

21st Century Evangelicals

A snapshot of the beliefs and habits of
evangelical Christians in the UK - Summer 2013

Life in the church?



Research by the Evangelical Alliance

Introduction

What is a typical evangelical Christian? What contributions do they make to society? What do they believe? What is distinctive about their lifestyle? What opinions do they hold about the most pressing issues of the day?

These are just some of the questions that the Evangelical Alliance is exploring as part of an ongoing study into the beliefs, habits and practices of evangelical Christians in the UK. The answers will help Christian leaders and the Church at large to understand their social context, and to make more effective plans for mission and ministry in the world today.

In January 2011 our groundbreaking *21st Century Evangelicals* research reported on our survey of more than 17,000 people. Since then more than 3,000 have agreed to join our panel. In partnership with eight other Christian organisations, we ask this panel questions on different themes to produce regular reports, and usually have more than 1,500 responses each time.

These are our reports so far, containing fascinating information on evangelicals' beliefs, opinions and experiences:

- *Do we value education?* (February 2013)
- *Confidently sharing the gospel?* (November 2012)
- *Does money matter?* (September 2012)
- *The World on our doorstep?* (May 2012)
- *How's the Family?* (February 2012)
- *Are we communicating?* (December 2011)
- *Does Belief touch society?* (September 2011)
- *21st Century Evangelicals* (January 2011)

We hope that you will find the reports interesting and that they will spark conversations and ideas.

At eauk.org/snapshot you can:

- download all the reports and order paper copies
- access free downloadable Powerpoint presentations and discussion questions to further explore the issues raised
- get involved by joining the research panel

"Evangelicals are facing fierce new challenges today; these surveys give valuable insights to the Christian leaders and organisations that serve them and must help them navigate the road ahead."

Ruth Marriott, Wycliffe Bible Translators

"These are such fantastic little booklets, jam-packed with fascinating and thought-provoking information. We plan to encourage our cell groups to use them for prayer and discussion in the 'witness' section of their meetings, and to that end we are making a copy available for each church member, along with some discussion-starter questions and suggestions for prayer."

Louise Chick, Network Church St Albans

"The *Confidently sharing the gospel?* research highlighted that many Christians are too scared to share the gospel, and that they often doubt that such sharing is even necessary. The report provided a useful stimulus to our church to continue to teach others about why we share the gospel, and how."

Ben Epps, pastor, Longmeadow and Immanuel Evangelical Churches, Stevenage



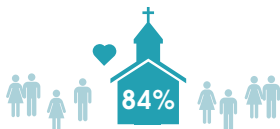
Snapshot: Life in the Church?



of evangelicals think every church should faithfully teach the Bible as the word of God.



feel confident they could invite a non-Christian to their church and that they would feel welcomed.



feel that in their church they belong to a strong caring community.



of sole church leaders are female, while 73% of our panellists think churches should allow women to hold senior leadership positions in the church.



of evangelicals expect their churches to grow over the next 20 years (but only 41% expect the wider Church to grow).



are attending churches which have good links and partnerships with other local churches.



see the theology and doctrinal stance of a church as very important, compared with 8% for the church's denomination.



of those who had moved church said it was because they felt called to serve in a new church, while for 20% it was due to frustrations or difficulties in the previous church.



of church leaders feel their marriage/family life/friendships suffer due to the demands of ministry.



of church leaders say they greatly enjoy their ministry.

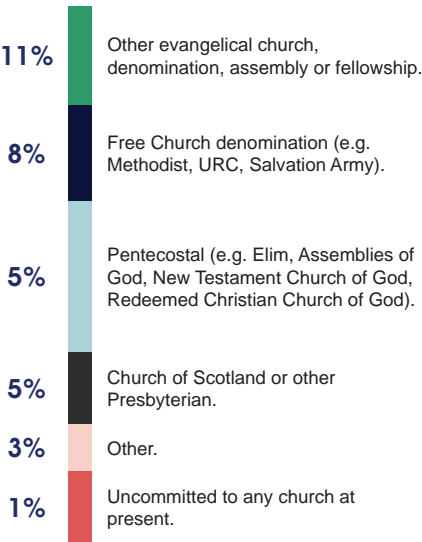
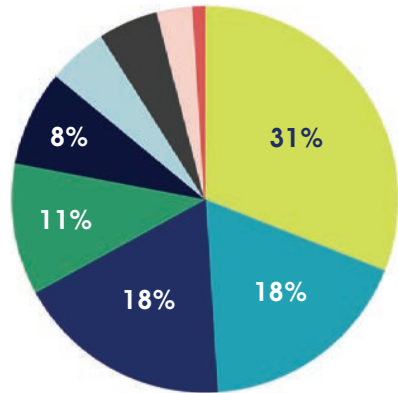
This online survey was carried out in February 2013 and 1,864 people took part, making this by far our most popular quarterly survey. A full data report including additional interesting data is available from g.smith@eauk.org

What sort of churches do we belong to?

