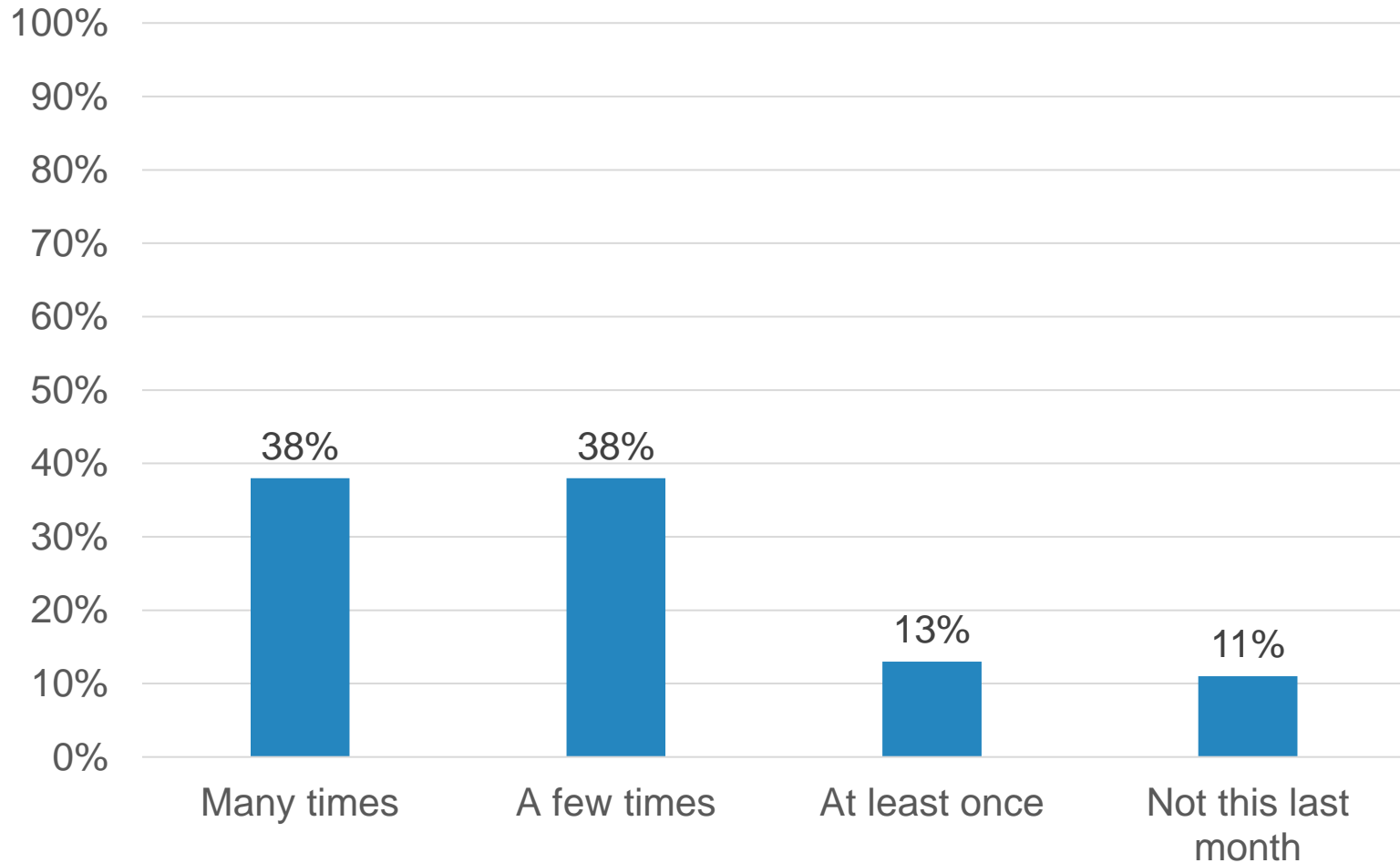
# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Working together to serve the people in their local community



Lifeway research

Q52\_2: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Members working together to serve the people in their local community**" n=389

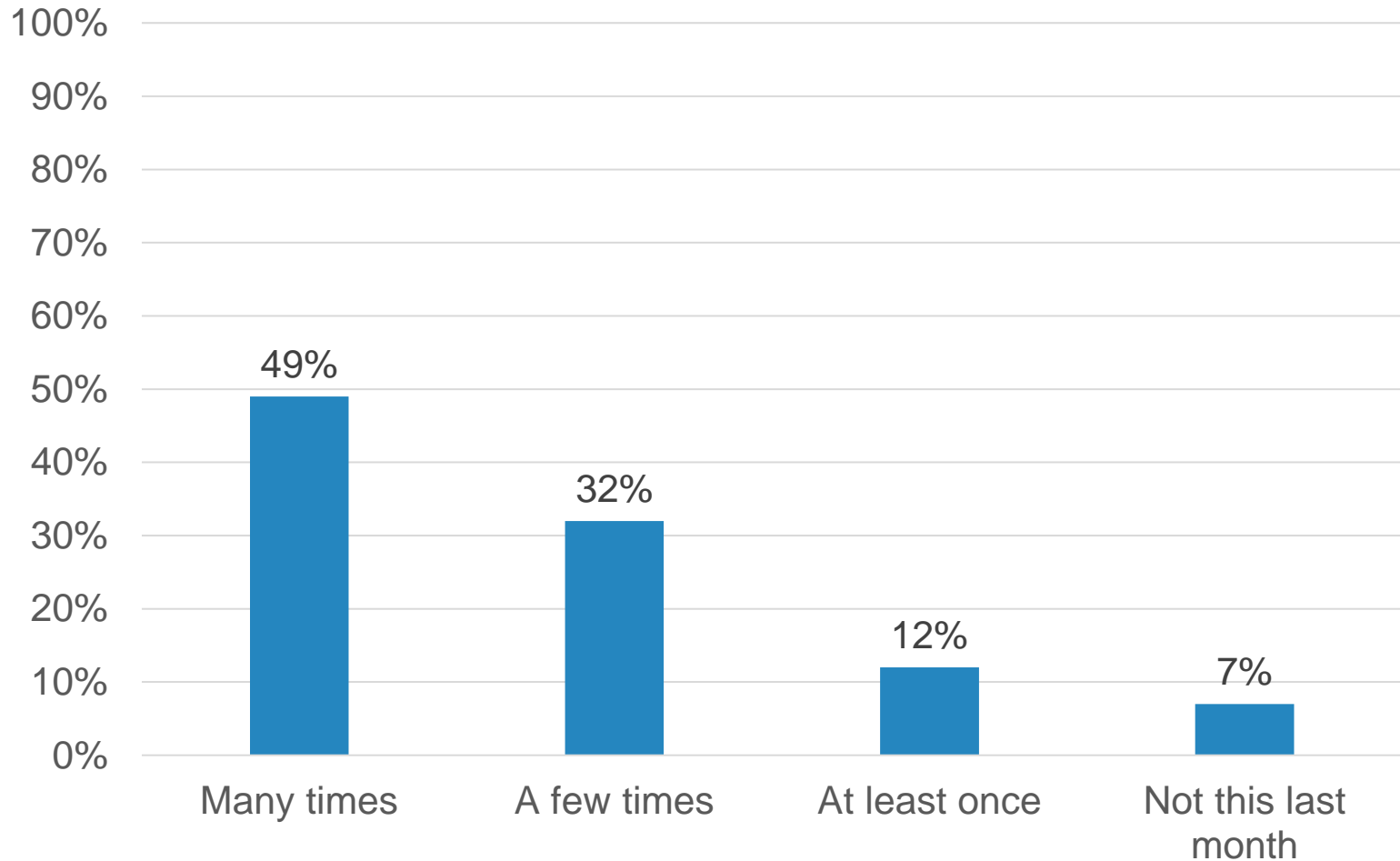
# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Studying the Bible together outside of church services



