

# 236 Ridgefield Church

## Member Survey

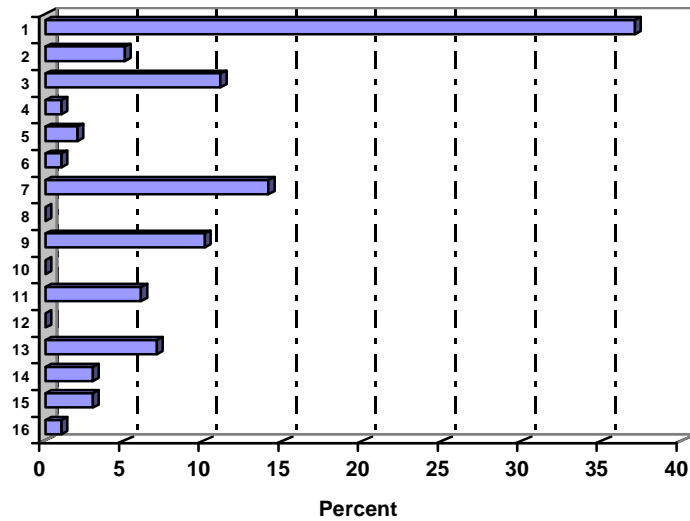
168 Total Respondents

### TASKS OF THE CHURCH

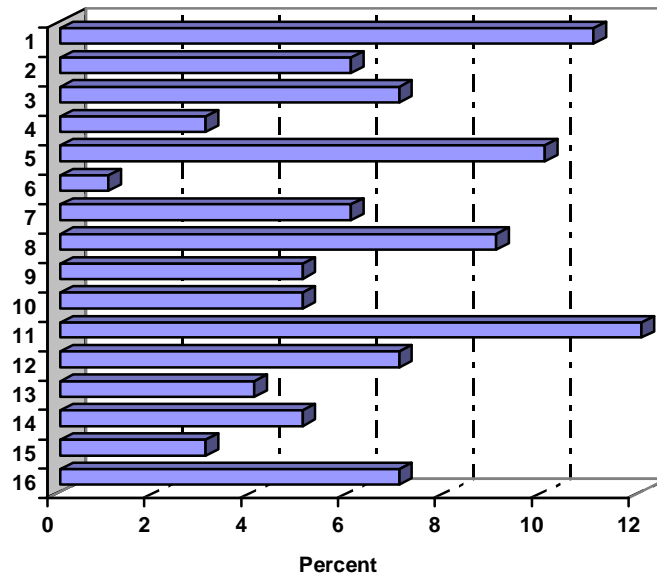
The survey listed a number of tasks that a local church is likely to perform. The congregational members were asked to evaluate these tasks as to whether they were generally satisfied with the congregation's current performance on the task, or whether they felt the tasks should receive more emphasis,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

	<i>Needs More</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Generally Satisfied</i>	<i>Too Much</i>
1. Offering worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and the Christian tradition.	13%	43%	43%	1%
2. Providing worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms.	15	37	45	3
3. Providing Christian education for children and youth.	19	44	37	0
4. Providing Christian education programs for adults.	24	27	47	2
5. Helping members deepen their personal and spiritual relationship with God.	31	22	48	0
6. Sharing the Word with the unchurched.	35	13	48	4
7. Engaging in acts of charity and service for persons in need.	21	44	34	1
8. Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political, and economic issues.	21	17	57	5
9. Providing a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved.	25	34	41	1
10. Providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems.	22	31	46	1
11. Providing fellowship opportunities for members.	22	39	38	1
12. Helping members understand their use of time, talents, and money as expressions of Christian stewardship.	31	18	48	3
13. Supporting the global mission of the church.	16	27	52	6
14. Helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service.	19	25	55	1
15. Participating in activities and programs with other religious groups.	17	29	54	0
16. Expressing our denominational heritage/tradition.	23	16	57	4

**Overall, which one task does your congregation do best?**



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



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

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1. Our church's identity, as it is, is one with which I feel comfortable.	16%	58%	22%	4%
2. It is easy for me to tell my friends what is unique about our church.	7	48	40	5
3. I have a clear understanding of what our church stands for.	12	57	27	4
4. An effective effort was made to instruct me in our church's mission.	8	55	33	4
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation.	27	52	17	4
6. Being at this church has made a difference in my spiritual life.	35	50	11	4

