

Changing Church 2025

What is the state of the UK evangelical Church five years on from the Covid pandemic?

evangelical alliance
together making Jesus known



Introduction

In 2020 and 2021 the Church in the UK went through significant disruption brought on by Covid-19. Churches were required to close for extended periods of time and were then bound by strict regulations as to how they could operate once they re-opened.

At three points, in May 2020, October 2020 and October 2021, the Evangelical Alliance surveyed both church leaders and individuals to take a snapshot of how church life was fairing. Restrictions on churches meeting were removed from summer 2021 so the final survey in that series provided a picture shortly after that change.

Five years on, the Evangelical Alliance has once again surveyed church leaders and individuals to find out what has changed since the pandemic, and compared to findings in previous surveys.

Anecdotally we have heard what church leaders are experiencing, and through our ongoing work with them, meeting hundreds every year, we were well-informed of some of the common challenges experienced. The frequency of church attendance was one reported trend, along with the shortage

of volunteers to carry out regular church activities and outreach.

We know that churches are active in communities throughout the UK, and during the pandemic stepped up to provide essential services despite the challenges involved. A few years on, what is the legacy of this involvement?

We have also heard stories from evangelical churches of every size, shape and tradition that something seemingly different is happening. People are exploring faith and finding Jesus.

We wanted to find out more about what churches are experiencing, and help other churches have confidence in sharing Jesus.





Methodology

Between 29 January and 24 February 2025, we surveyed 305 church leaders and 977 individuals about their experience of church life as well as how their habits and practices had changed since January 2020.

Some questions were specific to each audience, others identical, and others designed to explore the same issue from different perspectives. The key areas covered in the survey, and analysed in this report, cover church attendance, volunteering, giving, community activities, mission and engagement with public issues.

As part of our ongoing research, we also asked individual respondents demographic questions, and church leaders for further information about their church. These findings are not reported but are at times used to help our analysis.

This survey was publicised through Evangelical Alliance emails, social media, as well as to a group of individuals and leaders who have previously agreed to take part in regular surveys.

The self-selecting nature of the sample brings with it limitations. We sought responses from a wide range of churches and individuals but can only work with those we received, and therefore we know that this is not a complete picture, but one we remain confident provides helpful insights into the state of the UK Church in 2025.

Data tables for all the findings reported and discussed in this report are available at eauk.org/changing-church-2025

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Key findings

1

Church attendance for the churches responding to this survey increased by an average of 13% between 2020 and 2025.

2

Churches are seeing twice as many people finding faith in Jesus as in 2021 – an average of 3.5 people per church in the last three months.

3

Weekly church attendance has significantly declined since 2020. 78% of individual respondents reported attending weekly in early 2025, compared to just over 90% in early 2020.

4

Just under two thirds of churches are providing online opportunities to engage with church.

5

63% of individual respondents have invited a non-Christian to a church or Christian activity in the last three months.

6

Two thirds of churches are experiencing a shortage of children's work volunteers.

7

Volunteers contribute nearly £250,000 of time per year to the average church.

8

Less than a third of churches (31%) have seen giving income keep pace with inflation.

9

Churches are actively involved in supporting the practical needs of their local communities, with two thirds of churches involved in foodbank and nutrition work.

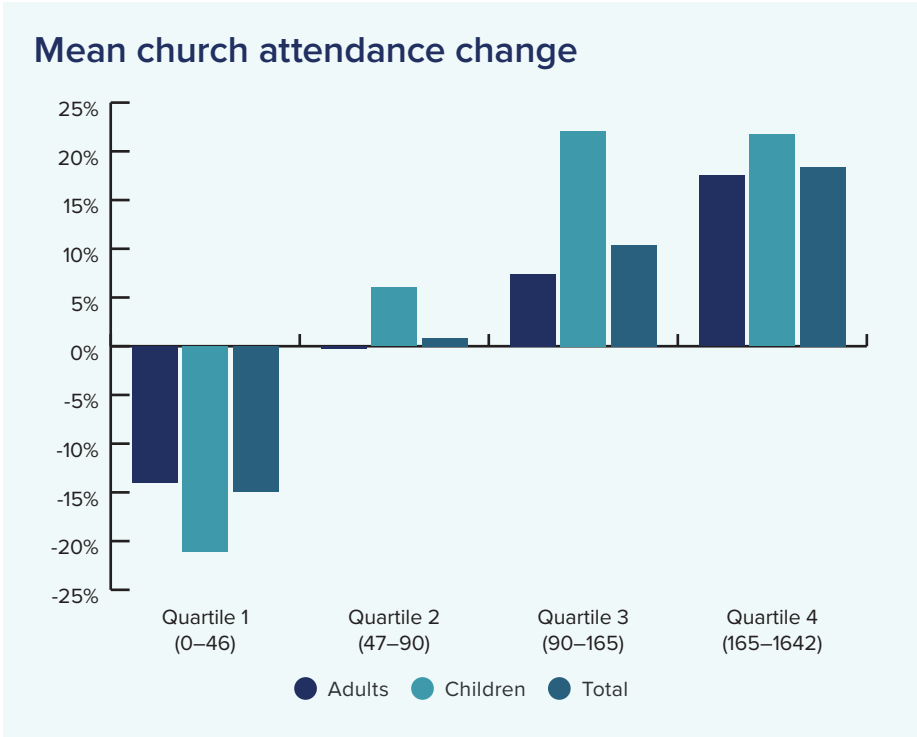
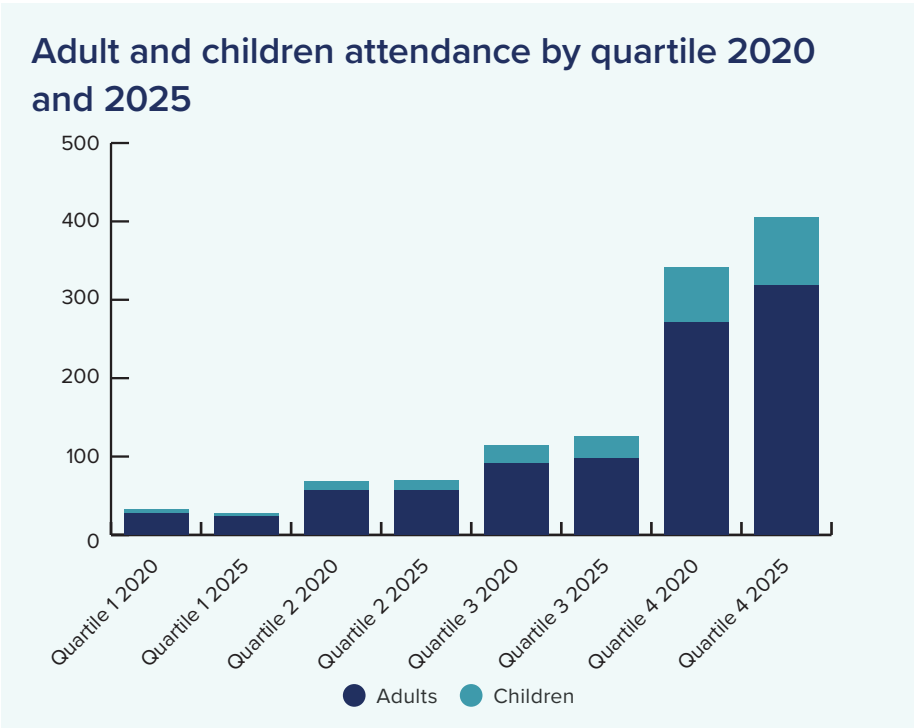
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In the past three months nearly 60% of respondents have spoken with a non-Christian about assisted dying proposals.

Church attendance

Church attendance for the churches responding to this survey increased by an average of 13% between 2020 and 2025.

The principal finding of this research is that church attendance has increased between 2020 and 2025, but this is significantly different for churches of different sizes. When broken down into quartiles based on overall attendance, we see that the bottom quartile of churches has shrunk during this period, the second quartile has grown by just 1%, the third quartile has grown by 10% and the top quartile has grown by 18%. This is true across adult and child attendance, although the third quartile has seen the largest percentage growth in children attending.

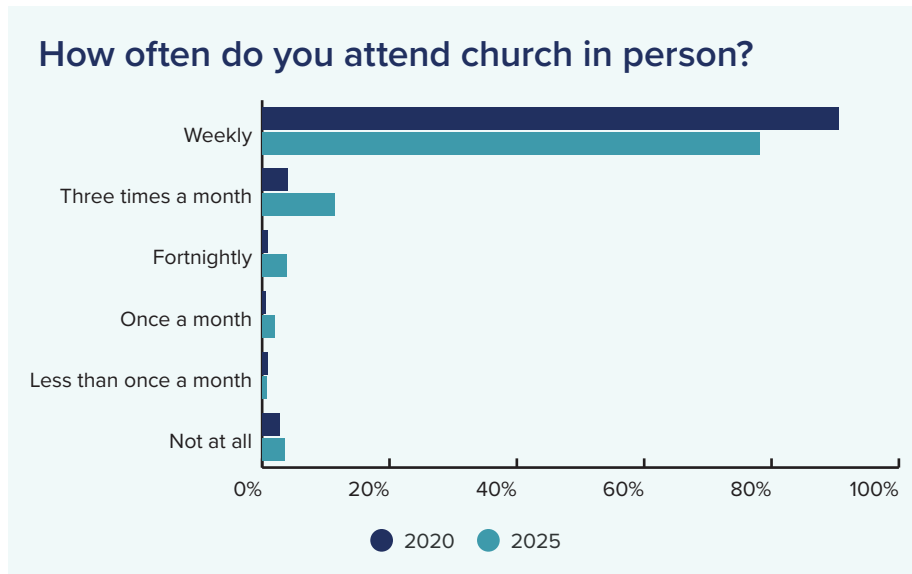


Median church attendance for adults has remained constant at 70, whereas the mean has increased from 111 to 123 – driven by the growth of a small number of larger churches. Median attendance of children has increased from 15 to 19 (mean up from 28 to 33).