Lifeway research

Q52\_3: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) Studying the Bible together outside of church services" n=389

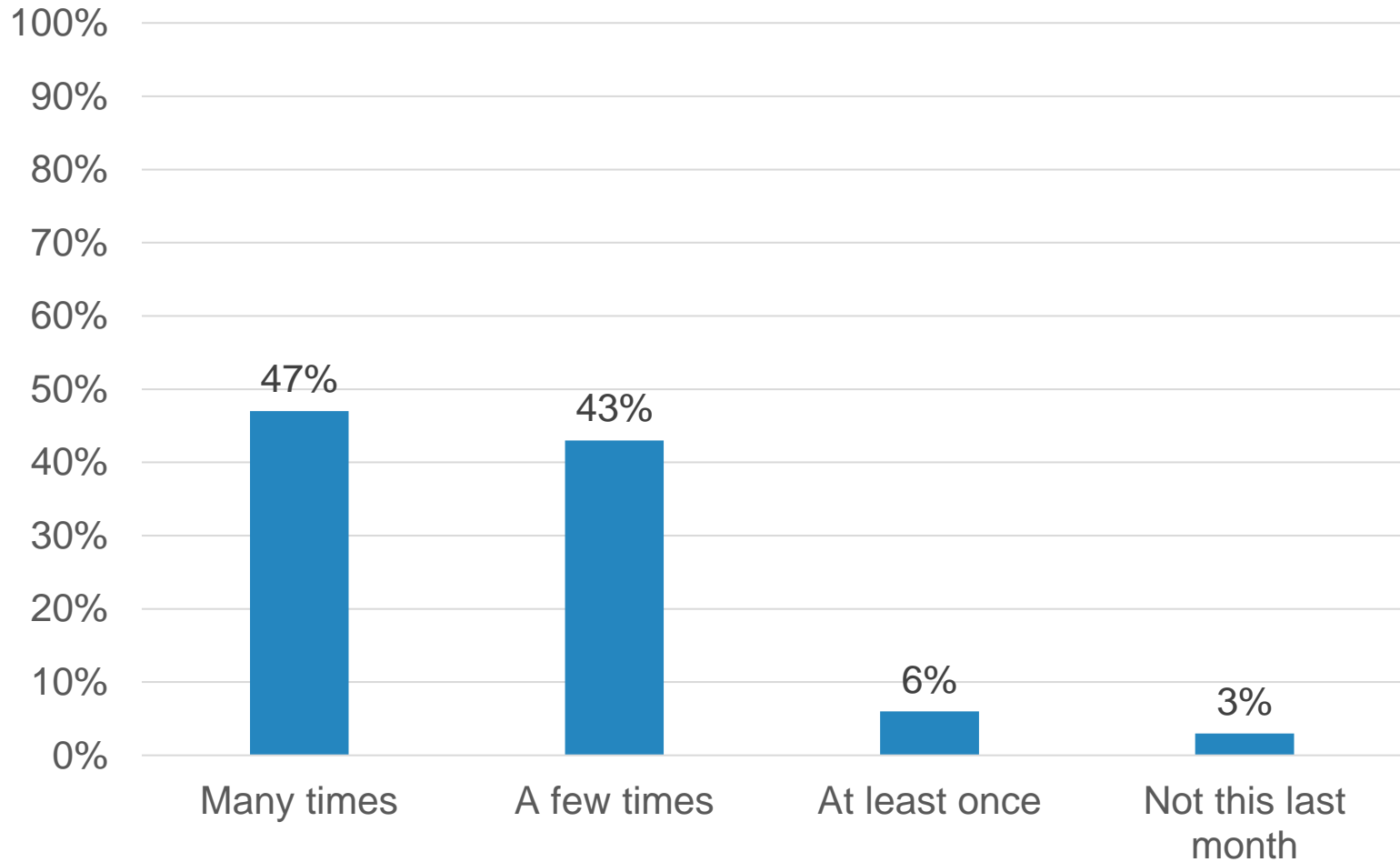
# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Praying together outside of church services



Lifeway research

Q52\_4: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Praying together outside of church services**" n=389

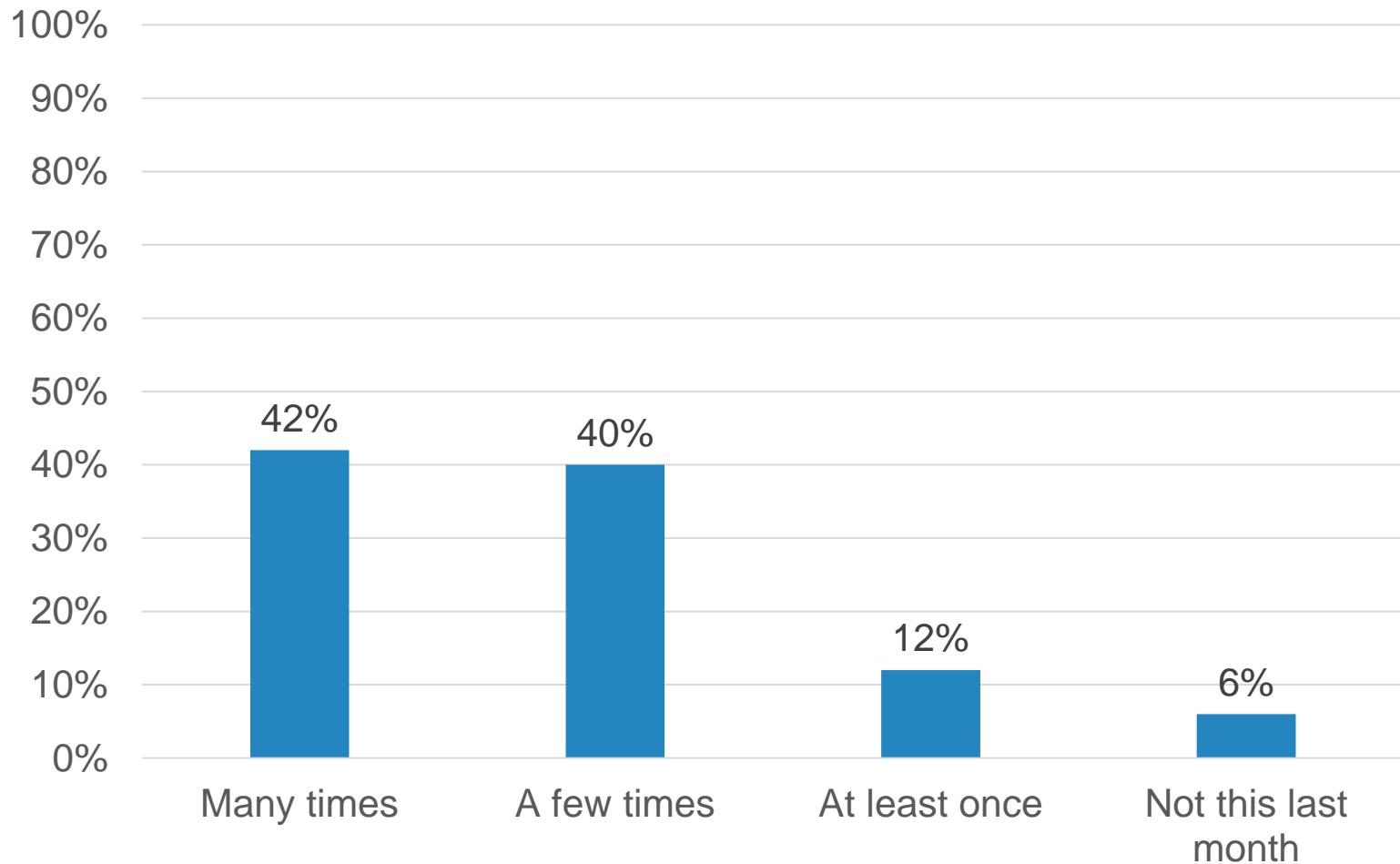
# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Checking-in/noticing when others are absent