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

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

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Agree</i>	<i>Slightly Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
1. Members are well informed about what the various committees and groups in the congregation are doing.	19%	39%	20%	20%	2%
2. The activities taking place in the congregation are well publicized to the surrounding community.	14	31	29	21	4
3. Study of the needs of the congregation and the community is regularly undertaken as the basis for church planning.	8	29	28	27	9
4. Members and groups get a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in the congregation.	9	30	30	22	8
5. Members are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and service.	25	47	22	4	3
6. Lay leaders are provided the training they need for their committee and task assignments.	19	32	23	11	14
7. Every member who is capable and interested has an equal opportunity to hold key leadership positions.	23	31	19	19	9
8. The theological and biblical implications of important decisions are regularly discussed.	4	27	35	22	12
9. Important decisions about the life of the church are rarely made without open discussion by church leaders <i>and</i> members.	20	39	20	20	3
10. Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than hushed up or hidden behind closed doors.	3	23	20	49	5
11. It is easy to summarize for visitors and non-members how our congregation differs from other congregations in the area.	3	22	33	33	8
12. Members help each other out in times of trouble.	35	44	13	5	4
13. Cooperative programs with other churches of other denominations are highly valued in our church.	30	41	15	12	3
14. The <b>current</b> morale of our church members is high.	4	17	29	48	3
15. There is a sense of excitement among members about our congregation's <b>future</b> .	10	32	30	24	4

## CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY:

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

1. Our church is more influenced by history and tradition	1-----3.0-----7	Our church is more influenced by contemporary ideas and trends
2. Members are similar to the people who live immediately around the church	1-----2.4-----7	Members are very different from people who live immediately around the church.
3. Our church is very involved with the community around the church	1-----3.9-----7	Our church is not at all involved with the community around the church
4. Our church is primarily oriented to serving our members	1-----3.3-----7	Our church is primarily oriented to serving the world beyond our membership
5. Our congregation feels like one large family	1-----5.1-----7	Our congregation feels like a loosely knit association of individuals and groups
6. Our church is known as a prestigious one in the area.	1-----3.8-----7	Our church is not considered one of the status churches in the area.
7. Our church's approach to social issues is basically educational	1-----2.8-----7	Our church's approach to social is decidedly "activist."
8. The congregation's approach to individual salvation emphasizes education, nurture and gradual growth in the faith	1-----2.0-----7	The congregation's approach to individual salvation stresses conversion and a born-again experience
9. Our church gives strong expression to its denominational identity and heritage	1-----3.3-----7	It would be difficult for a visitor to know to which denomination the congregation belongs.
10. Our congregation strives to create partnerships with other local churches.	1-----3.2-----7	Our congregation prefers to work by ourselves or through our Denominational channels

## FUNCTIONS OF THE SENIOR MINISTER:

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

	<i>Very High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Low</i>
1. Providing administrative leadership for the congregation's ministry.	17%	41%	32%	11%
2. Actively and visibly supporting the church's stewardship program.	10	33	48	9
3. Directly involving laity in planning and leadership of church programs and events.	21	56	22	1
4. Planning and leading a program of new member recruitment.	14	32	44	10
5. Participating in local community activities, issues and problems.	5	34	41	20
6. Holding social justice issues before members.	6	11	44	38
7. Planning and leading worship sensitive to the needs of the congregation.	68	26	6	0
8. Emphasizing the spiritual development of members.	54	30	14	2
9. Visiting the sick, shut-ins, and bereaved.	27	51	22	1
10. Visiting members at their homes.	6	22	42	31
11. Pastoral counseling of members having personal, family, and/or work related problems.	38	47	15	1
12. Developing and supporting religious education program for children and youth.	19	32	38	11
13. Developing and leading adult education programs.	11	39	44	7
14. Supporting the world mission of the church.	4	33	55	7
15. Participating in denominational activities beyond the local church, that is, at the regional or national level.	1	14	44	42
16. Preparing and preaching inspiring sermons.	76	25	0	0

## SIZE AND CONDITION OF FACILITIES:

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

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Needs Attention But Not Immediate</i>	<i>Needs Immediate Attention</i>
<b>Worship Space</b>	60%	40%	1%	0%
<b>Educational Space</b>	37	52	11	1
<b>Fellowship Space</b>	41	52	6	1
<b>Office Space</b>	21	67	12	1
<b>Parking Space</b>	31	61	7	1

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

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Needs Attention But Not Immediate</i>	<i>Needs Immediate Attention</i>
<b>Worship Space</b>	72%	26%	1%	1%
<b>Educational Space</b>	33	58	9	0
<b>Fellowship Space</b>	32	52	14	2
<b>Office Space</b>	19	67	14	1
<b>Parking</b>	31	61	7	1
<b>Exterior &amp; Grounds</b>	41	44	13	3