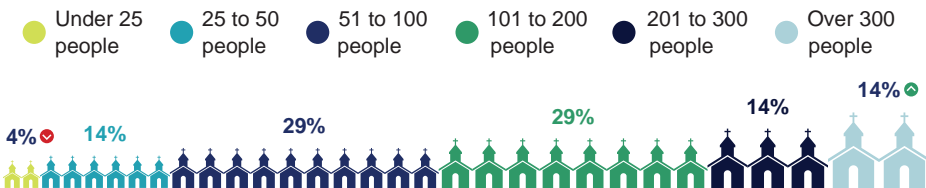
Evangelical Christians are found in a wide variety of churches of different denominations. Around two thirds of our panel were part of Anglican, Baptist or Charismatic streams.

- A higher proportion of Free Church and Anglican respondents were in the older age ranges, while those attending charismatic churches were more likely to be young adults.
- While the majority of evangelicals attend evangelical churches, as many as a third (31%) could not say their church was 'definitely evangelical'.
- 76% were formal members of a church, while another 15% said: "I am very involved and committed but the church does not have a formal membership list."

Denominations our respondents attend



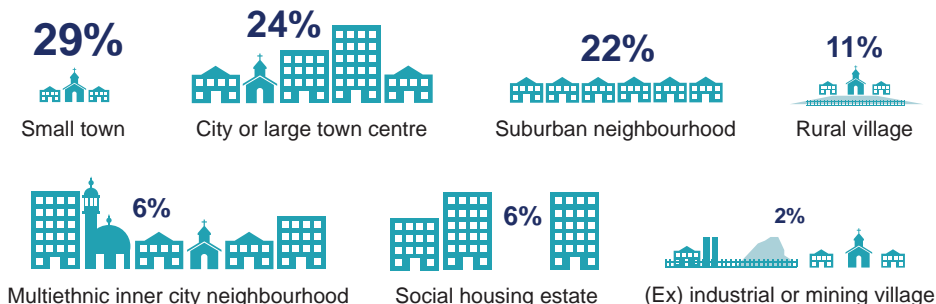
The size of our respondents' church congregations



- ⊕ Pentecostals and city centre locations, especially in London but also in Northern Ireland.
- ⊖ Rural settings and in Free Church denominations.

Location of churches

77% live within three miles of the church, yet over 70% often use a car to get there.



My church...

These arrows indicate some of the inter-group differences which we found particularly interesting

● Agree or strongly agree ↗ More than average

Has good links and partnerships with overseas churches and mission organisations

76%

Has good links and partnerships with other local churches

71%

Has lots of children attending

61%

Is predominantly middle class

59%

Has people from most of the different ethnic and social groups living in our locality

47%

↗ London, Pentecostals, Charismatics and Baptists

Is good at providing for and including people with disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health issues

47%

Is noticeably growing in numbers

47%

Has a large number of committed young people (under-25) attending

41%

↗ South-east, Northern Ireland, Charismatics and large churches

Has noticeably more women than men

37%

Is predominantly elderly

26%

Is always struggling financially

16%

What styles of worship do we prefer?

Different churches have different styles of worship, and diverse worship styles are also often found within a single church.



The most popular seems to be *contemporary worship with songs, prayers and a talk*, attended and enjoyed by 77% of respondents and *communion service, Lord's Supper or Eucharist*, attended and enjoyed by 75%.

In contrast only 10% attend and enjoy *traditional Prayer Book/liturgical service/Service of the Word* while 42% say they are glad it does not happen, and 12% attend with an element of reluctance.



For the *traditional Free Church service with hymns, prayers and sermon* 35% attend and enjoy, 21% say they are glad it does not happen and 11% attend with an element of reluctance.

While 69% sometimes attend *all-age, family or parade services*, 24% among them say it is not their preferred style, 5% have the chance to attend but do not do so and 6% are glad this does not happen in their church.



Charismatic or Pentecostal worship is attended and enjoyed by 38% and a further 21% would like to see it happen, while 14% are glad it does not and another 7% attend but don't really like such services.

There does seem to be an unmet appetite for some 'experimental' or 'fresh expressions' styles of worship which are only currently available to a minority of respondents; 34% would like to see *café church*, 27% *youth services*, 26% *healing services* and 26% *meditation/prayer services (with substantial periods of silence)*. However in each case there are roughly similar numbers who are not enthusiastic about these forms of worship.



I think it's a privilege to be part of a church where leaders listen to God and where God is obviously at work.

I always look for similar qualities in a church, most notably strong Bible-based teaching and genuine, contemporary worship.

The role of worship leader is all too 'glorified'.

Church is a fabulous experience.

Ditch the robes and garbs and formality. Let God in and be led by Him.

Church, God and worship prepares me for the rest of the week.

Imagine a day...