Lifeway research

Q52\_5: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Checking-in/noticing when others are absent**" n=389

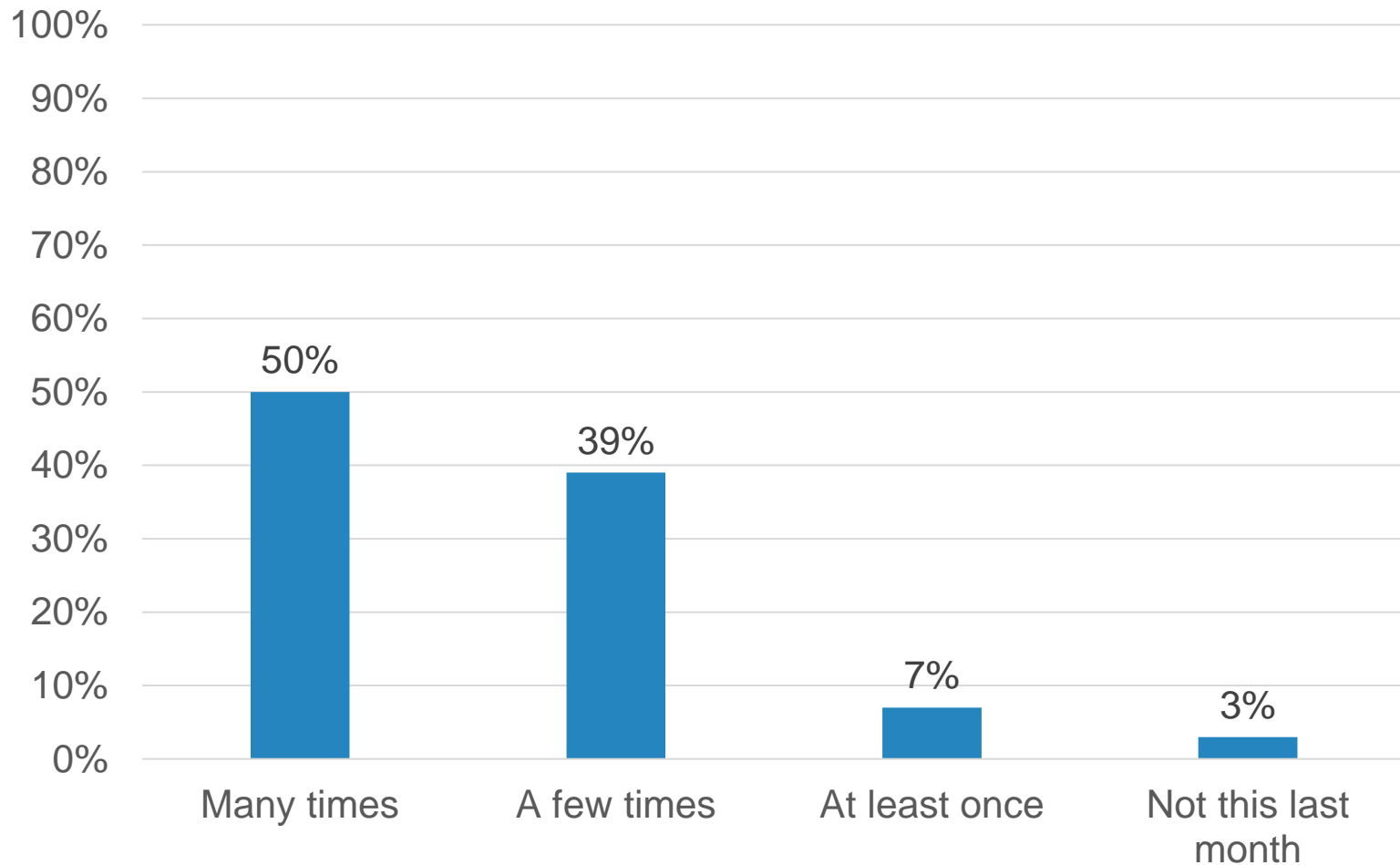
# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Being transparent and accountable with one another



Lifeway research

Q52\_6: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Choosing to be transparent and accountable with one another**" n=389

# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Choosing to get along and promoting unity