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

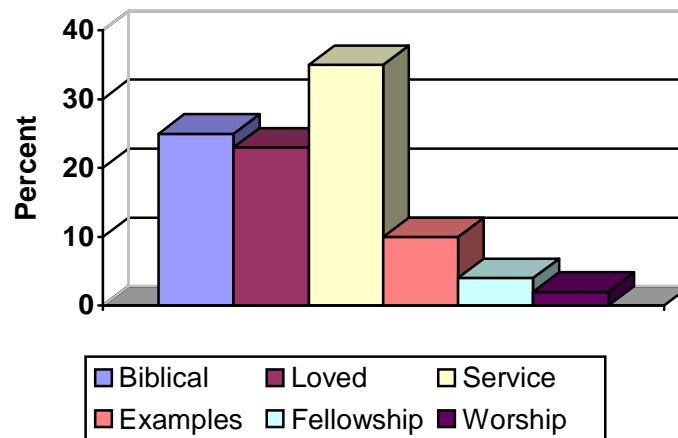
A. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your congregation's Christian Education program for **children**? A "Don't Know" (DK) response is provided, but please use it only if absolutely necessary.

	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Generally Satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat Satisfied</i>	<i>Not Very Satisfied</i>	<i>DK</i>
1. The total number of children that attend.	14%	28%	21%	10%	26%
2. The time and day at which classes for children are held	24	41	8	2	25
3. The training provided teachers	12	27	12	11	38

B. Members were asked how satisfied they were with each of the following aspects of the congregation's church school program for children?

	<i>Need More Or better</i>	<i>Generally Satisfied</i>	<i>Too Much Already</i>	<i>Doesn't Have No Need</i>
1. Teaching children about the Bible and the church	15%	81%	1%	4%
2. Giving children the feeling that they are loved by God and the church	10	86	1	4
3. Developing in children a sense that Christian love includes respect for and service to others	23	73	0	4
4. Providing examples of what it means to be a Christian in today's world	34	61	0	5
5. Offering enjoyable fellowship activities	23	69	3	5
6. Including the children in the worship service	31	62	2	6

C. Which one of the above 6 types of activities for children did members believe should be the primary focus of the congregation's children's program?

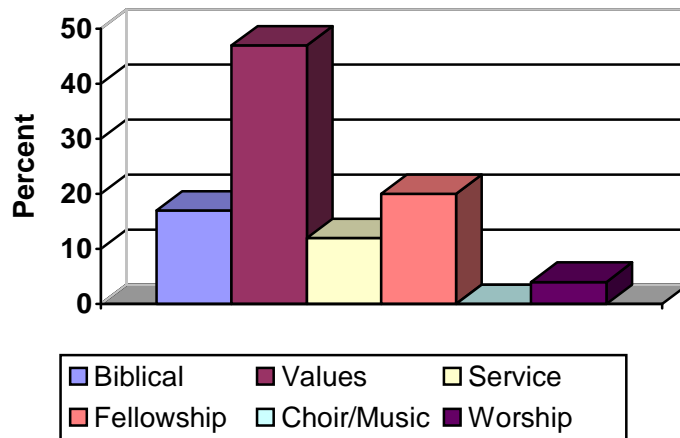


# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

Members were asked how satisfied they were with each of the following aspects of the congregation's church school program for youth and teens?

	<i>Need More Or better</i>	<i>Generally Satisfied</i>	<i>Too Much Already</i>	<i>Doesn't Have No Need</i>
1. Educational programming that is biblically centered	31%	62%	3%	4%
2. Educational programming that helps youth clarify values and beliefs	50	48	0	2
3. Programming that involves youth in serving others	50	46	3	2
4. Providing fellowship opportunities for youth to have fun in Christian setting	56	41	1	3
5. Youth choirs or other kinds of musical groups	30	63	1	7
6. Including the youth in the worship service	54	44	0	3

Which one of the above 6 types of activities for youth did members believe should be the primary focus of the congregation's youth and teen program?



# ADULT EDUCATION AND SMALL GROUP PROGRAMMING

For each of the kinds of programs or groups listed below, members were asked to indicate:

- A:** Whether they think their congregation **needs more or better** programs of this kind; is doing **about right**; is already over-emphasizing or doing **too much** in the area; or, if the congregation currently **doesn't have** such a program and they see **no need** for beginning it?
- B:** Whether it is likely that they would **Attend** if the congregation offered more or better programs of this kind.

	<i>Need More or Better</i>	<i>About Right</i>	<i>Too much Already</i>	<i>Doesn't Have No Need</i>	<i>Attend</i>
1. Study groups dealing with the Bible and theology	36%	62%	1%	2%	28%
2. Study and discussion groups dealing with contemporary issues, topics and problems	42	54	1	3	31
3. Prayer, meditation and spirituality groups	23	73	2	2	8
4. Support groups in which members share with each other at the level of feelings and personal experience	27	66	3	5	13
5. Fellowship events or hobby groups	40	52	5	5	26
6. Evangelistic outreach and visitation groups	25	47	3	24	4
7. Social concern groups for planning and working on projects directed at community or social issues/problems	34	48	3	15	14
8. Recreation/Athletic activities	37	14	0	49	12
9. Literary/culture groups	26	41	1	32	10
10. Groups and classes that explore marriage, the family, and parenting issues	44	46	1	9	14