When Christians love each
other with a passion.
When we pray, work and speak
as one body - full of hope,
living to change the world.

*Together we can make that vision a reality.
So come with us.*

eauk.org/join

evangelical alliance
better together



Getting involved

Church ministries

● I am involved in... ▲ More than average

These figures refer only to those who do not define themselves as church leaders.

Taking part in prayer groups or prayer chains

51% ● Females

Leading worship, reading scripture or prayers in Sunday services

37%

Leading a home group or Bible study

34%

Taking part in social action projects associated with the church

32% ● Females

Working with children or young people

31% ● Females

Leading or volunteering for other midweek activities or ministries

28% ● Females

Providing refreshments

28% ● Females

Welcoming people on arrival or stewarding

27% ● Charismatics and Church of Scotland

Taking part in evangelistic outreach

26% ● Born 1990s

Playing music or singing in a group or choir

24% ● Females, born 1990s

89% attend worship weekly, and
20% attend twice each Sunday.

Working on overseas mission and international church links

18%

● Born 1950s

Serving on the governing body of the church (eg the church council, PCC, deaconate or trustees)

18%

● Born 1950s, Anglican, Free Church

Being part of the technical team for worship (eg sound desk, projectors etc)

16%

● Males, born 1980s and 1990s

Helping in administration or financial management

16%

Other (please specify)

16%

Preaching in Sunday services

15%

● Males, Free Church, smaller churches

Pastoral visiting

13%

● Females, born before 1950s

Cleaning or maintaining church building or grounds

12%

Representing the church on other governing bodies (eg synod, circuit meeting, Churches Together committee, school governors, as trustee of a linked project or charity)

8%

● Free Church

I can't imagine my life without the church.



It is important for me to find ways of being actively involved in church.

Being too involved with church can prevent people fulfilling God's calling for them.

The number one priority for me is always a home group to provide close, supportive and praying friendship.

How often (approximately) do you attend/
take part in the following activities

Although it was acknowledged that Christian discipleship is far more than just going to a church building, the most common ways of participating in congregational church life are weekly Sunday worship (87%) and weekly or fortnightly small group participation (63%).

 Weekly	 Fortnightly	
87%	6%	Sunday morning worship (including Sunday school or young people's groups at same time)
36%	27%	Home/small fellowship group
24%	9%	Sunday afternoon or evening worship (including Sunday school or young people's groups at same time)
22%	12%	Prayer meetings/groups
17%	22%	A one-to-one talk at more than a superficial level about your personal faith or Christian life with another church member
11%	5%	Midweek worship services
11%	15%	A coffee or a drink in a cafe, pub or at home with (an)other member(s) of the church
11%	5%	Midweek Bible study or classes for the whole church
9%	2%	Midweek children's activities (as a leader or helper)
8%	9%	Leadership or activity planning meetings
8%	5%	Music or choir practice
7%	3%	Midweek youth activities (as a leader, helper or member)
5%	5%	Evangelistic activities run by the church
4%	7%	A meal in your home with other members of the church
1%	1%	Messy Church or similar sessions

Words respondents used to describe their church



What do we think about church leaders?

Those who are not in church leadership seem to have an overall positive view of their own church leaders.

● Agree or strongly agree

I respect the authority of our church leader



Our church members in general offer good support to our leader



Our church leader seeks to delegate tasks and build a broad team of people to take responsibility for ministry



I would usually strive to follow the advice or implement the decisions of our church leader



Our church leader is excellent at preaching and teaching the Bible



Our church leader seems strong and decisive, leading from the front



I am inspired by the example of our church leader



I regularly and personally pray for our church leader



I think our church leader works long hours (over 40 each week)



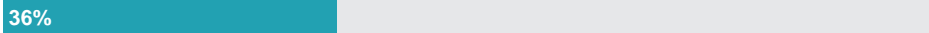
Our church leader is excellent at pastoral ministry with members of the congregation



Our church leader spends a lot of time in outreach among non-Christians



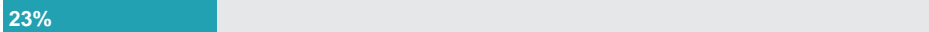
I consider our church leader to be among my good personal friends



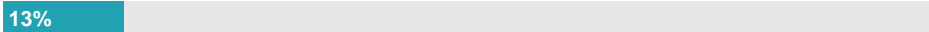
I think our church leader needs to take off more time to relax



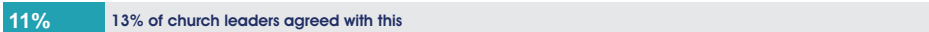
I think our church leader is not paid enough for their work



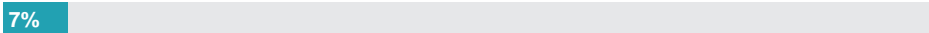
I feel our leader seeks to control and dominate members of the congregation too much



Our church expects our leader to do everything, and to be a perfect saint



I have a difficult relationship with the leader of our church





Christ inspired church partnerships for over 40 years

Transforming lives

CWR's vision is to enable people to experience personal transformation through applying God's Word to their lives and relationships.