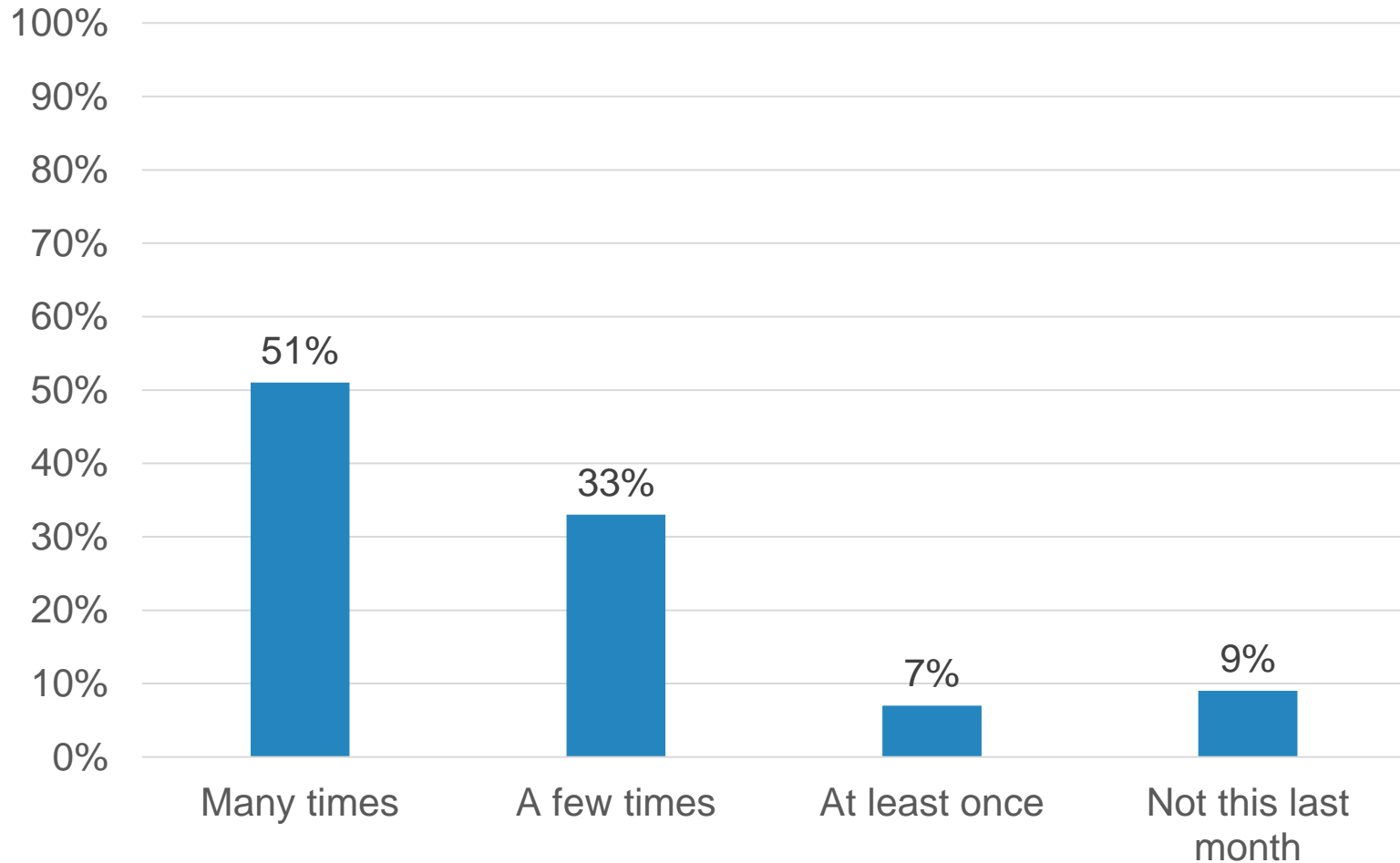


Lifeway research

Q52\_7: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Choosing to get along and promoting unity**" n=389



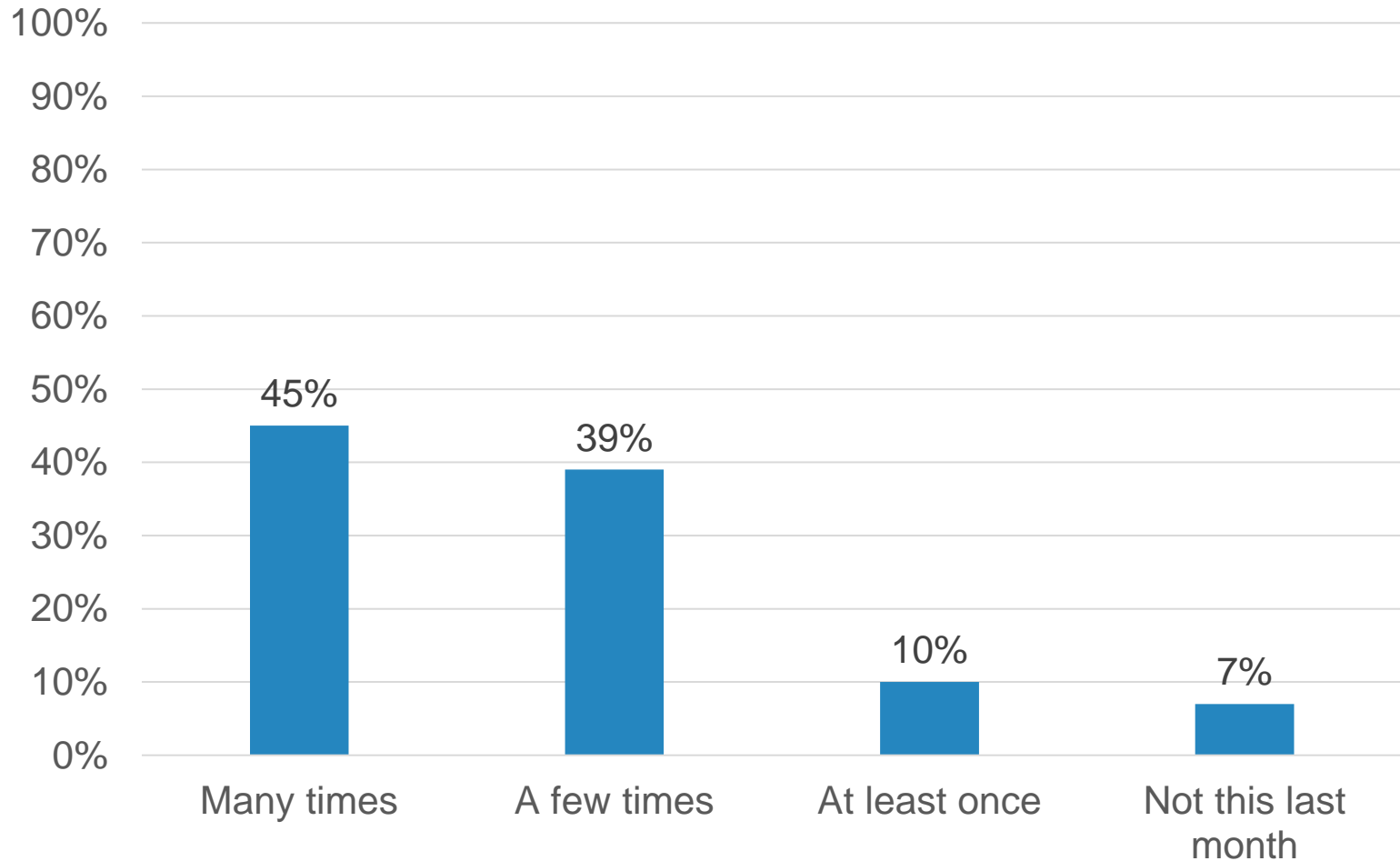
# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Welcoming those from different cultures and backgrounds



Lifeway research

Q52\_8: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Welcoming those from different cultures and backgrounds**" n=389