A note on quartiles: throughout this report one way we analyse what different churches are experiencing is to group them by size. When we talk about quartiles, this means four groups of churches ranging from the quarter of churches which are smallest, to the quarter which are largest. The size of the churches in these quartiles are in these ranges:

- Quartile 1** 0–46 adults and children
- Quartile 2** 47–90 adults and children
- Quartile 3** 90–165 adults and children
- Quartile 4** 165–1642 adults and children

Weekly church attendance has significantly declined since 2020. 78% of individual respondents reported attending weekly in early 2025, compared with just over 90% in early 2020.



What we see is that most of those not attending weekly are still attending regularly, but less frequently. Those attending monthly or more frequently has dropped, but by less, from 96% to 93.5%, with most of those not attending weekly still attending three times a month.

When weighting responses according to frequency of attendance this means that of the people a leader might have expected to see in church on any given Sunday in 2020, 94% of these would be in church on any given Sunday in 2025.

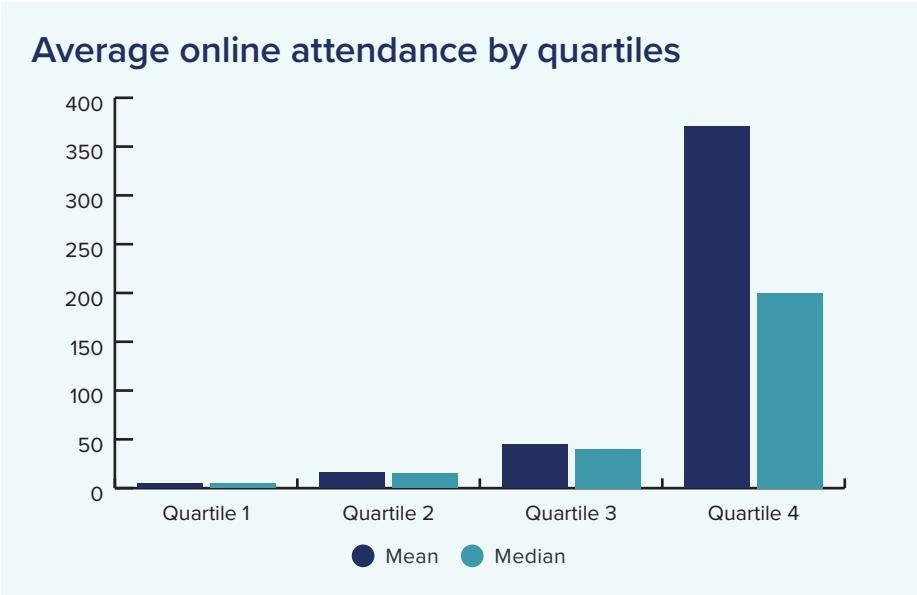
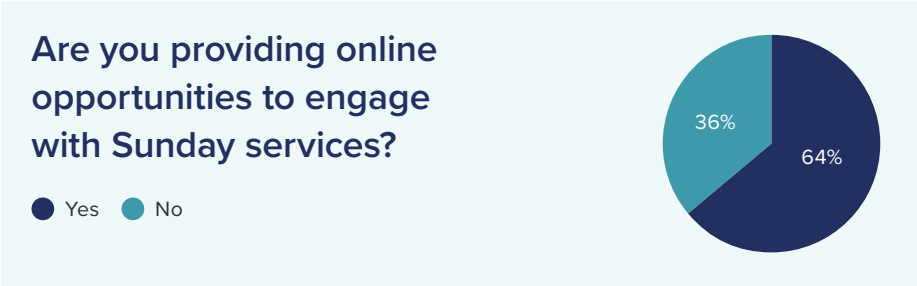
Therefore, the growth in attendance of 13% represents a growth in people regularly attending church of closer to 20%.



Online church

Two thirds of churches are providing opportunities for people to engage with their Sunday services online.

For most churches this is a small number of people; the median for all churches with any engagement is 25. However, for the top quartile this is serving a significant number of people. The mean for this group is 371, driven by four churches noting more than 1,000 people engaging in this way.

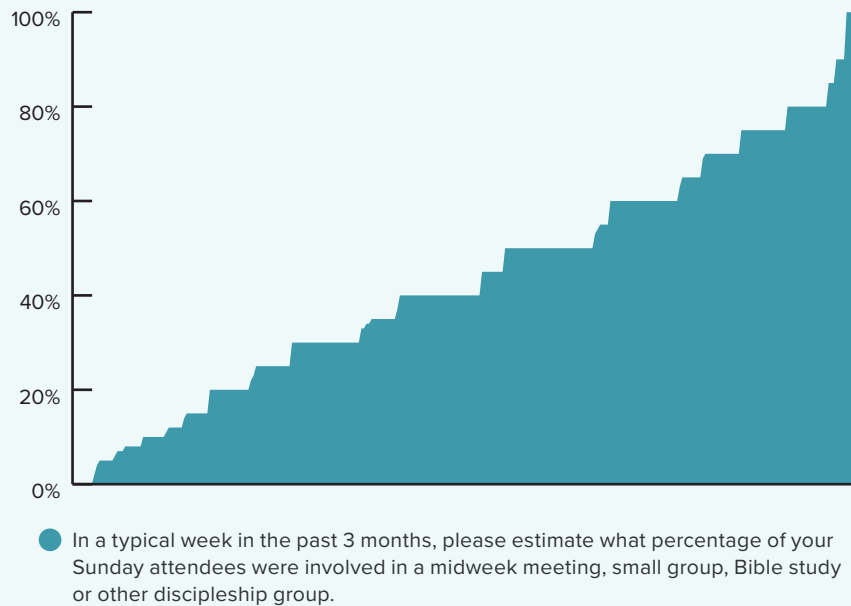


More than half of individual respondents to our survey (53%) never participate in online services at their church, while just under one in ten (9.5%) engage weekly, with the remainder spread in between. Around 20% of respondents engage online with a different church at least once a month, although only 3.5% do so weekly.

The ongoing high level of online engagement for churches is significantly greater than the reduced frequency of attendance at church services. While some will do both, online church engagement represents significant growth over and above the growth seen by churches in Sunday services.

Engagement with midweek groups

Percentage engagement in midweek groups



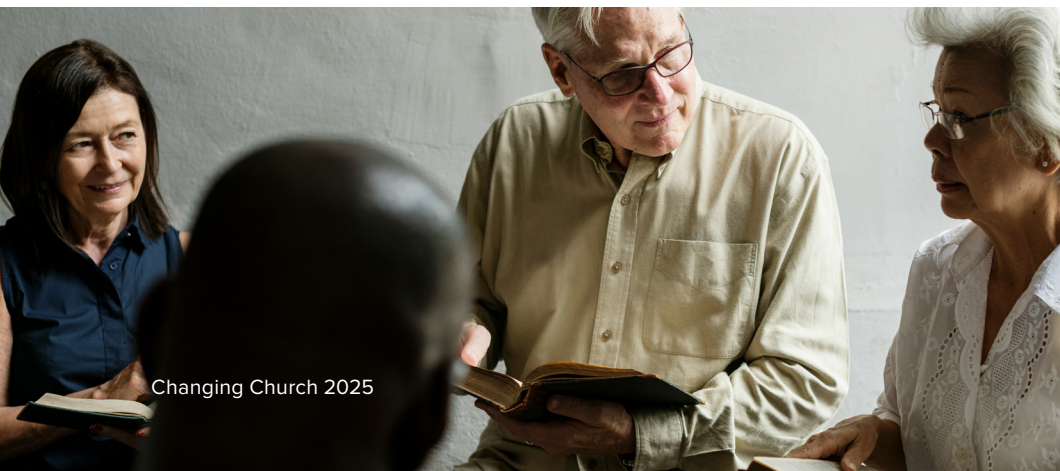
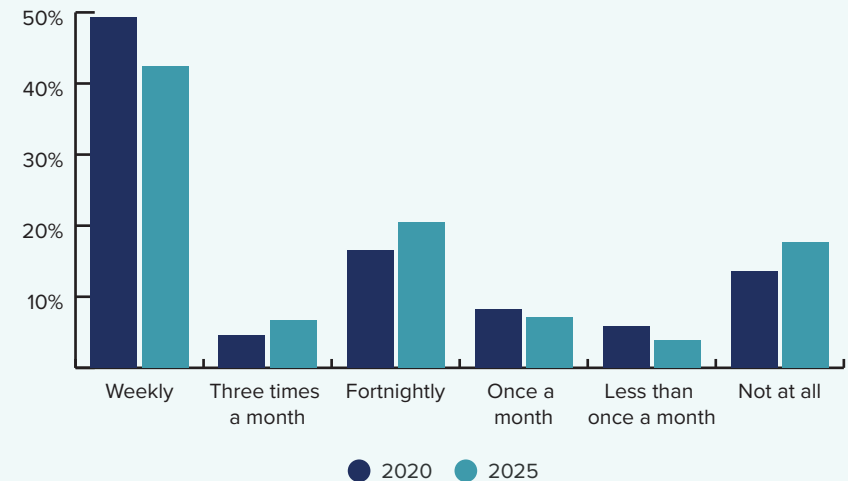
The midweek life of the church remains an important element of church life, but it is notable that the frequency of engagement has dropped, and slightly more people report not engaging at all.