<p>Which three of the following are the <i>best times</i> for you to attend adult programs?</p> <p>Sunday morning 61%</p> <p>Weekday evening 55</p> <p>Sunday evening 30</p> <p>Weekend retreat 66</p> <p>Saturday morning 36</p> <p>Weekday afternoon 21</p> <p>Weekday morning 31</p>	<p>Which three of the following are the <i>worst times</i> for you to attend adult programs?</p> <p>Weekday afternoon 48 %</p> <p>Weekday morning 44</p> <p>Saturday morning 41</p> <p>Weekend retreat 42</p> <p>Sunday evening 44</p> <p>Weekday evening 21</p> <p>Sunday morning 14</p>
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## WORSHIP

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

	<i>Need More Emphasis</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Generally Satisfied</i>	<i>Receives too Much Attention</i>
1. Providing time for members to greet one another	18%	39%	38%	4%
2. Providing worship that is emotionally moving	28	34	39	0
3. Providing worship that is intellectually challenging	23	42	35	0
4. Attention given to sacraments	3	63	29	5
5. Lay participation in leading worship	8	50	37	5
6. Use of inclusive, non-sexist language	5	44	39	12
7. Use of creeds or statements of faith	12	36	46	6
8. Silent prayer/meditation	7	53	39	1
9. Having parts of the worship especially for children	22	35	41	2
10. Use of new or unfamiliar hymns	5	24	39	32
11. Corporate prayer in which the entire church participates	4	42	42	13
12. Providing worship at times other than Sunday morning	27	24	41	8
13. Use of contemporary worship styles, music and language	38	13	32	17

## QUALITIES OF A GOOD SERMON

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

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Not Very Important</i>	<i>Downright Distractiong</i>
1. Sets forth a clear faith position as a guide for making decisions and living a faithful life.	58%	38%	4%	0%
2. Based on a clear, unambiguous religious authority.	14	50	32	5
3. Touches directly on my everyday life.	54	41	4	0
4. Contains scholarly or literary illustrations.	8	42	47	3
5. Is Biblically based and illustrated.	35	54	11	0
6. Makes me reflect on issues and events that go beyond my personal life and local community.	41	49	9	1
7. Is challenging and thought-provoking.	59	39	0	2
8. Obviously flows from the depth of the preacher's own personal faith and spiritual convictions.	37	50	13	1
9. Is comforting and reassuring.	12	51	35	2
10. Is carefully composed and skillfully delivered.	31	58	11	1
11. Is spiritually moving and inspirational.	44	53	3	0
12. Sets forth various sides of an issue without advocating one position as the only Christian position.	14	47	33	6

## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

Members were asked what priority they would give each of the following many possible ways the congregation could be involved with community and social issues?

	<i>Highest Priority</i>	<i>High Priority</i>	<i>Moderate Priority</i>	<i>Low Priority</i>	<i>No Priority</i>
1. Providing or supporting social services for persons in need	19%	55%	23%	2%	1%
2. Providing meeting rooms in the church for community groups working on various issues and problems	3	24	51	20	2
3. Encouraging the minister to use a portion of his/her time working with community and social action groups	2	15	52	25	6
4. Calling attention to social, community and world issues from the pulpit and in study groups	7	23	43	23	5
5. Organizing social issue advocacy or action groups	5	7	33	38	18
6. Linking interested lay members to denominational, ecumenical or non-church social service or advocacy programs	7	16	46	27	5
7. Giving money to denominational programs	3	21	53	18	5
8. Giving money to ecumenical or non-denominational programs	1	16	41	34	8
9. Helping organize or support disadvantaged groups to pursue their own causes	3	20	38	24	16
10. Lobbying and petitioning corporate and government officials on peace and justice issues	3	6	18	32	42

## STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- A. Members were asked what **priority** they would give to each of the following efforts to encourage the congregation's stewardship program?

	<i>Highest</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>None</i>
1. Strong appeals from the pulpit	11%	37%	36%	15%	1%
2. Adult education programs on the meaning of Christian stewardship	8	27	44	19	3
3. Mailings to members clearly setting out the reasons for Christian stewardship	22	41	31	6	1
4. Encourage membership pledging	44	41	15	1	0
5. Every member canvass or visitation	16	27	25	26	6
6. Tithing or proportionate giving	8	23	42	21	6
7. Hiring a professional fund raising consultant or group	1	3	8	39	48
8. Fund-raisers such as fairs, bazaars, tag sales, etc.	0	12	35	39	15
9. Encourage giving to a church endowment through wills and bequests	12	31	42	15	1
10. Special giving appeals for a charitable cause or mission effort	9	42	42	7	1

- B. Members were asked to imagine that the congregation were able to raise significantly more money than currently budgeted and rate how high a **priority** they would put on each of the following uses of that money?