Our Bible-based resources help people to:

- understand and apply Scripture to their lives
- develop pastoral care and counselling skills
- organise effective small group meetings
- train for leadership.

The prayers of our friends and supporters have enabled us to meet the spiritual needs of thousands of people:

- 85,000 resources released into prisons
- 29,000 issues of Bible-reading notes sent to Africa
- 200,000 resources for those new to the Christian faith.

CWR's training and conference centres in Surrey and East Sussex provide idyllic settings for both learning and spiritual refreshment. Ideal venues for your Church weekends, away days, meetings and other events.

For more information visit www.cwr.org.uk or call 01252 784700

"Being involved in a ministry that encourages and advocates engagement with, and application of, God's Word in our every day lives and relationships, I welcome this paper. It focuses not on hearsay or vox pop but actual research, highlighting expectations of growth in local churches and an overwhelming commitment to understanding the Bible as God's Word."

Mick Brooks, CWR Chief Executive



Applying God's Word
to everyday life and relationships

Churches that preach the Bible clearly and consistently, love each other, pray much and work to serve those around them are the ones that grow.

They are like families - far from perfect!

To me 'church' means an organic growing, loving, serving, body of followers of Jesus whose commitment to God and each other radically impacts every part of life bringing transformation. Church is people not the building.

As a single parent I have often felt excluded by the main body of the church, judged.

Church needs to 'go to the people' rather than have an arrogant 'come to us and be saved' attitude.

All too often, bullying by leaders goes unrecognised and challenged.

This church was a safe space in which to fall apart, and then they put me back together again.

How good it is that all ages work so well together in our church and a number of people with learning disabilities are so welcomed and give so much joy.

I would like to see churches being "Ofsteded".

I do not know where I would be without my church family.

Too many seem to want to turn up and have a good service on Sunday without becoming really involved with each other.

In nearly 50 years' experience I feel that many churches deliver very weak Bible teaching.

Most churches appear to suffer from tunnel vision, ploughing the same furrow endlessly but not making much progress.

I certainly wouldn't feel comfortable inviting any of my secular friends or colleagues into our church in its current form - it's totally irrelevant or alien to their way of life.

Church is where I meet with God on a regular basis.

It is not possible to thrive in isolation and so every believer should be an involved member of the local church.

We need new blood in the next five years otherwise we may start to decline.

Church may be imperfect, but it's God's best plan for his people to get ready to do his work

No one seems to appreciate the struggles that single people in the church really face.

I feel encouraged in my walk with God by the church.

With the persecution in other parts of the world, church is something we must never take for granted.

Programmes, methods and the trendy thing has taken hold and there is no confidence in the power of God's gospel.

I could not bear being in a white middle class suburban church.

Churches can become social clubs. They rarely deal with reality and the big controversial issues.

I love spending time with people from other churches and traditions to learn the things about God that they see so clearly but I don't.

The church does not understand the unskilled urban working class.