We asked church leaders what proportion of their Sunday attendees were in midweek groups, and the average (mean) was 43%, with a fairly stable trend running from 0 to 100%.

There is a noticeable increase in engagement with groups for larger churches, with the mean being around 50% for the largest quartile, and 30% for the smallest.

We also asked individual respondents how often they engaged with church midweek small groups. While the highest number engaged weekly, this had reduced since 2020, with an increase both in people engaging less frequently and not at all.

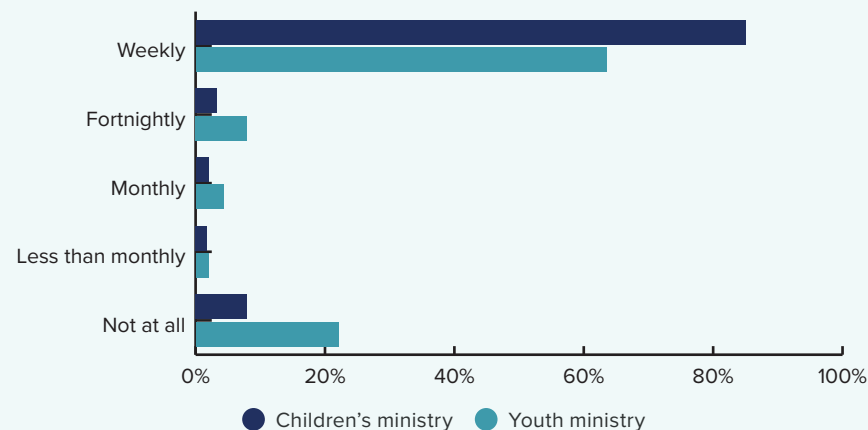
Midweek church groups



Children and youth

Most churches responding to this survey report providing weekly ministry for children, and just under two thirds offer weekly youth ministry.

How often are churches providing children's and youth ministry?



Of those churches not currently offering children's and youth ministry most were also not providing it in 2020, 78% for those not now providing children's ministry, and 75% for those not now providing youth ministry. Since 2020, 2% of churches surveyed have stopped providing children's work and 6% have stopped providing youth ministry.

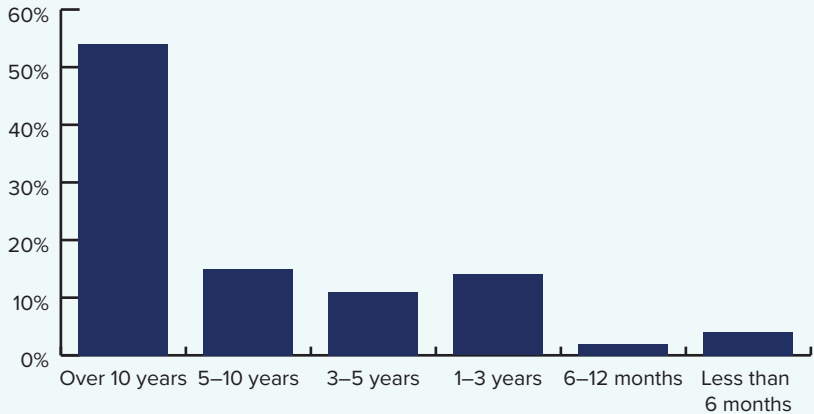
We found that 7% of churches reported no children attending, which was very similar to the number in 2020; however, half of those churches that have no children attending now did have children in 2020; therefore the same is true in reverse. About half of the churches with no children in 2020 now have children attending (between 1 and 10).





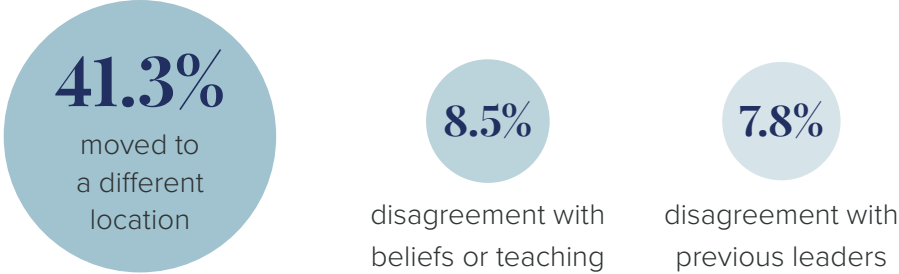
Time at church and changing churches

How long have you been at your current church?



More than 80% of respondents have attended their church for more than three years, with 70% attending for at least five years. Over half of those surveyed have been at their church for more than a decade.

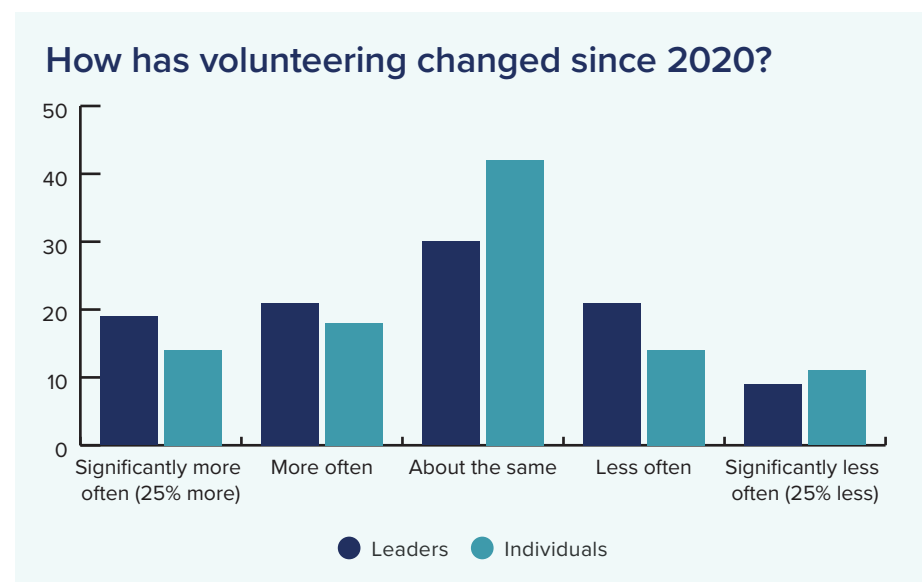
We asked those who had been attending their current church for less than five years why they had changed church.



Volunteering

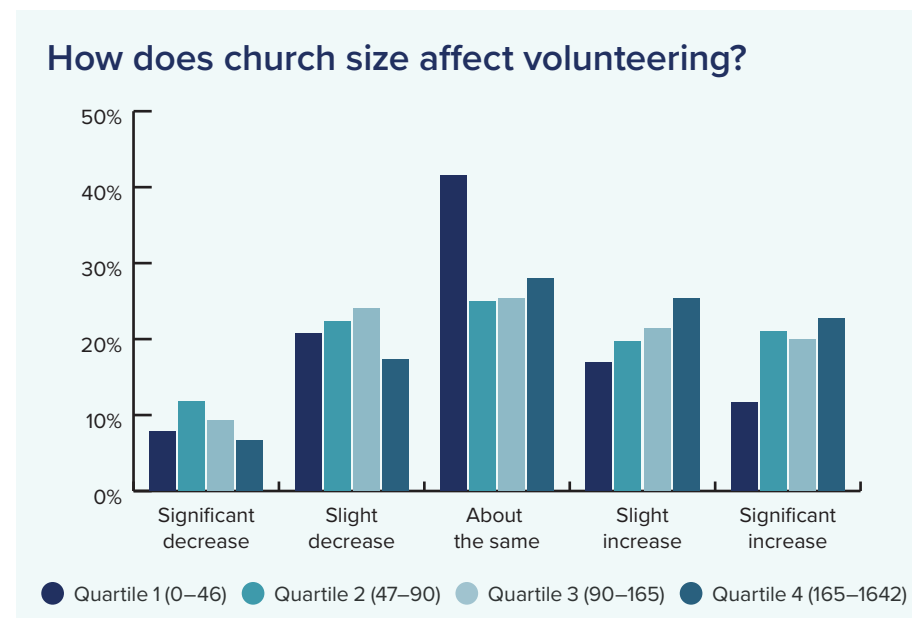
Volunteers contribute nearly £250,000 of volunteer time to the average church surveyed.

One of the reported trends that we wanted to investigate was the state of volunteering within UK evangelical churches. What we found was a very mixed picture.



Leaders were asked whether they had seen an increase or decrease in the number of people volunteering at church, and individuals were asked whether their volunteering had increased or decreased. Leaders were both more likely to have observed that volunteering had either increased or decreased, whereas individuals were more likely to say that their volunteering had remained the same.

For 40% of church leaders, they had seen volunteering increase, whereas 30% had seen it decrease. This finding is significantly affected by church size. The largest quarter of churches were much more likely to say they had seen an increase over the smallest quarter, 48% to 27%. Interestingly, it was the middle half of churches which were more likely to say they had seen a decrease in volunteering, while for the smallest churches their volunteering was more likely to have remained stable.