# In the last month, pastors have heard about their congregation: Socializing with each other outside of church



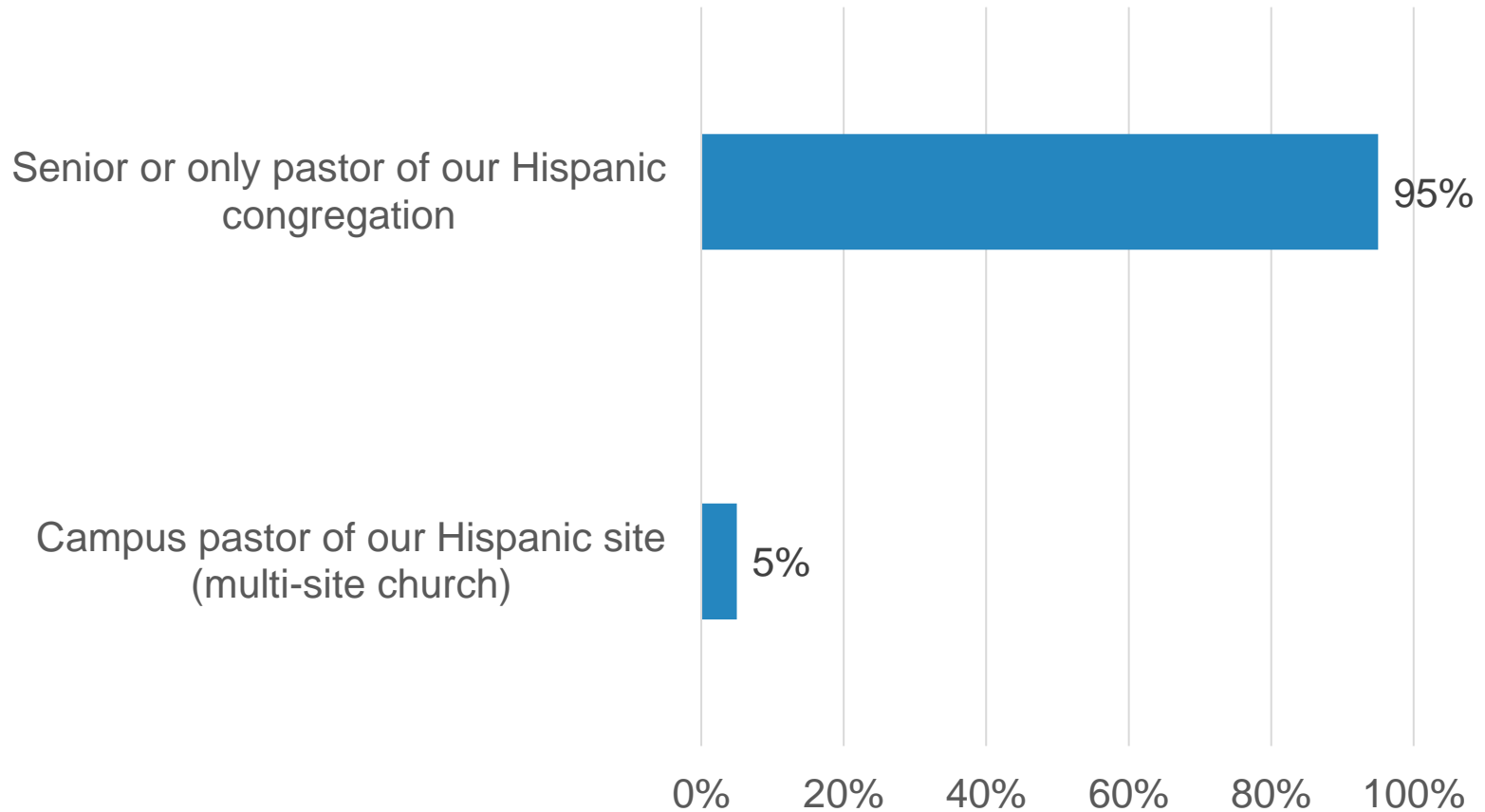
Lifeway research

Q52\_9: "In the last month, how regularly have you heard news about your congregation demonstrating each of these actions? (Select one answer for each row) **Socializing with each other outside of church**" n=389

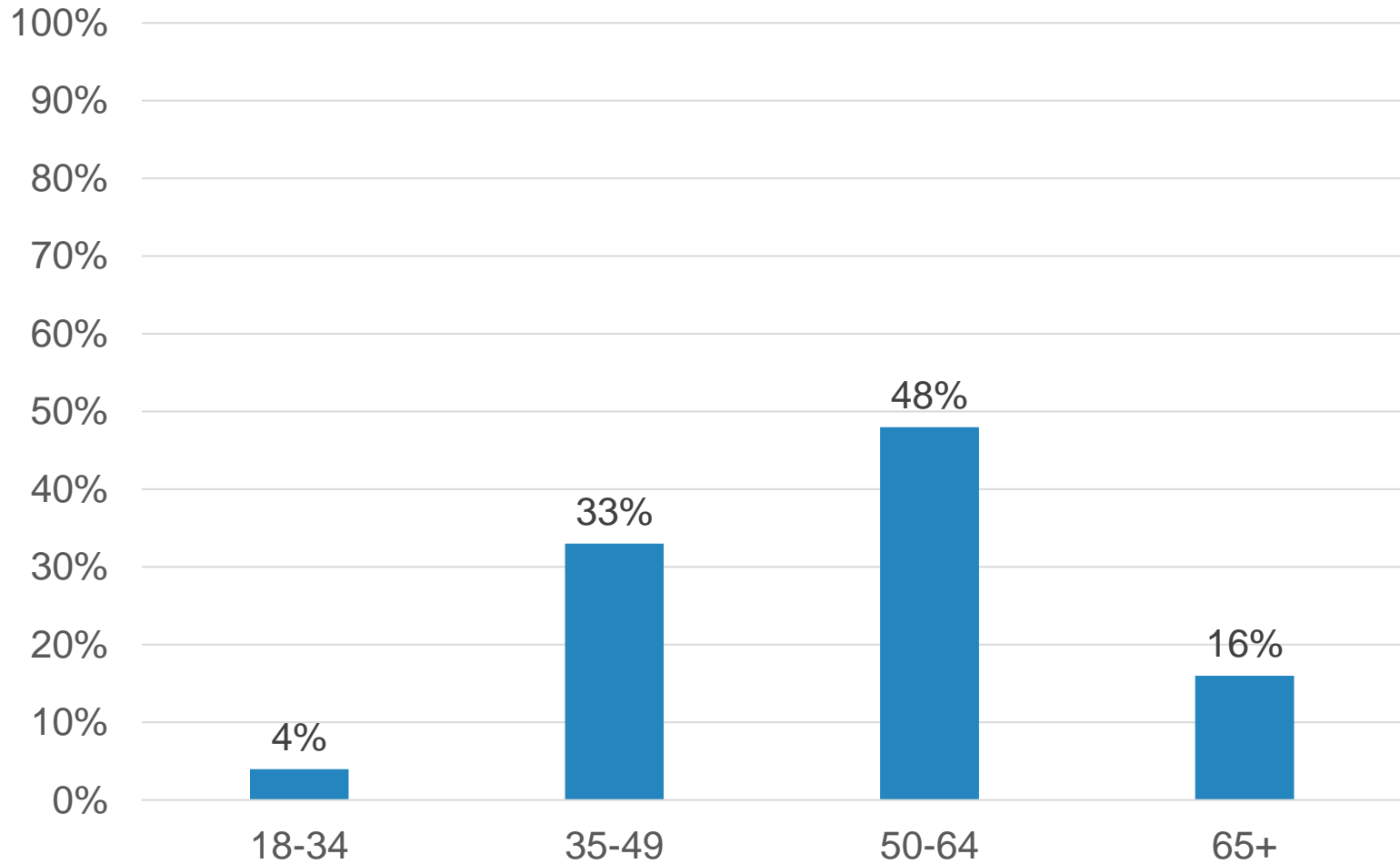
# Pastors of Hispanic Congregations

Lifeway [research](#)