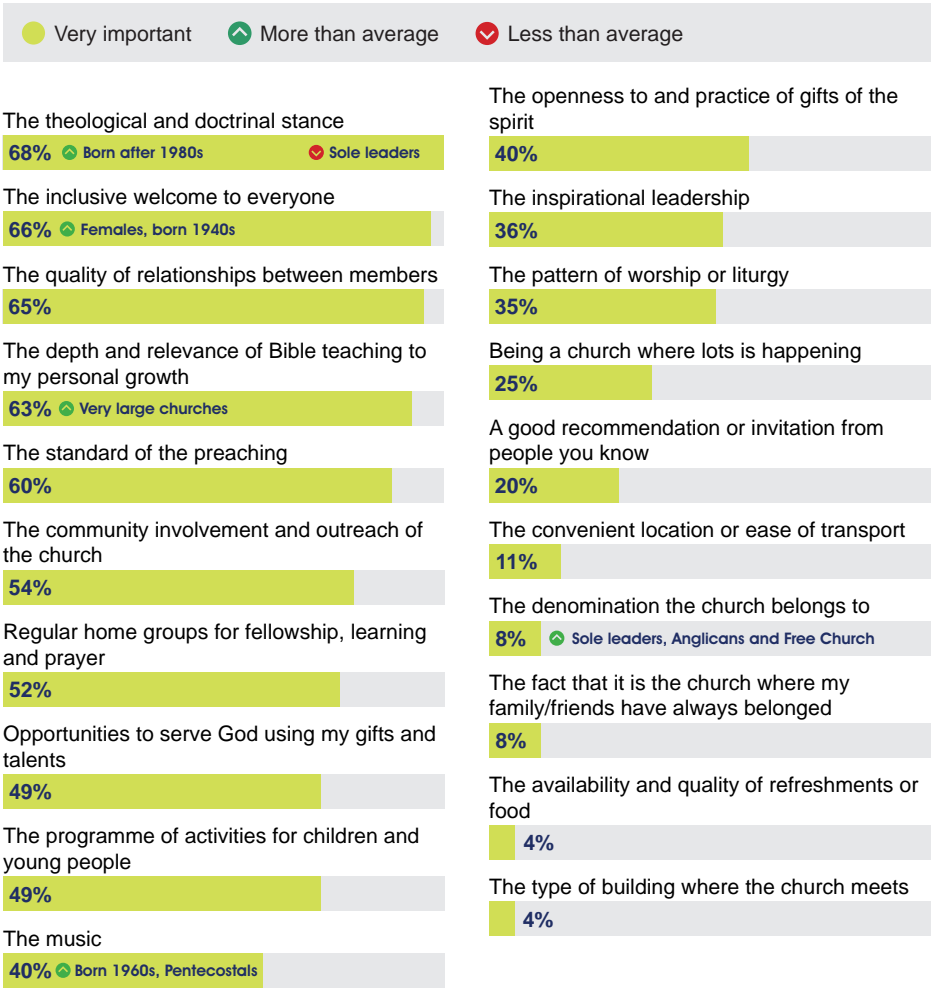
What we look for in a church

It's clear that there are two key factors in church life that are very important to evangelicals:

- A church first needs sound theology and doctrine, with good Bible teaching that leads to personal spiritual growth.
- A church also needs to be friendly, welcoming, caring and inclusive, so that there is a sense of belonging and community.

“It’s clear from this report how much we, in the UK, value our local church family. Yet while we enjoy the basic freedom to be Church, many of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world do not, and are paying with their lives for that same liberty. They need to know we value them, too. We can’t take the Church for granted.”

Eddie Lyle, Open Doors CEO, UK & Ireland



"The church in the Middle East is using its blood and sacrificing its people to witness to Muslims and its fellow countrymen. You have a role to not only help us reach out with food and medicine. You have a role to be advocates to your governments."

PASTOR B, TARTUS, SYRIA

SAVE SYRIA

CHURCH ON ITS KNEES



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

SPEAK OUT | PRAY | GIVE

WWW.OPENDOORSUK.ORG/SAVESYRIA

Open Doors Registered Charity in England and Wales No. 1125684 © 2013

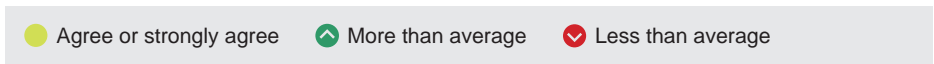
Me and my church

Overall our respondents have a very positive view of the churches they attend, suggesting that they have a strong sense of belonging and spiritual wellbeing from their participation in church life.

However there are a minority of responses suggesting that some people and churches face significant problems. We should also remember that our panel does not include many Christians who were once involved in church life but have become discontented and left.

Pastoral care is patchy.

About the church you attend



I feel confident I could invite a non-Christian to my church and that they would feel welcomed



As part of my church I feel I belong to a strong caring community



As a church we often know that God has answered our prayers



I am happy to give a substantial part of my income to support the work of my church



When my church meets I usually sense the presence of God



I am growing spiritually as a result of being part of my church.



I feel my gifts and talents are being well used in the work of God through my church



I am very happy with church life at the moment



My church is being shaped by a clear strategy based on an inspiring vision for the future



Being involved in my church brings me into contact with many people in the wider community



There are too many cliques and exclusive groups in my church



I have often thought about leaving and finding another church



There are a lot of conflicts and discontent in my church



I stay because it's family but often feel starved for teaching.

No one has ever pastored me before or cared about my spiritual growth so long as I was 'useful' in the church.

Evangelicals consider many factors important in church culture, and our survey suggests:

- the most significant issues are biblical truth, effective evangelism, and building a strong, caring and inclusive Christian community.
- evangelicals emphasise the importance of churches being involved in mission, social action and social justice.
- it does not seem that evangelicals insist on a single form of music or worship in church.

Church should be a safe place for people but I do not always find that this is the case.

Why do most church members only speak to those people they already know?

I would like to see far more co-operation with all local churches.