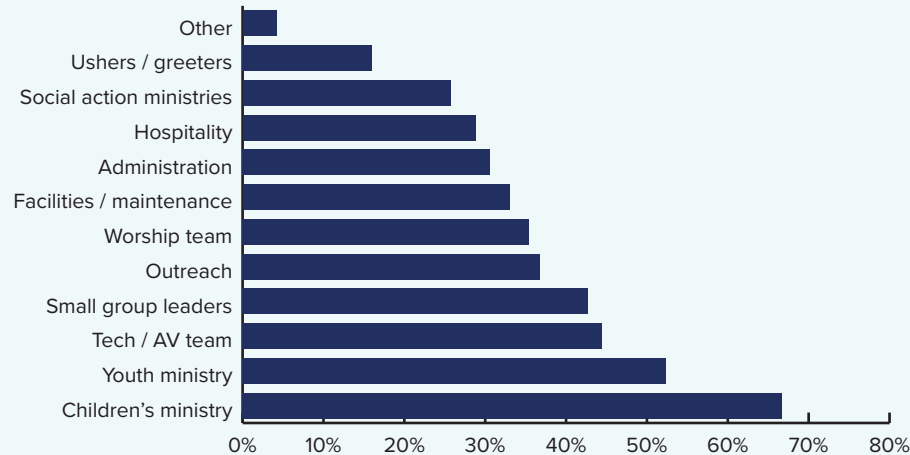


Across all individual responses we found that the mean amount an individual was volunteering was 13 hours per month. Based on the mean adult attendance of 123 people, this is a hugely valuable contribution for the average church, equating to £241,769 a year if it was paid work (based on the real living wage).

Mean volunteering hours = 13

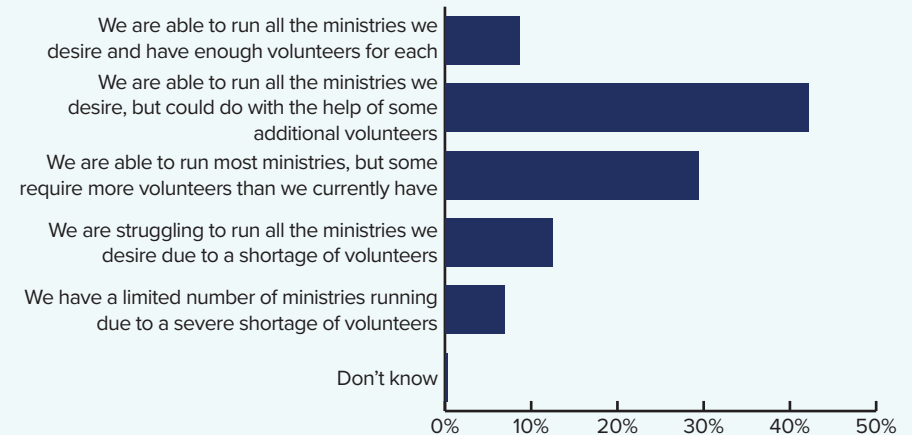
Median volunteering hours = 8

Where are churches experiencing a shortage of volunteers?



Churches were asked where they were experiencing a shortage of volunteers, and for two thirds of churches this included children's ministry. Social action ministries were relatively well resourced, with only a quarter of churches reporting a shortage of volunteers in this area.

How is this impacting church life?



For half of churches the level of volunteering, while not always as high as they would like, is not adversely affecting the ministries that they run. For 20% of churches it is having an impact with either ministries not running or being affected by a shortage of volunteers.

Barriers to volunteering

We asked both leaders and individuals about the barriers to volunteering, and both groups were able to select multiple reasons. Leaders were far more likely to see family and work commitments as proving a major barrier. While these two reasons were the most commonly cited by individuals, they were referenced by a far smaller proportion of respondents. It is worth noting that individuals were far less likely to select multiple reasons in response to this question, which is understandable; a leader will recognise multiple reasons across their congregation whereas an individual is more likely to respond with their most likely reasons. The only area individuals were more likely to cite is the lack of opportunities, which was only considered by 2% of church leaders.

What are the barriers to volunteering?



Why do leaders think people are volunteering more?

"New people who have joined are now finding their confidence and becoming more willing to explore their place in the body of Christ."

"We have had lots of new people join, the church has grown and people have seen the need to serve."

"Specific teaching on serving and discipleship."

Why do leaders think people are volunteering less?

"Some saw the pandemic as an opportunity to 'retire' from ministries they have served in for many years."

"Some people left the church, some got out of the habit. Some are placing a different value on free time."

"Some more experienced leaders and volunteers have stepped back. So far, only a smaller number of emerging leaders and volunteers have come forward to replace them."

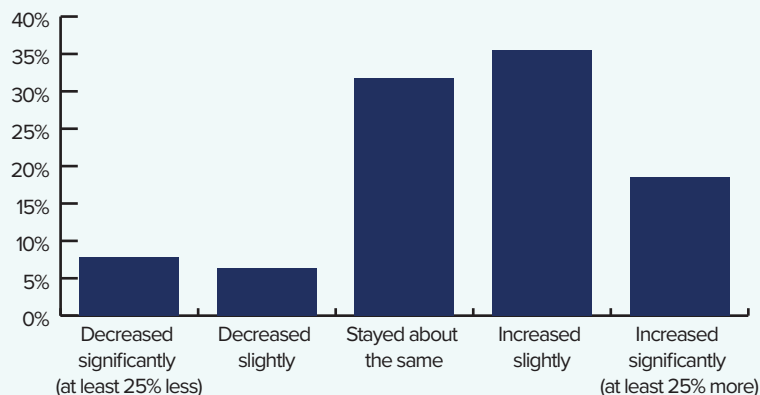
Giving

For most churches, even where giving has increased, it has not kept pace with inflation.

A vital aspect of the ongoing functioning of churches, their discipleship and mission is the financial income to sustain that work. To explore this area, we asked a variety of questions of both leaders and individuals.

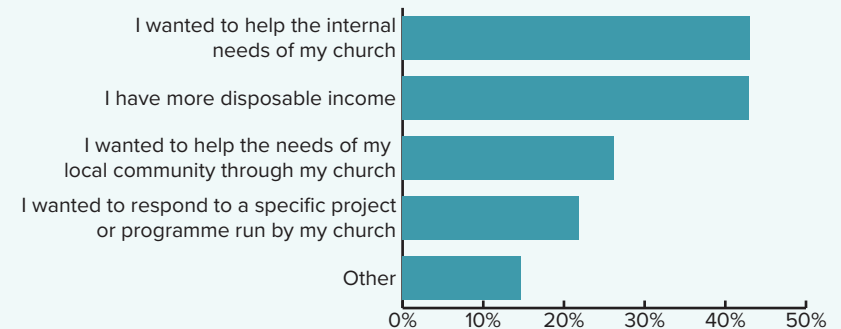
For around 15% of respondents their giving had decreased since 2020. For more than half of these this was due to reduced disposable income, although it is notable that just under 20% are less confident in how churches would use the money, and a little over 20% are giving less because they are giving more to other causes.

How have the financial donations of individuals to their church changed between 2020 and 2025

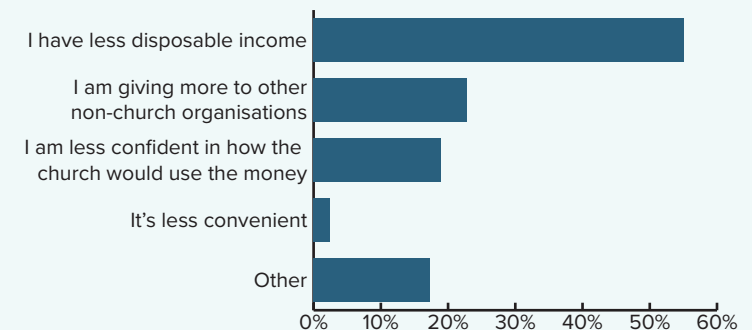


The majority of respondents, around two thirds, said their giving had either stayed the same or increased slightly. However, due to inflation over the past five years any increase less than 25% is, in real terms, a reduction. Fewer than one in five respondents had increased their giving above this level.

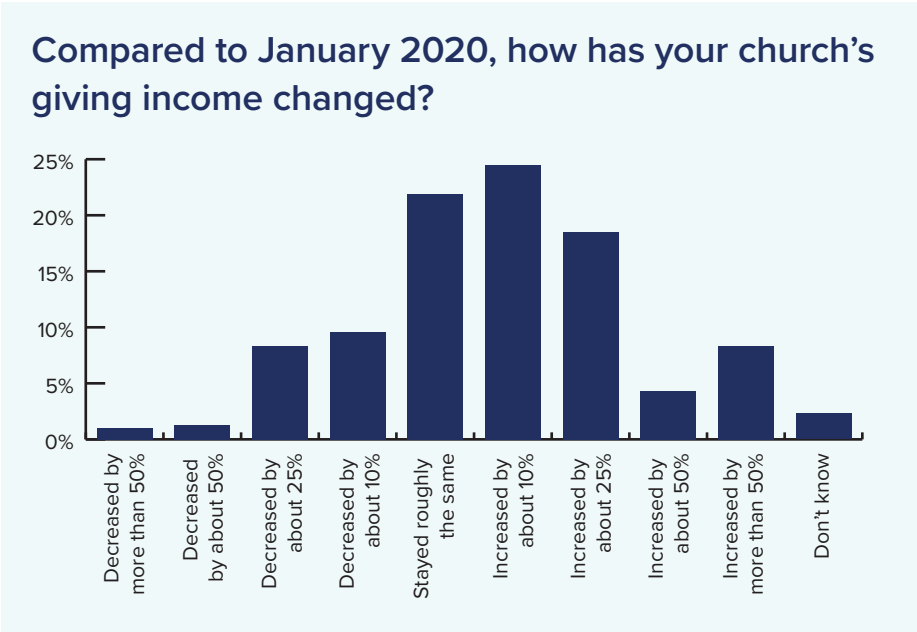
Why has your giving increased?