	<i>Highest</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>None</i>
1. Increased support to our denomination	5%	30%	40%	21%	4%
2. Increased support for community social service programs	12	35	40	12	1
3. Increased support for world missions	16	34	34	15	1
4. Increase current staff salaries	22	45	23	10	0
5. Hire additional staff	11	22	24	30	13
6. Renovate, enlarge or add to current facilities	9	11	32	34	14
7. Increase budget for educational and program materials and resources	11	33	39	16	1
8. Begin an endowment or add to an existing one	23	24	29	19	5
9. Increase evangelistic efforts and advertising	4	9	28	37	22



than the music?

[ 30% ] Very Satisfied	[ 12% ] Somewhat Dissatisfied
[ 57% ] Generally Satisfied	[ 1% ] Very Dissatisfied

C. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied is the membership with the way your spiritual needs are being met in the worship service?

[ 27% ] Very Satisfied	[ 17% ] Somewhat Dissatisfied
[ 53% ] Generally Satisfied	[ 3% ] Very Dissatisfied

D. If they could choose any time on Sunday morning, what time would members prefer for worship to start?

[ 2% ] before 8:00 a.m.	[ 38% ] 9:00 a.m.	[ 9% ] 10:30 a.m.
[ 9% ] 8:00 a.m.	[ 10% ] 9:30 a.m.	[ 3% ] 11:00 a.m.
[ 9% ] 8:30 a.m.	[ 21% ] 10:00 a.m.	[ 1% ] 11:30 or later

E. In thinking about what originally brought you to this congregation, What originally attracted you to attend this congregation? Will not equal 100% since it was possible to pick more than one.

58% The minister	27% The music program
17% My friends are here	8% The social outreach
22% The church's reputation	51% The worship style
6% Adult Education program	1% The self-help groups
41% Child & Youth program	32% The denominational ties

F. In thinking about what originally brought you to this congregation, What is the foremost reason you remain a part of this congregation? Will not equal 100% since it was possible to pick more than one.

21% The minister	39% The music program
46% My friends are here	17% The social outreach
9% The church's reputation	57% The worship style
12% Adult Education program	5% The self-help groups
20% Child & Youth program	22% The denominational ties

## RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PERSONAL PRACTICES:

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

### Percent

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

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

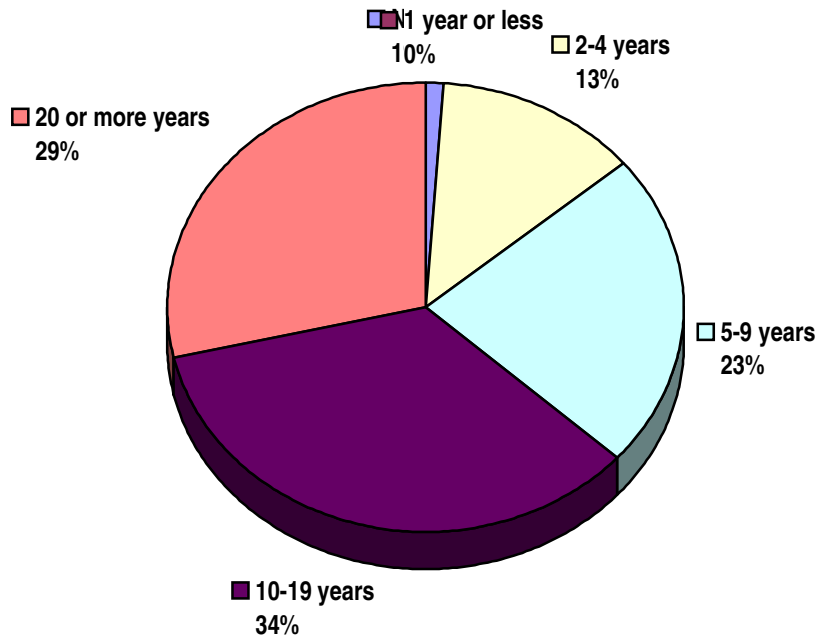
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral or Unsure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1. There is no other way to salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ.	28%	26%	25%	14%	8%
2. Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life.	27	41	14	11	7
3. Jesus' resurrection from the dead was an actual event.	42	31	23	3	2
4. All religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth.	7	28	28	29	9
5. The Bible has answers for all of the basic questions of life.	16	52	20	10	2
6. Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel.	12	38	37	12	1
7. It is often difficult to live out my faith in daily work, leisure and community life.	8	40	11	36	4