# Role of participating pastors



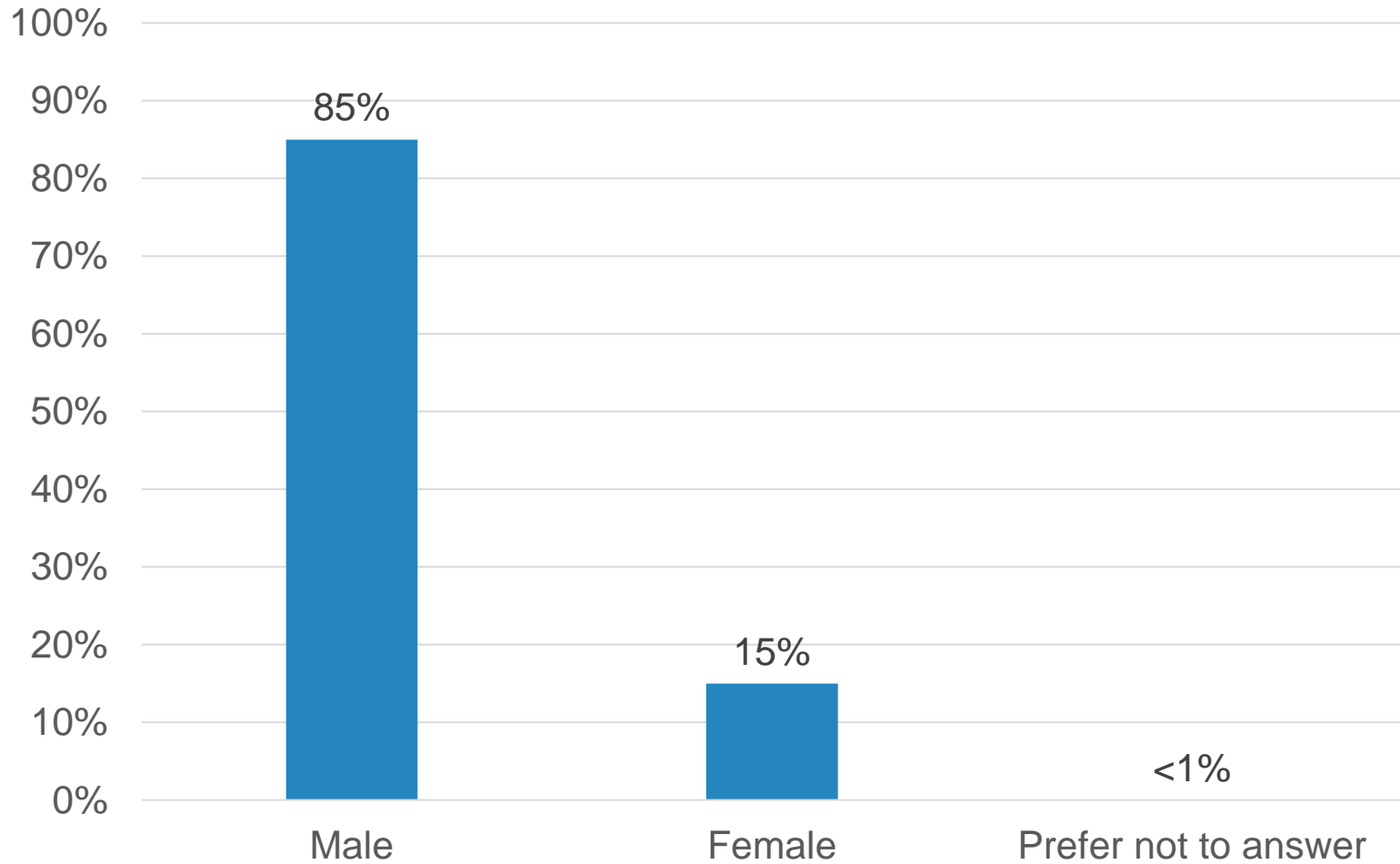
# Age of participating pastors



**Lifeway**research

Q3: "What is your age" n=692

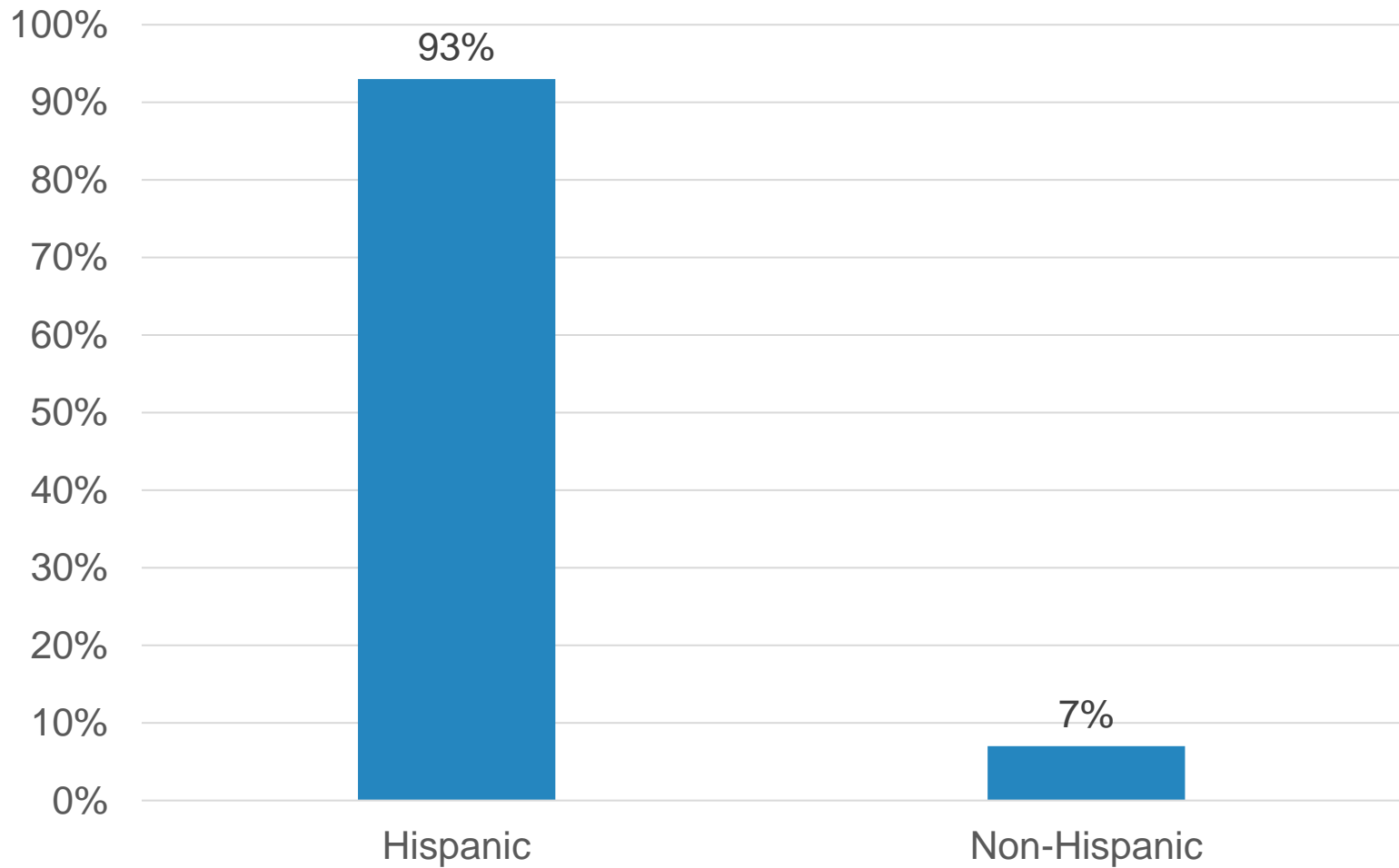
# Gender of participating pastors



**Lifeway**research

Q53: "What is your gender?" n=691