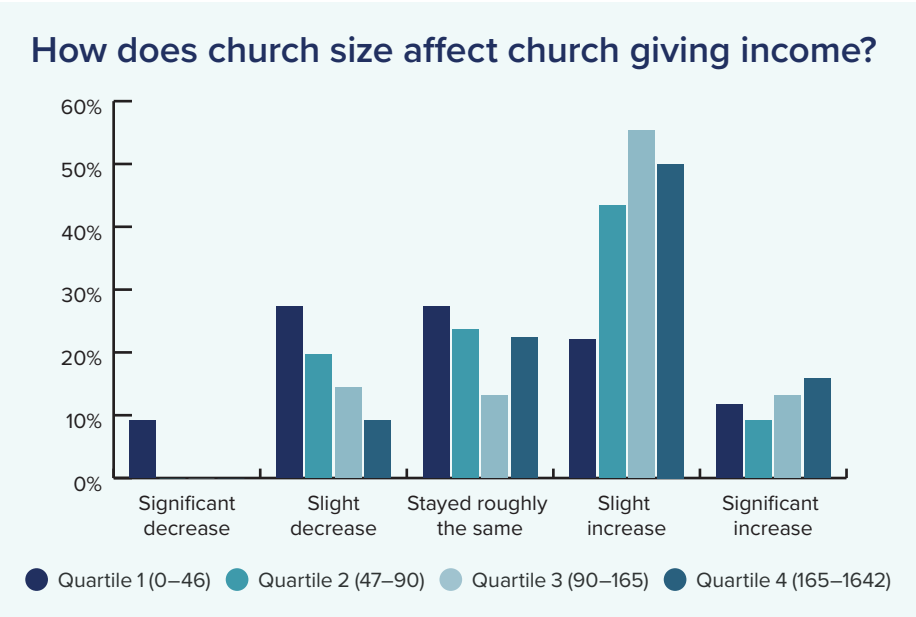
Why has your giving decreased?



A similar picture was observed from the responses of church leaders, although we provided them with a greater range of options about their giving income. Reflecting the responses from individuals, around two thirds of church leaders said their giving income had either stayed the same or increased by about 10% or 25%; however as noted above, this represents in real terms a freeze or reduction.



One notable finding was that larger churches were much more likely to have seen an increase in giving. This was the case for 70% of the largest half of churches, whereas for the smallest quarter only a third had seen an increase. In contrast for nearly 40% of this group their income had reduced, while for the largest quarter only 10% had seen a decrease. This is likely to be associated with increased attendance at larger churches, and a decrease in the attendance at the smallest quarter of churches surveyed.

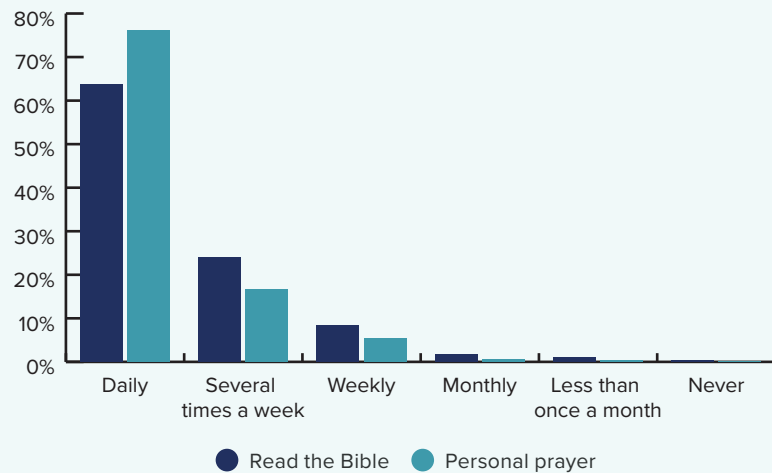


Prayer and Bible habits

The respondents to this survey demonstrated a very high level of commitment to personal Christian practices, with nearly two thirds reporting that they read the Bible daily, and 96% at least weekly. More than three quarters pray daily, and 98% at least weekly.

When weekly Bible reading and personal prayer are combined with attending church services at least monthly as a criteria for a 'practising Christian', 89% of respondents met this definition.

How often do you read the Bible and pray?



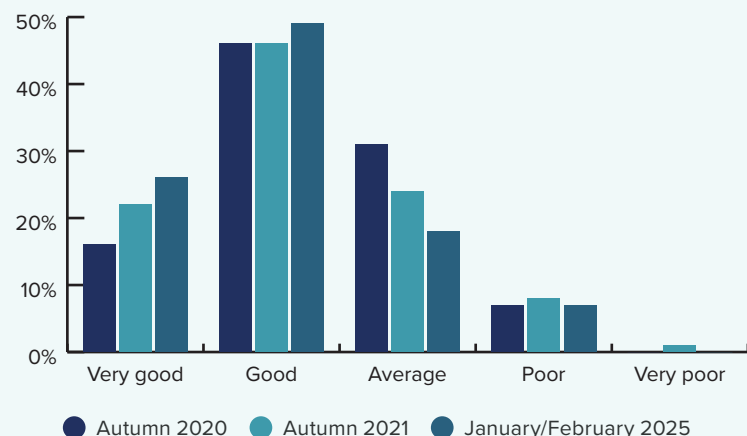
Respondents who read the Bible daily are slightly more likely to attend church weekly, 84% compared with 78% of the whole sample. They are also likely to have talked to more people who are not Christians about their faith. In the whole sample this was an average of three people, while for those who read the Bible daily it is an average of four people.



Wellbeing

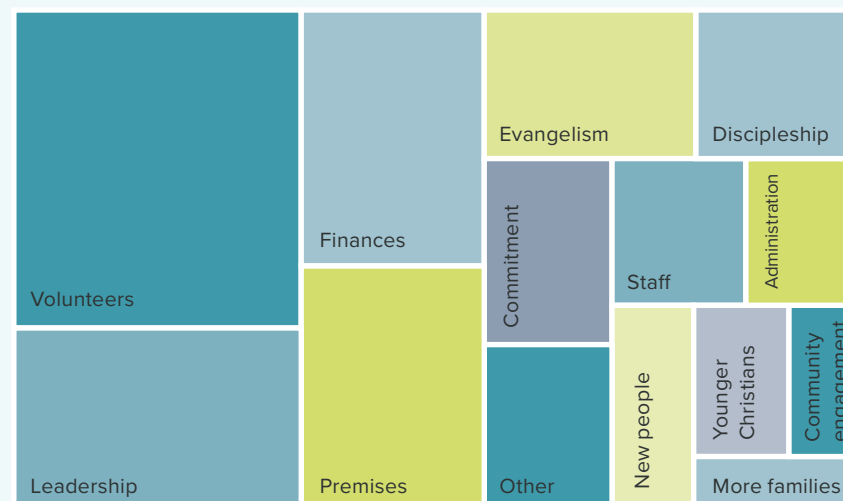
The wellbeing of leaders has improved over the past five years.

Emotional wellbeing of church leaders



These results suggest that there has been a small improvement in the emotional wellbeing of church leaders over the past five years, with higher numbers describing their emotional wellbeing as good or very good. 75% of church leaders described their emotional wellbeing as good or very good in early 2025, compared to 68% in 2021 and 62% in 2020. It was also encouraging to see that no church leaders described their emotional wellbeing as very poor in 2025.

The most pressing needs of church leaders



Church leaders were asked with regards to functioning as a church, what are your most pressing current needs? This was an open-ended question with respondents able to type as much or as little as they wanted. Some focused on one key need, others suggested several areas. Responses were examined to find key themes and were categorised by these. Given the open-ended nature of the question, it was possible for a church to have pressing needs in multiple categories.

The most common pressing need of church leaders was for more volunteers. 36% of church leaders identified having more volunteers as a pressing need in their church. This further highlights the problems that churches are having with finding enough volunteers in order to do all that they wish. Other pressing needs included leadership (21%), finances (18%) and premises (17%). A lot of the needs identified are very practical in nature.

Current pressing faith needs of individuals

We asked individuals, thinking about your Christian faith, what are your current, most pressing personal needs? This was an open-ended question and respondents could say as much or as little as they wanted. A selection of quotes is presented below.

“Good teaching at church.”

“To stay disciplined in prayer and Bible study.”

“To know Jesus better and to take opportunities to share my faith.”

“To have an even closer relationship with God.”

“To know and hear God more and do His will.”

“Commitment to spending time with God every day.”

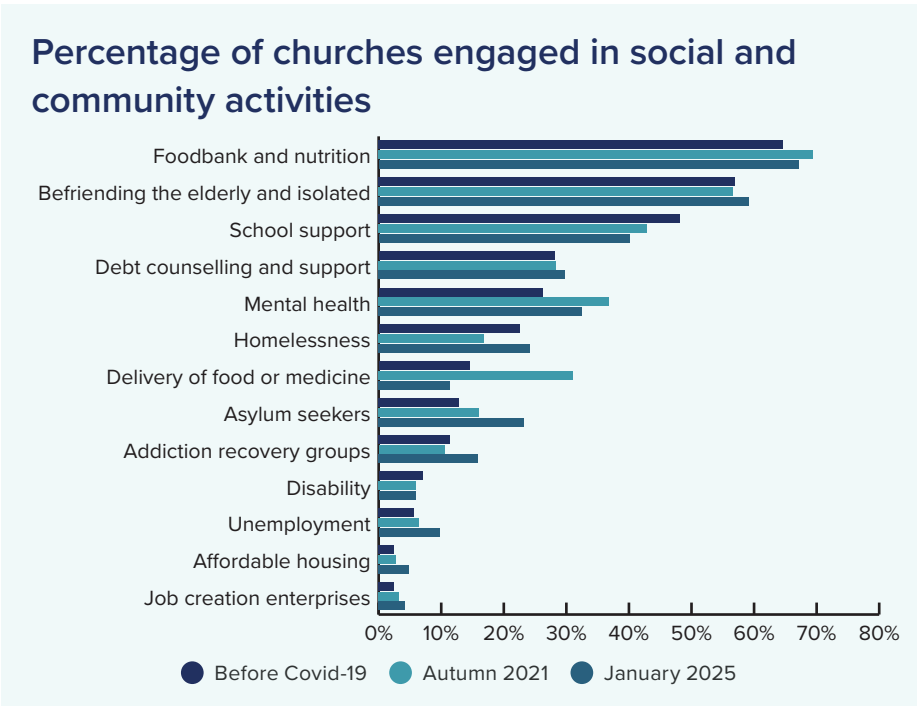
“Fellowship with people who will encourage and challenge me.”