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

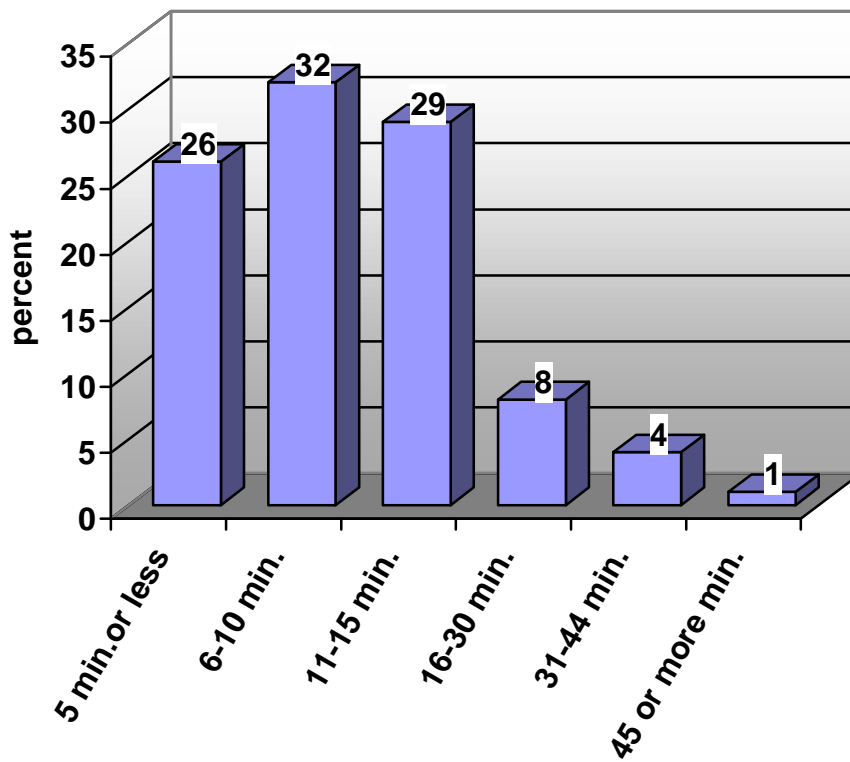
	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Few times a week</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Few times a month</i>	<i>Seldom or Never</i>
1. Spend time in private devotional activity such as prayer, meditation, reading the Bible or other spiritual books?	32%	30%	11%	16%	12%
2. Use the web at home or at the office?	70	10	4	4	12
3. Use email?	79	7	1	3	10
4. Look at religious Internet sites?	1	5	2	17	75
5. Volunteer time in social service?	4	17	14	40	25

## OUR CHURCH PARTICIPATION:

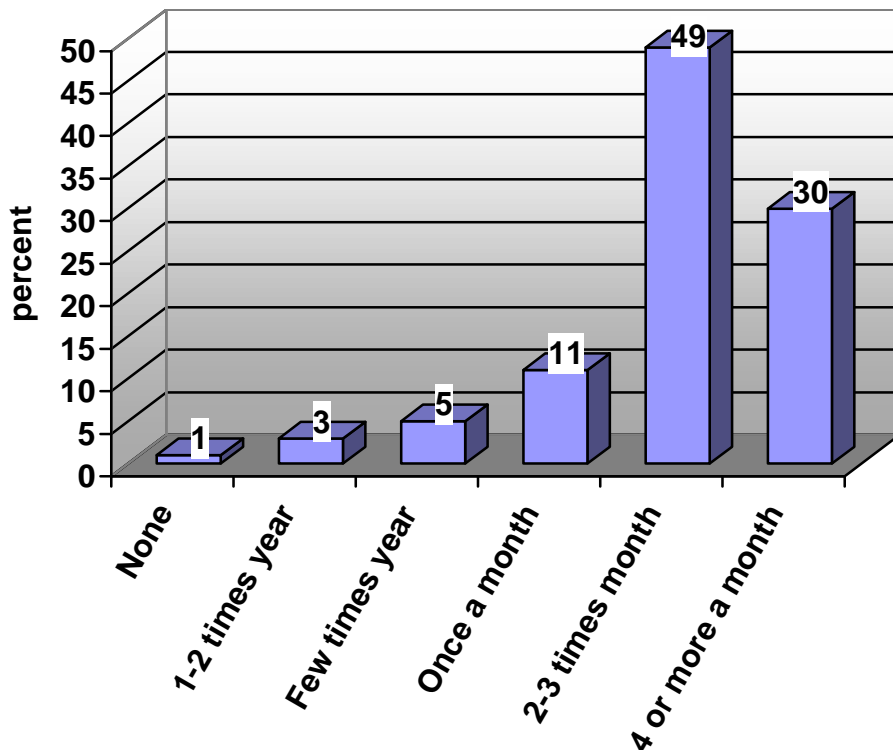
How long have you been a member?