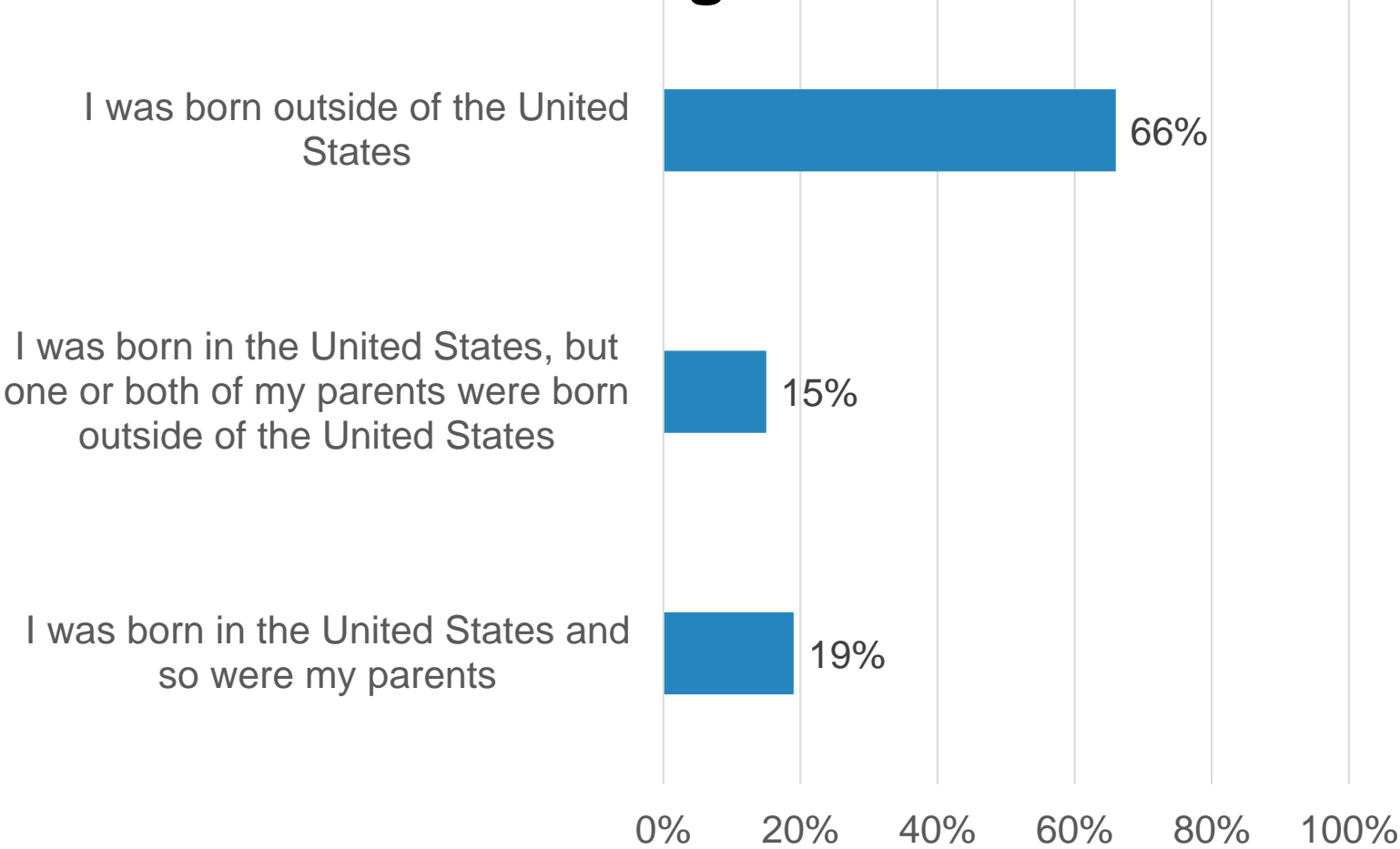
# Ethnic background of pastors of participating Hispanic congregations



**Lifeway**research

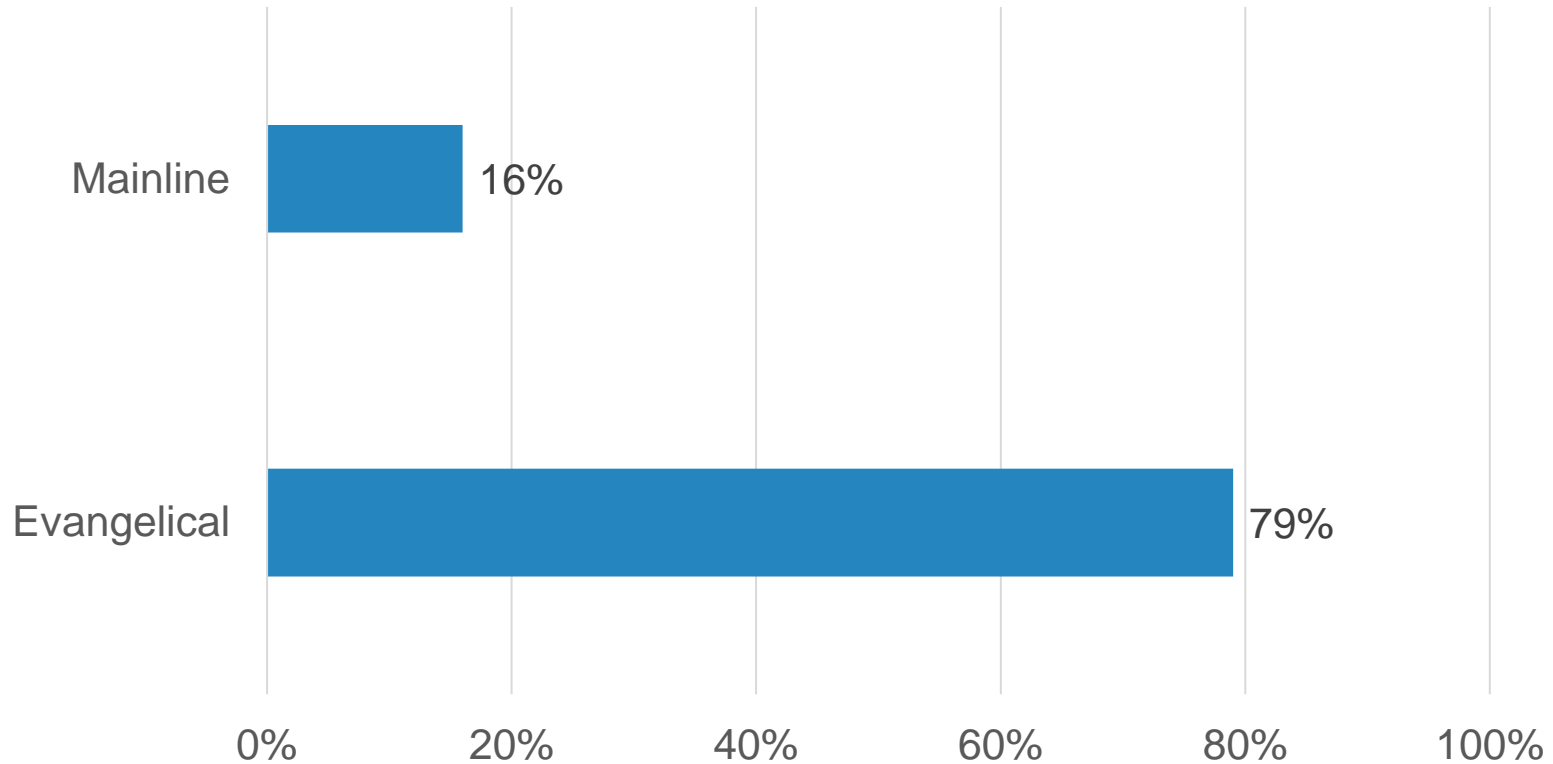
Q54: "Which of the following best represents your ethnic background?" n=692