“The salvation of family members.”



Community involvement

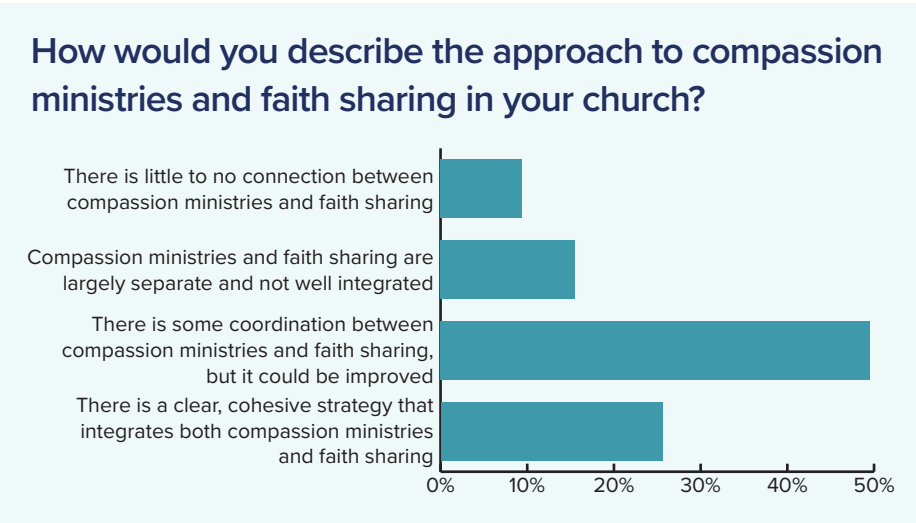
95% of churches surveyed are involved in activities to benefit their community.



Church leaders were asked about which community engagement activities their church had been involved in. Church leaders reported a wide variety of activities. There has been little change in most of these over the past five years. Foodbanks and nutrition work remains the most common activity that churches are involved in in their community, with 67.1% involved in this in early 2025. There has been a substantial fall in the number of churches involved in delivery of food or medicine, but that unsurprisingly peaked during the Covid-19 pandemic. The

percentage of churches involved in school support has dropped from 48.2% before Covid-19 to 40.1% in early 2025. This perhaps reflects the reduced access and influence that churches now have in schools.

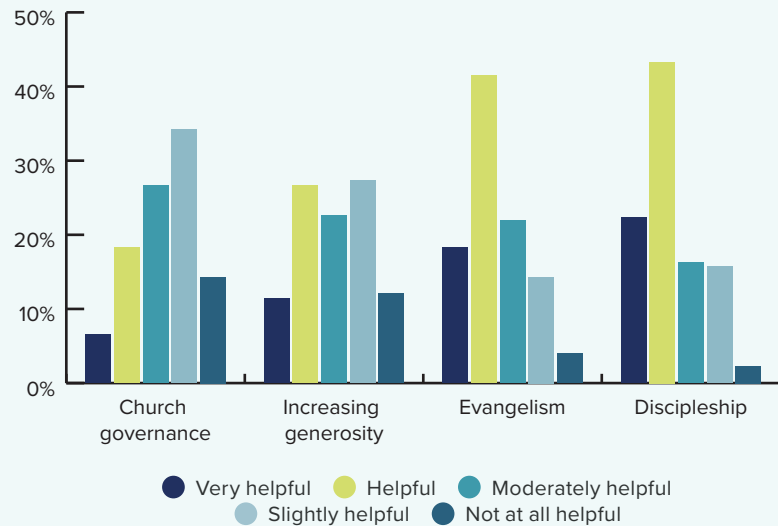
Over the last five years, we can see that the number of churches involved in addressing homelessness, supporting asylum seekers and addiction recovery groups has risen. These findings highlight all that churches are doing to help with the very practical needs of those in their communities.



Church leaders were asked to select an answer which best described the approach to compassion ministries and faith sharing in their church. It's clear that for most churches there are links between their compassion ministries and faith sharing. A quarter of church leaders said their church has a clear, cohesive strategy which integrates both compassion ministries and faith sharing. Recognising that improvements could be made, half of church leaders said that in their church there was some coordination between compassion ministries and faith sharing, but that it could be improved.

Resourcing

How helpful would leaders find training and resources in these areas?

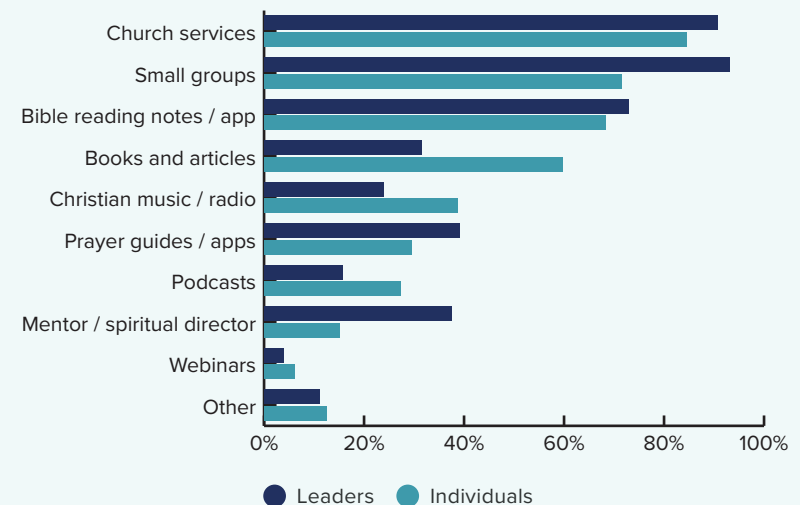


Leaders were asked how helpful they would find training and resources in four different areas, with discipleship and evangelism scoring highest, with 65% and 60% respectively rating these areas as either very helpful or helpful. There was less support for training and resources around generosity, 38% said this would be very helpful or helpful, and even less for church governance – only 25% rated this area as helpful or above, and 14% said it would not be at all helpful.

Individuals were asked what is most helpful in growing **their** relationships with Jesus, and leaders were asked what helps grow **their congregation's** relationship with Jesus. Church services, small groups and Bible reading are the top three for both groups, but with leaders placing more importance on small groups, while individuals see more value in individual components such as reading books or listening to music, radio or podcasts. Church leaders were more than twice as likely to see value in a mentor or spiritual director than individual respondents.

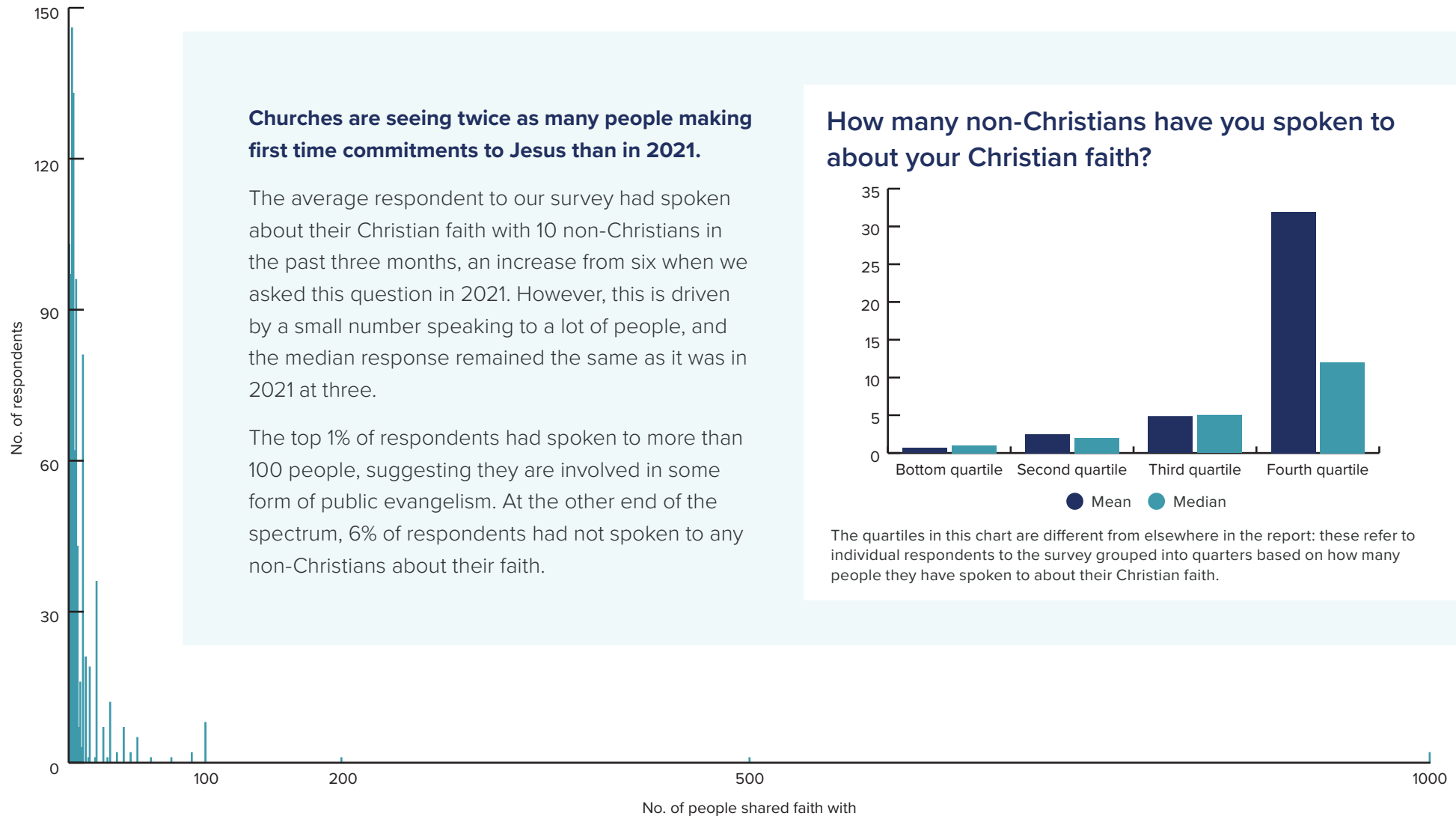
We also asked this question to individuals in autumn 2021 and the responses and order were very similar, with the only notable increases this year being in 'church services' and 'small groups' – likely as a result of these functioning more regularly than in 2021.