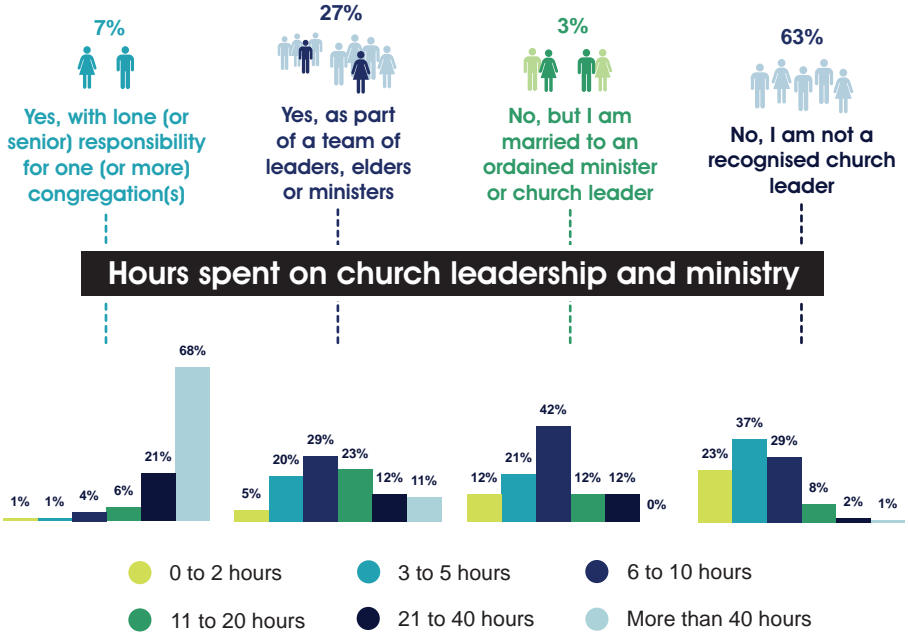
Strongly Agree Agree

What every church should do:

89%	10%	Faithfully teach the Bible as the word of God.
84%	15%	Make sure all (regardless of age, gender or background) feel accepted, valued, loved and supported.
76%	23%	Make efforts to bring children and young people to faith in Christ.
69%	28%	Go out to non-Christians, not expecting them to come to us and our buildings.
65%	33%	Ensure that any of its members who are facing poverty or severe need are helped. 👍 Females, younger and Charismatic
65%	32%	Encourage all its members to develop and use their spiritual gifts.
63%	34%	Recognise and support the callings of its members in the secular world of employment and society.
60%	34%	Make effective communication of the Gospel to unbelievers a priority.
57%	39%	Seek to work with and honour the ministries of other local Christian churches. 👍 Charismatic
53%	42%	Be involved in supporting worldwide mission.
51%	38%	Have some form of shared leadership and ministry.
50%	44%	Be involved in meeting the social needs of its surrounding community, including those who are not Christians.
50%	40%	Frequently celebrate communion (the Lord's supper, Eucharist, breaking of bread).
48%	32%	Allow women to preach or teach in the context of public worship. 👍 Females
43%	30%	Allow women to hold senior leadership positions in the church.
40%	48%	Seek to transform unjust structures of society.
27%	41%	Use lively contemporary music and songs in its worship. 👍 Younger

Our church leaders

Are you a leader or minister of a church?



Church leaders are...

	Sole leaders	One of a team
Male	84%	64%
Female	16%	36%
Responsible for more than one congregation	35%	13%
Earning at least part of their livelihood by other employment	14%	28%
Ordained or officially recognised as a minister by their denomination or network of churches	82%	20%
Formally trained or qualified in theology or ministry	77%	32%
A founder or church planter of their congregation	16%	10%
Married and living with their spouse	85%	71%
Living alone	3%	13%
Parent or guardian of at least one child who still lives with them	43%	27%

The realities of church leadership

Only the 634 people who said they were church leaders responded to these statements

● Agree or strongly agree
⬆ More than average
⬇ Less than average

I greatly enjoy my leadership ministry

84%

I have very good support from the members of the church(es) which I lead

77%

I like to delegate tasks and build a broad team of people to take responsibility for ministry

75%

⬇ Older (born before 1950)

I try to set aside time every day to pray for the church I lead

68%

⬆ Sole leaders

I place a high priority and spend a lot of my time preparing for preaching and teaching

59%

⬆ Males

I have good supportive relationships with leaders of other local churches

58%

I try to be a strong and decisive church leader, leading from the front

56%

⬆ Males

I place a high priority and spend a lot of my time in pastoral ministry with members of the congregation

46%

⬆ Females, sole leaders

I place a high priority and spend a lot of my time in outreach among non-Christians

40%

⬆ Sole leaders

It is difficult to find time for rest, relaxation and leisure activities

38%

⬆ Younger (born 1960s - 1980s), sole leaders

I am paid enough for the work I do in my ministry

32%

⬇ Females, Northern England

My marriage, family life or friendships suffer because of the demands of my ministry

25%

⬆ Younger (born 1970s and 1980s)

I am overwhelmed by administrative tasks

18%

⬆ Sole leaders

I think the congregation expect me to do everything, and to be a perfect saint

13%

⬆ Younger (born 1980s)

My ministry often involves travel where I need to spend nights away from home

8%

One-man ministry, which has been the norm, has left me rather exhausted.

The ministry is hard work and frustrating at times but hugely enjoyable and very rewarding.

My church means a lot to me not only because I am its minister, but also because it is a real spiritual family to me and my family. I feel I am much valued, loved and prayed for.