# Two-thirds of pastors of Hispanic congregations are first generation immigrants





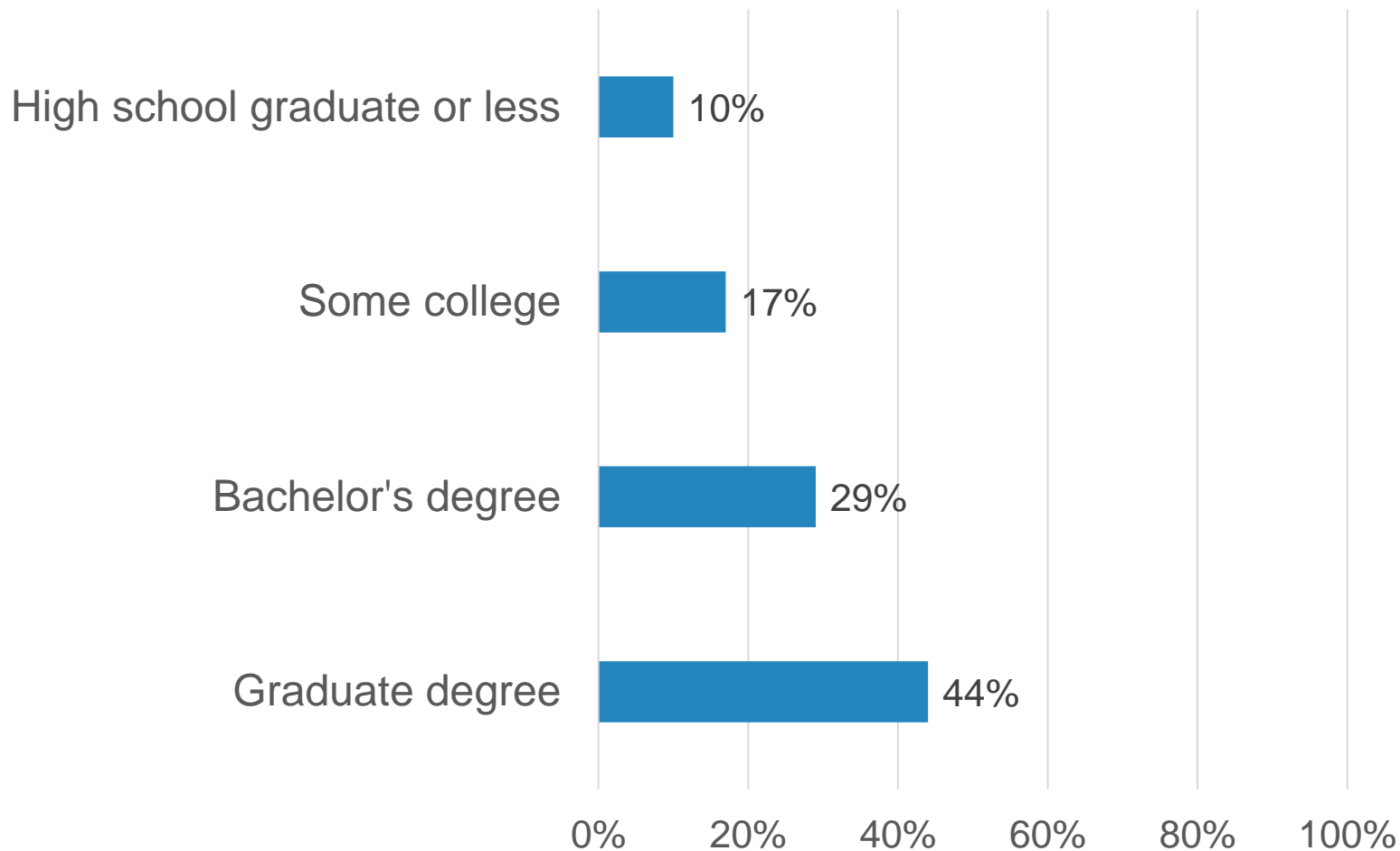
# Self-identified theological beliefs of participating pastors of Hispanic congregations



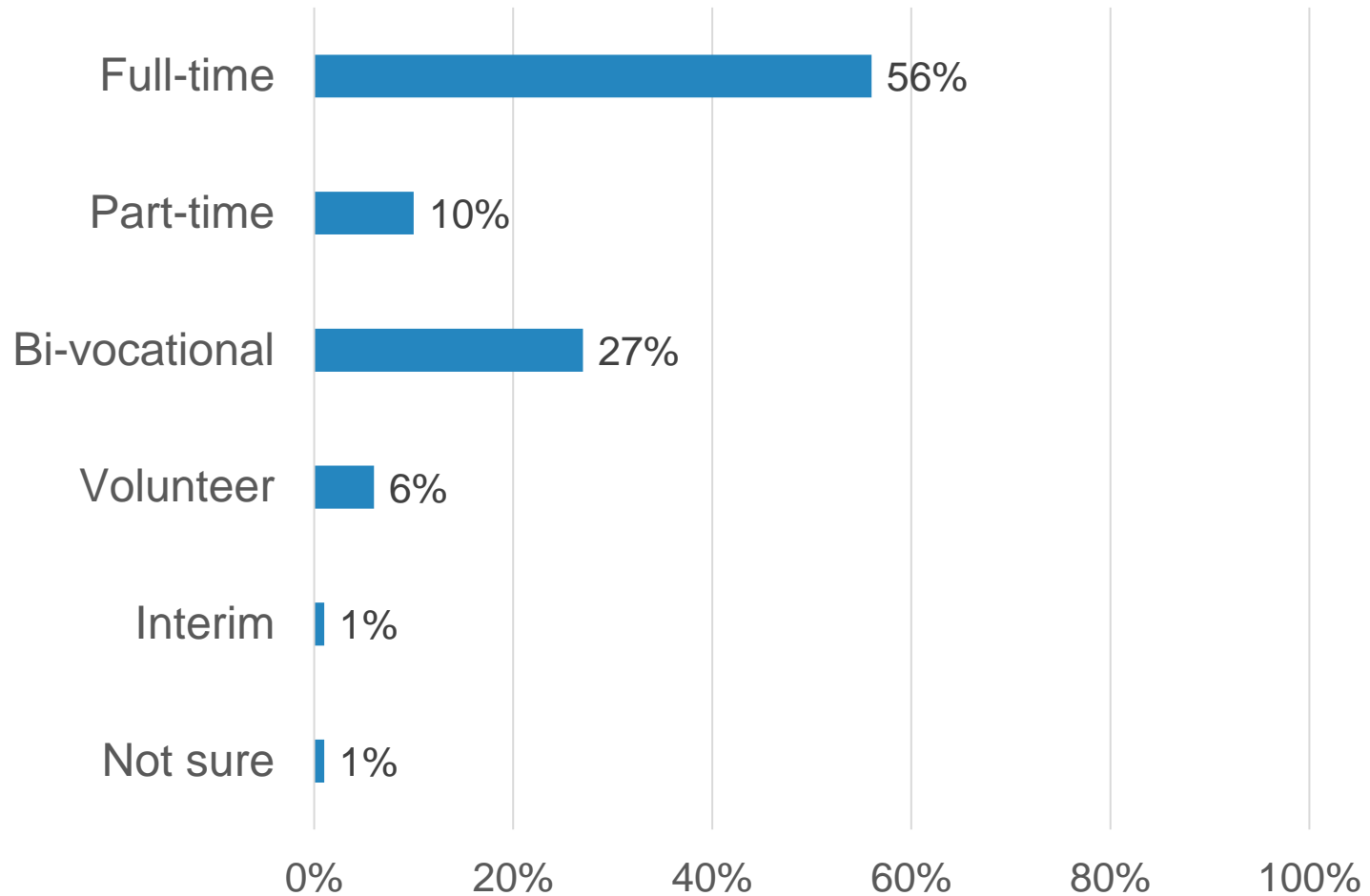
**Lifeway** research

Q56: "Do you consider yourself any of the following (Select all that apply)" n=692

# Education level of participating pastors of Hispanic congregations



# Church employment status of participating pastors of Hispanic congregations



Lifeway research

Q58: "Which of the following best describes your employment status in your church? (Select One)" n=692

**Lifeway** research

# Hispanic American Church Study

A SURVEY OF PASTORS OF HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE U.S.

Sponsored by Lifeway Recursos, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and Samaritan's Purse

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