What resources help most in growing relationship with Jesus?



Sharing faith

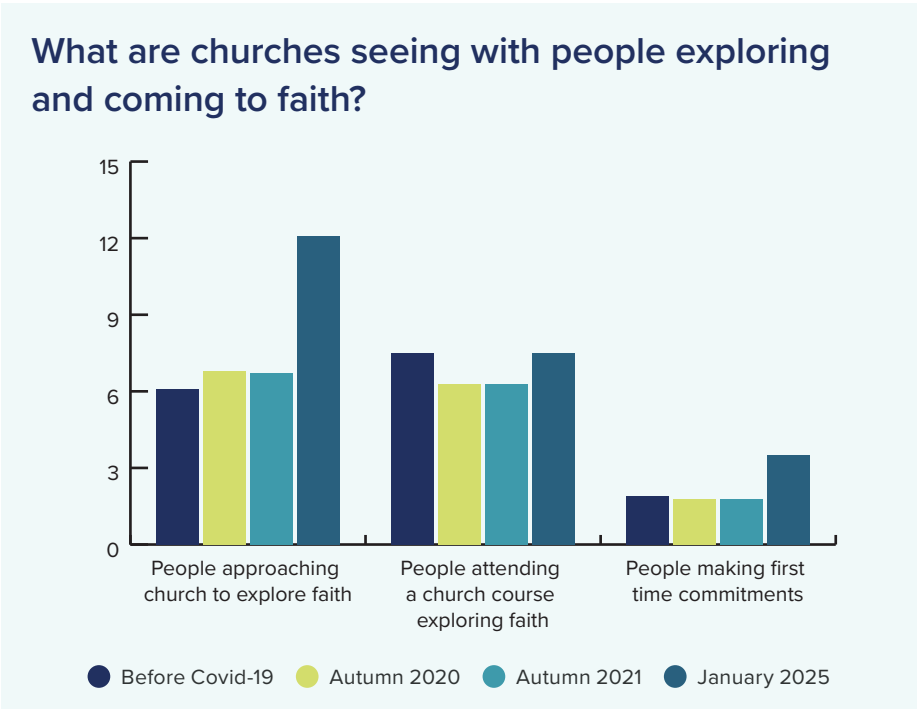
How many people have you shared your faith with in the past 3 months?



We asked church leaders a set of questions about what they are seeing with regards to people exploring and finding faith.

Compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic, churches are seeing twice as many people approaching them asking questions about the Christian faith – an average of 12 people over the past three months, up from six before Covid and 6.5 in 2021.

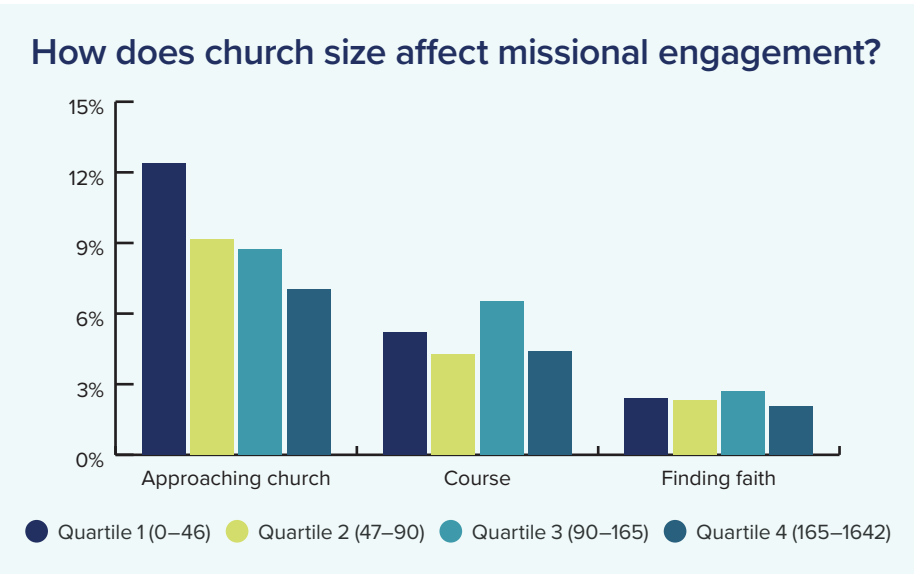
Similarly, twice as many people are making first time commitments to follow Jesus. In previous surveys we found an average of 1.8 were making commitments in 2020 and 2021, whereas in January 2025 this was 3.5.



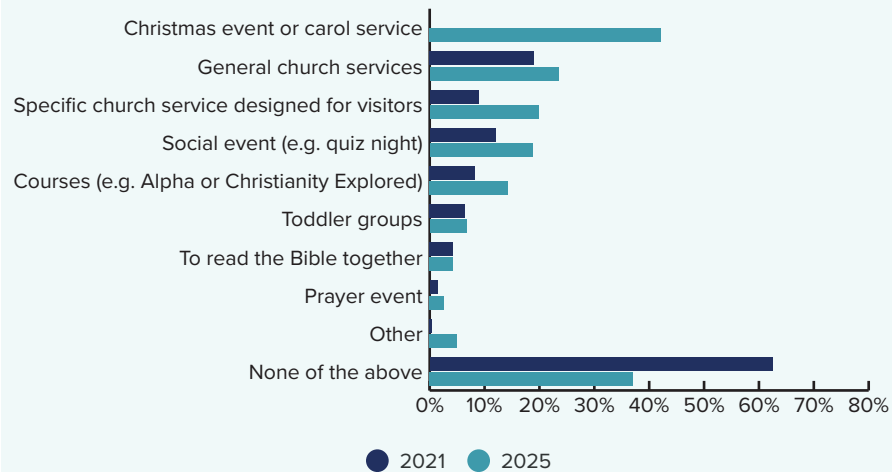
There had a been a smaller change in the number of people attending a church-based course to explore Christianity (such as Alpha or Christianity Explored). This returned to the pre-pandemic level of an average of 7.5 people per church.

Over half of church responses recorded no one engaging with such courses, largely represented by more than a third which weren't running any.

An interesting insight into these numbers is that the number of people in a church congregation does not affect the number of people making first time commitments when measured as a percentage of congregation size. Across all four quartiles based on church attendance this was between 2.1 and 2.7% of congregation size making first time commitments. Smaller churches were, however, much more likely to see a higher number of people asking questions and exploring faith when measured as a percentage of church size – 12% for the smallest churches and 7% for the largest churches.



Have you invited someone who isn't a Christian to...



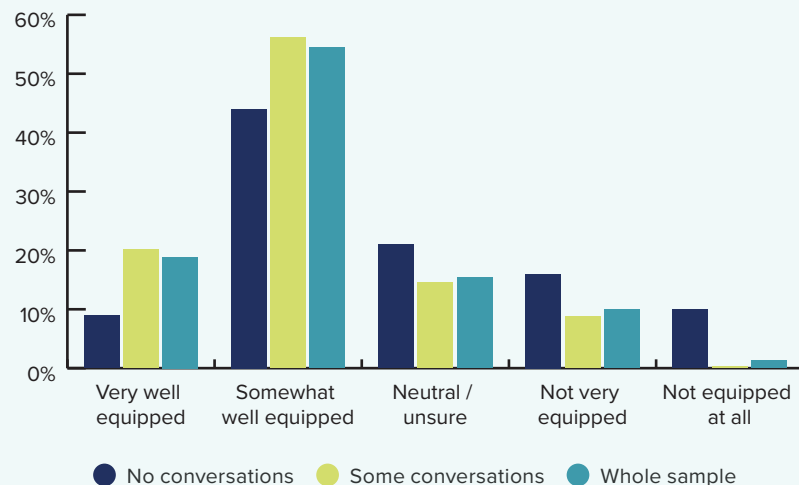
In the three-month period before completing the survey 63% of respondents had invited a non-Christian to some form of Christian or church-based activity. This is a significant increase from 2021 when only 37.5% had. This may be a reflection of many more events taking place. It is also important to note that the survey took place in January, so we included Christmas events within this period which was the most common event that people invited others to. Increases were, however, seen across almost all types of activity.



Barriers to sharing faith

Evangelicals in the UK are seeing fewer barriers to sharing their faith.