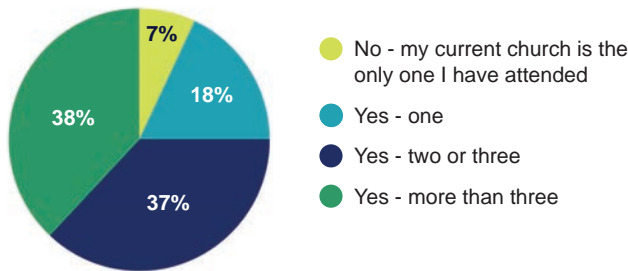
Moving church

The vast majority (93%) had regularly attended at least one other church before joining their current one.

Just less than half (48%) who moved to a new church moved to one within the same denomination or stream as their previous church.

Only 27% had been at their current church for five years or less, while 10% had been there 40 years or more. Some 57% had been part of their previous church for more than five years before moving. This indicates loyalty to particular churches, and little evidence of widespread and frequent 'church hopping'.

Before joining or attending your current church have you belonged to or regularly attended any other church(es)?



It has been impossible to find a good church, especially living in a rural area.

I'm on the verge of giving up (on church, not God).

Like many others, I have experienced rejection/control/spiritual abuse by some churches in the past.

By far the most common circumstance for changing church was moving home (58% of those who had moved church), while 20% said they felt called to serve in a new church, and 20% left due to frustrations or difficulties in the previous church. Difficulties included cases of theological disagreement (including the Holy Spirit or women in leadership), issues with leadership style or forms of worship and conflict between personalities.

Reasons for moving church?

58%	Following moving home
20%	You had a calling to serve in your new church
20%	Problems or frustrations with your previous church
19%	You felt the new church offered you a better spiritual environment
13%	You felt you were not growing spiritually at your previous church
11%	A change in your personal circumstances made it easier to attend a different church
9%	Conflict between you and the leadership at your previous church
9%	You felt the new church offered a better ministry for your child(ren)
4%	You were part of group commissioned to plant a new church or ministry
3%	A split in the previous church when a group of you left and formed or joined a new fellowship

Church is not a shopping experience - there is no perfect church.

Church discipline

We asked our respondents to consider how churches might best deal with situations of conflict or sin coming to light in church life. The statistics are very complex and detailed, but the broad findings are:

- The only issue where the majority of respondents (79%) felt it was appropriate to have a formal church disciplinary procedure including a public statement of the outcome was *a case of adultery involving the church leadership*.
- A majority felt it was appropriate to involve the police and courts in cases involving *domestic violence in a church family* (64%) or *theft or financial irregularity* (56%).
- For most other issues (such as *sexual misconduct, bullying, dishonesty, gossiping or feuding*) a large majority felt issues should be addressed pastorally and discreetly, when appropriate drawing up a behavioural contract between the individual and the church specifying expected standards of behaviour. As many as 74% thought this was the appropriate route for a situation where a *convicted sex offender was wanting to be involved in church life*, while only 20% thought the involvement of the authorities was called for here.
- 11% felt that a *couple living together without being married wanting to be involved in church life*, or an *openly gay or lesbian couple wanting to be involved in church life*, were not a matter of concern for the church. And 13% felt the same for a church member with a *job in a 'dubious' industry such as gambling or the arms trade*.

How people thought church attendance would change

Numbers attending my particular church will:



Numbers attending church in the UK as a whole will:



Over 70% believed that attendance at their own church would increase over the next 20 years.

Some 47% agreed or strongly agreed that their church was currently growing in numbers.

However, only 41% were expecting growth in church attendance at the national level, showing a large disparity between local and national expectations.

- Increase dramatically
- Increase somewhat
- Decrease somewhat
- Decrease dramatically
- Stay the same
- Don't know

So what?

Points for prayer and action



Church: God's growing community

Rather than a building, Church is a community into which we as believers are called. It's where we gather and grow, and where we all have a part to play in God's mission to see people come into a personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus said that he would build his Church, and as Goodhew (2012) describes, after years of decline, the evangelical Church in the UK is growing again. This research suggests that many evangelicals are committed to being part of a church community that aims to reflect the love, grace and power of God. They consider that churches should be welcoming, getting involved in the local community and communicating the gospel.

Pray about how your church can get involved in your local community. Also ask God how you and others in your church can connect with your neighbours and grow in confidence in talking about your faith.

God's word is central

It is encouraging that this research shows that good Bible teaching is highly valued in the life of the church. The theology and doctrine of a local church is clearly very important to many evangelicals. In an age of relativism and compromise, this faith in the Bible as the living Word of God may be counter-cultural, but opens the way for God to speak to us and do great things with and through us.

Pray for church life to be energised, strengthened and directed by good Bible teaching and the Holy Spirit.

We love Church... most of the time.