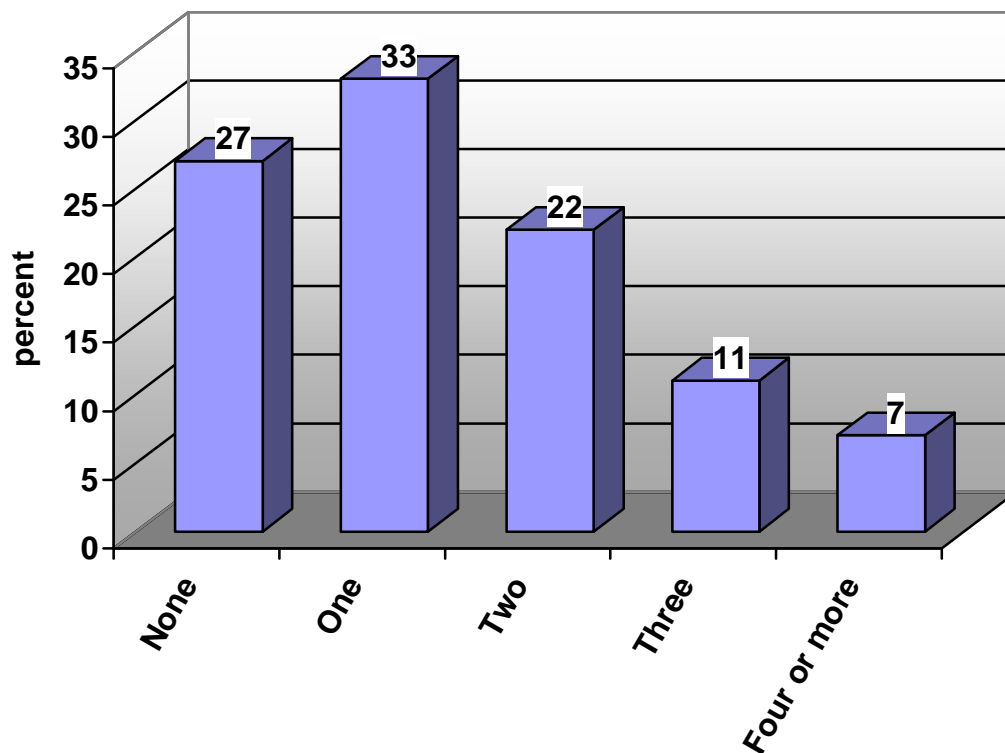
How long does it usually take you to travel from home to church?



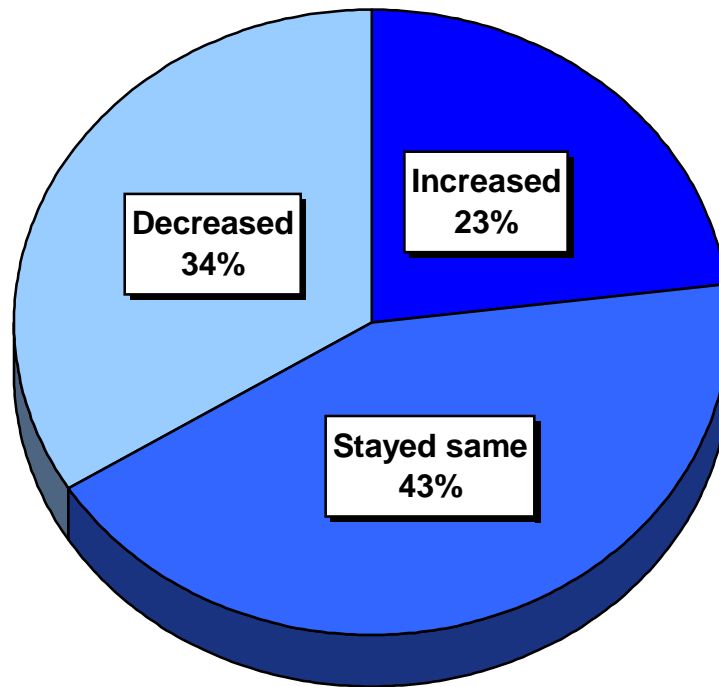
**On the average, about how many times have you attended church services during the past year?**



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



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



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

**If involvement has increased (n=39), why:**

More time available		10 persons
Better health	11	
Stronger faith	9	
More positive attitude	0	
Because of children	9	
Accepted office/responsibility	28	