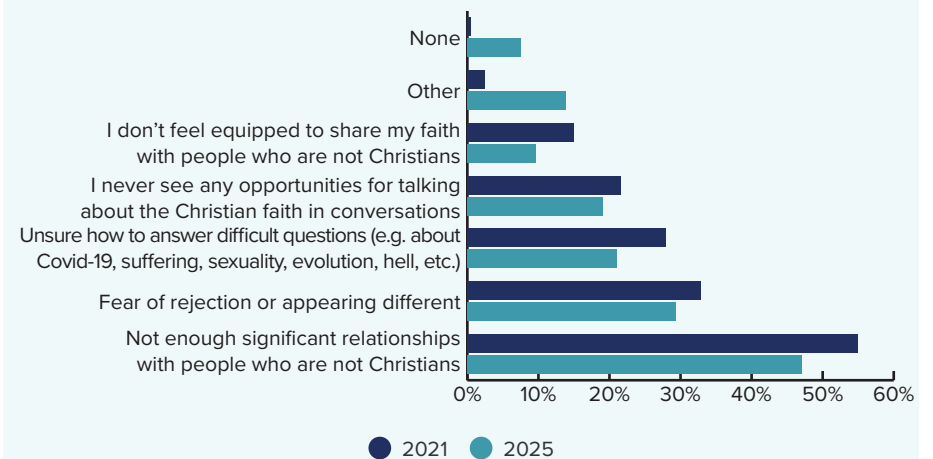
How equipped do you feel about sharing your faith with non-Christians?



Three quarters of Christians we surveyed felt that they are equipped to share their faith with non-Christians, with nearly 20% saying they are very well equipped and more than half (54%) saying they were somewhat well equipped.

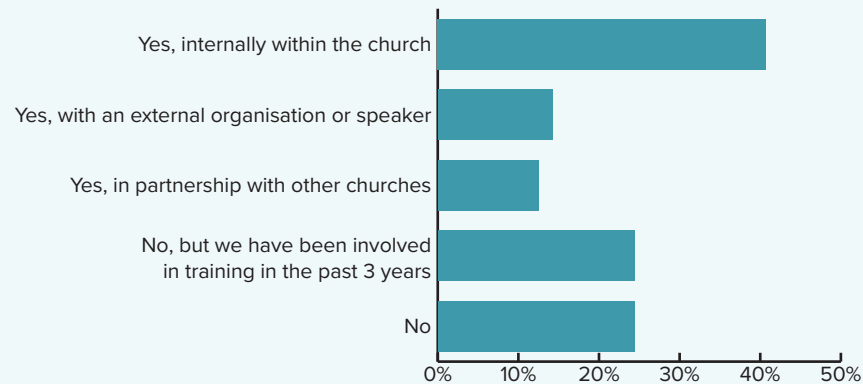
Unsurprisingly, there is a significant difference between those people who had spoken with a non-Christian about their faith and those who hadn't. For those who had had no conversations in the past three months only 9% said they were very well equipped and more than a quarter either not very equipped or not at all equipped.

What are the barriers to sharing faith?



Respondents were asked to select the main barriers that stopped them from sharing their faith with others. The answer options were the same in both the 2021 and 2025 editions of the survey. For most barriers we can see a decrease from 2021 to 2025 which is encouraging. Also encouraging is the increase in those saying they have no barriers to sharing their faith. However, we see a large rise in those selecting “other” barriers. Some of these respondents mentioned concerns about how sharing their faith would be received in a secular workplace that has policies which make such conversations difficult. Others highlighted the way that Christians are perceived by society and portrayed in politics or the media which makes faith sharing conversations challenging. Future research may wish to explore in more detail what these other barriers are.

In the past year has your church been involved in any training around evangelism and sharing faith?

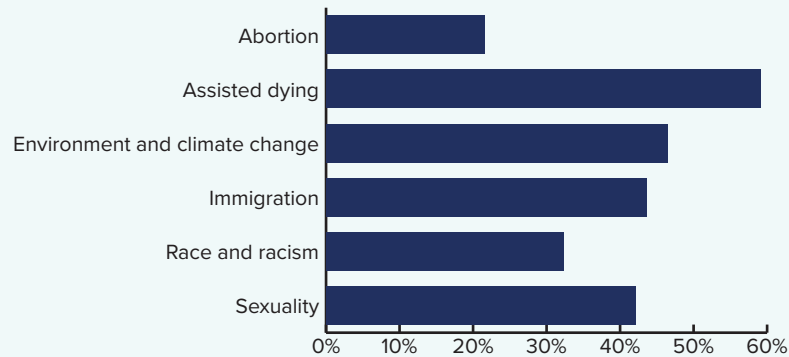


We asked church leaders whether they had been involved in any training around evangelism and sharing faith in the past year. Just under half of churches had not, although half of these (a quarter of whole sample) had done so within the past three years. Most of those who had been involved in training had done so internally, although one in seven leaders reported involving an external organisation or speaker and one in eight had done the training in partnership with other churches.



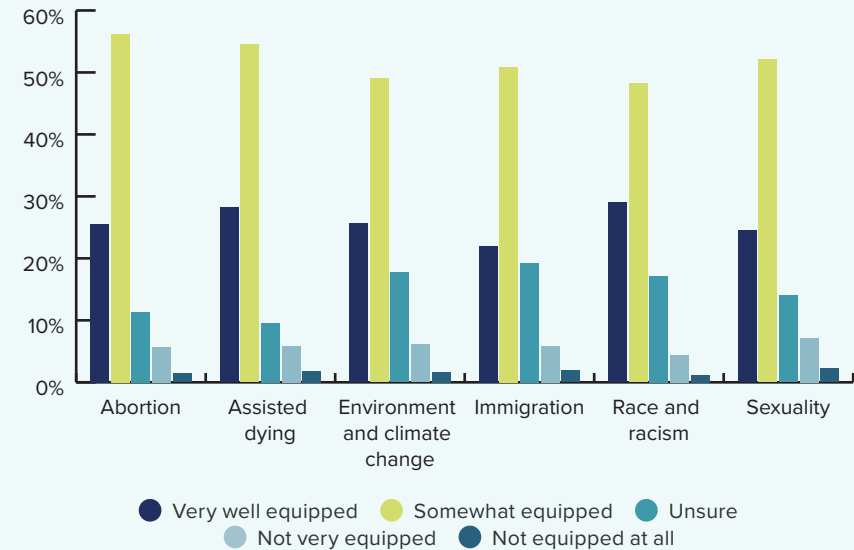
Talking about current public issues

In the past three months have you had a conversation with a non-Christian relating to any of the following issues?



Unsurprisingly, recently assisted dying is the issue that individual respondents are having the most conversations about with non-Christians. Almost 60% of individuals reported having had a conversation with a non-Christian about assisted dying in the last three months. This shows that what is happening in the news and society affects our conversations with non-Christians. It shows us the importance of making sure we know where we stand on topical issues.

How well equipped do you feel talking about social and cultural issues with non-Christian friends or family?



We can see that how equipped individuals feel is quite similar across all issues. It's also clear that when respondents are having conversations about these issues, they tend to feel equipped.

Summary and conclusions

Many evangelical churches in the UK are thriving and growing; however, the situation is significantly different for larger and smaller churches.

The largest half of churches are growing, and with more growth among children than adults. The smallest quarter of churches are shrinking, and many of these have no children attending on a regular basis.

Churches are seeing people make first time commitments to follow Jesus at a significantly higher rate than when last surveyed in 2021. On average churches are seeing twice as many people become Christians (3.5 per church in the last three months) as both before the pandemic and immediately after. Likewise, nearly twice as many people (an average of 12 per church) are approaching them asking questions and exploring the Christian faith.

One notable finding is that churches of all sizes are experiencing this trend at the same rate. When analysed as a proportion of current attendance, churches had seen just over 2% make first time commitments. Smaller churches are seeing a much higher rate of people exploring faith – at 12% of current attendance compared to 7% for the largest churches.

Online church saw an explosion in 2020 by necessity when churches were prevented from meeting in person. This is a change that has stuck. Two thirds of churches are currently providing online opportunities to engage, with the median number of participants at 25. The average (mean) is over 100; however, this is driven by a few churches with very large engagement.



Midweek small groups remain a vital component of church life; however, engagement has shifted. Fewer people are engaging weekly, or at all. Larger churches are likely to see around half of their congregation in such groups, while for the smallest quarter this is less than a third.

The difference between larger and smaller churches is, however, reflected across a number of other indicators considered in this survey. Larger churches are much more likely to have seen an increase in giving and an increase in volunteering. Relating to giving, while more than half of churches have seen an increase in their giving, and less than one in five have seen it decline, for many churches increases have not kept pace with inflation. For the smallest quarter of churches only 15% of churches have seen giving increase sufficiently, compared with 40% of the largest churches.

The most common areas where churches are experiencing shortages of volunteers is with children's and youth ministry, but this activity is still being carried out by most churches. Similarly, churches are incredibly active in their local communities, with 95% of churches engaged in some form of social action programme, with more than two thirds involved in food provision.

There has been significant comment in recent years on the wellbeing of church leaders. While this is clearly something that requires attention even when only affecting a small number of leaders, we found the situation had improved. Three quarters of leaders described their wellbeing as good or very good, up from autumn 2021, which itself had seen an improvement from the height of the pandemic when this was just over 60%. Only 7% of leaders described their wellbeing as poor, and no one said it was very poor.

The overall picture for evangelical churches in the UK is of growth and opportunities. Churches are seeing more people commit to follow Jesus and more openness to exploring the Christian faith.

There are obvious challenges for smaller churches identified in this research, and stories of growth in larger churches should not obscure these. Churches of all sizes are seeing people come to know Jesus and this reminds us that the challenges need addressing rather than assuming they will go away.





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