Our research shows that church life is clearly extremely important for most evangelical Christians. It is where we find and develop meaning in our lives, have the opportunity to worship and learn together, and give and receive the love of God. Many evangelicals deeply love their local church, and give their money, time and talents sacrificially to support. Yet, being full of human beings, no church is perfect. Often people find church frustrating and difficult, with experiences of pain and upset. Among people who have moved church, 20 per cent cited frustration as one of the reasons for moving. This reminds us of the need for God's grace, love and forgiveness to show up in the midst of our messiness.

Pray for your church and the Church in the UK to be healthy, open and safe places for us to grow together in Christ. Pray also for plenty of grace, patience, love and forgiveness within churches.

Church leadership - the joys and the pains

Contemporary evangelical Christians place a strong emphasis on leadership and vision. This report shows that most people are supportive of and thankful for their church leaders and that most leaders feel privileged and fulfilled. However, leaders can struggle to find time to relax and relate with friends and family, with long working hours and frustrations that can lead to burnout. With so many expectations about what church should be, the findings also suggest some unresolved confusion about the precise role of a church leader. It is encouraging to see a growing acceptance of shared leadership and recognition that all church members have a role to play. Although a large majority of respondents fully accept the leadership of women in church, the issue remains contentious. Sadly, comments about egocentric and domineering church leadership, although relatively rare, appear far too often in this data.

Remember to pray for your leaders and their families. Support them practically and encourage them regularly.

Welcoming, inclusive communities?

Our findings show that evangelical Christians strongly believe that churches should be welcoming and inclusive communities. An encouraging 84 per cent feel their non-Christian friends would be welcomed at their church. However, a significant minority of 16 per cent felt there were too many exclusive cliques and groups. This reminds us to make sure we are not excluding people within our own churches.

Pray that our churches would be attractive, open and authentically loving to all.

“I pray... that all of them may be one”

These words of Jesus tell us that God cares about His people being united (John 17:21). This research shows that evangelicalism continues to be a movement within Christianity that transcends denominational boundaries and allows for considerable variation in expression and forms of church governance. Given the great diversity in our contemporary society, it is encouraging that our churches provide different styles for different people. But the gospel brings a challenge of discipleship that goes beyond consumer choice and meeting our own needs. Being part of God's family means belonging to a group of diverse people who share a common belief and an eternal destiny. It is encouraging that over 70 per cent of churches have good links and partnerships with other local churches. Learning to live together graciously and purposefully offers us a wonderful opportunity for a witness of unity to our often fragmented world.

Pray that the Church will be united in its mission, and confident in its voice, working to overcome the things that divide us.

To explore these findings and issues further you can access a free Powerpoint and discussion questions through eauk.org/snapshot

We hope you have found this report interesting and thought-provoking. To find out more about joining us as a member of the Evangelical Alliance, visit eauk.org/joinus

Contact g.smith@eauk.org if you would like to access a full data report, including inter-group breakdowns.

Afterword

Involvement in church life is an essential part of evangelical Christianity, so it is no surprise that this survey has been the most popular one in the series, with more than 1,860 people eager to respond. In general the picture is a positive one, with most people feeling a strong sense of loyalty and optimism about the church they belong to.

For evangelicals the priority in church life will always be Bible-based learning that deepens our walk with Jesus, alongside outreach to those who have not yet responded to the

gospel. Building and sustaining Christian communities that warmly welcome, serve and include people of all backgrounds and personalities is also recognised as vital.

Churches are never perfect and we must remember to pray for our leaders and fellow church family, particularly when they face frustrations and disappointments. But we should be encouraged and full of hope for the future of the Church in the UK, thanking God for church growth and praying for more.

Steve Clifford, general director,
Evangelical Alliance

Discussion questions and a PowerPoint presentation of key findings can be downloaded free through our website.

You can also join our research panel at eauk.org/snapshot



More detailed information about the research can be found at eauk.org/snapshot and a fuller data report is also available on request from g.smith@eauk.org

evangelical alliance
better together



Academic research advisors

Keith J. White, Visiting Tutor: Spurgeons College; Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary; Asian Graduate School of Theology. **John M Evans**, Research Director of Gweini (The Council of the Christian Voluntary Sector in Wales), **Dr Mandy Robbins**, Senior Lecturer, Division of Psychology, Institute for Health, Medical Science and Society, Glyndwr University, Wrexham. **Dr Sylvia Collins-Mayo**, Criminology and Sociology Department, Kingston University. **Dr Matthew Guest**, Senior Lecturer in Theology and Religion, Durham University. **Professor William K. Kay**, Professor of Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Glyndwr University. **Benita Hewitt**, Partner at Christian Research Consultancy.

Copyright © Evangelical Alliance 2013.

The Evangelical Alliance. A company limited by guarantee Registered in England & Wales No. 123448. Registered Charity No. England and Wales: 212325, Scotland: SC040576. Registered Office: 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 0ST