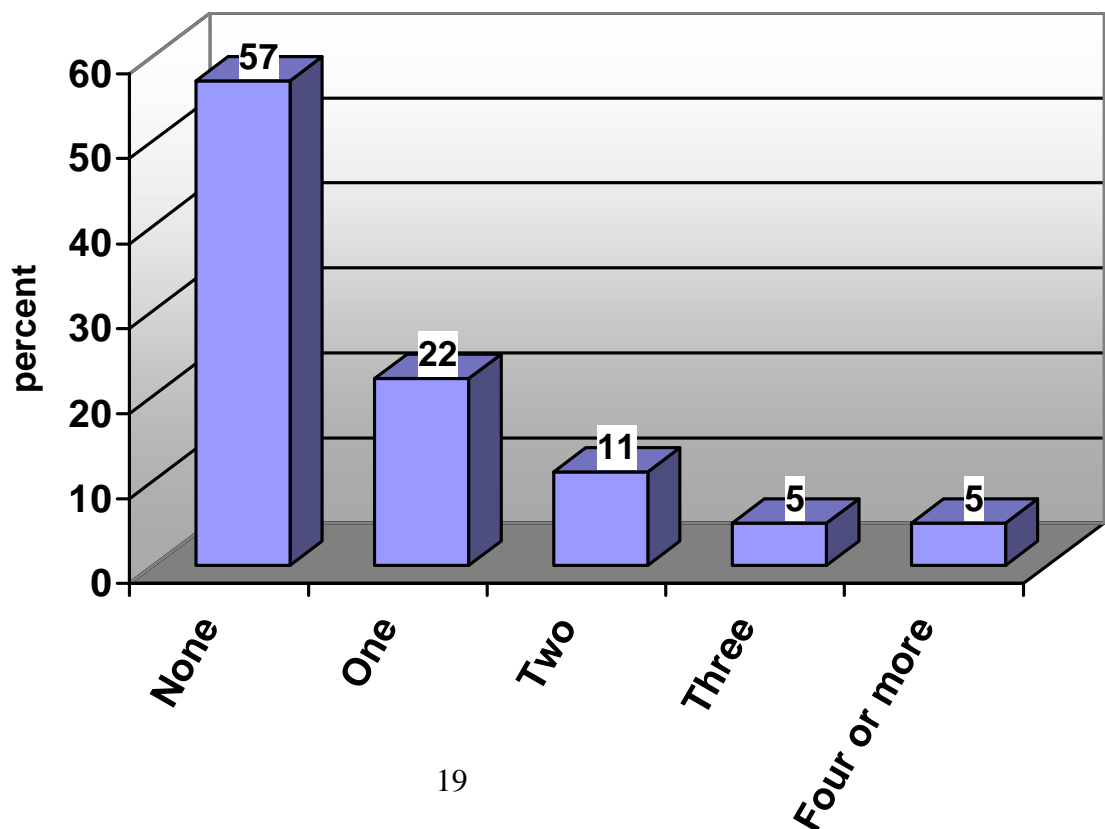
**If involvement has decreased (n=57), why:**

Decreased faith	30 people
Less time available	13
Health problems	1
Given up office/responsibility	26
More negative attitude	8
Because of children	7

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

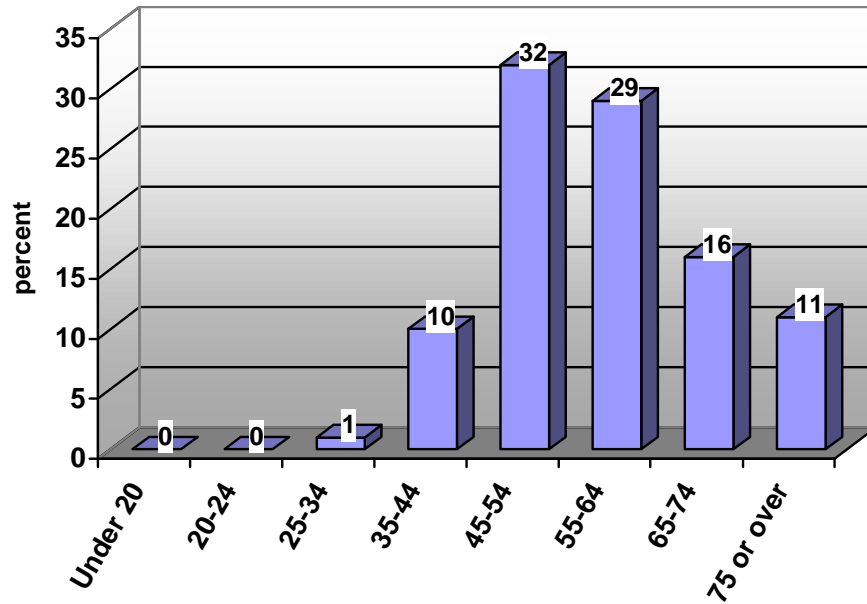
<b>Contribution Category</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Under \$200	1%
\$200 - 599	10%
\$600 – 999	7%
\$1,000 – 1,499	10%
\$1,500 – 2,499	22%
\$2,500 – 3,499	18%
\$3,500 – 4,999	13%
\$5,000 – 7,499	10%
\$7,500 or more	9%

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



**OUR CHURCH FAMILY:**

**Age Grouping**



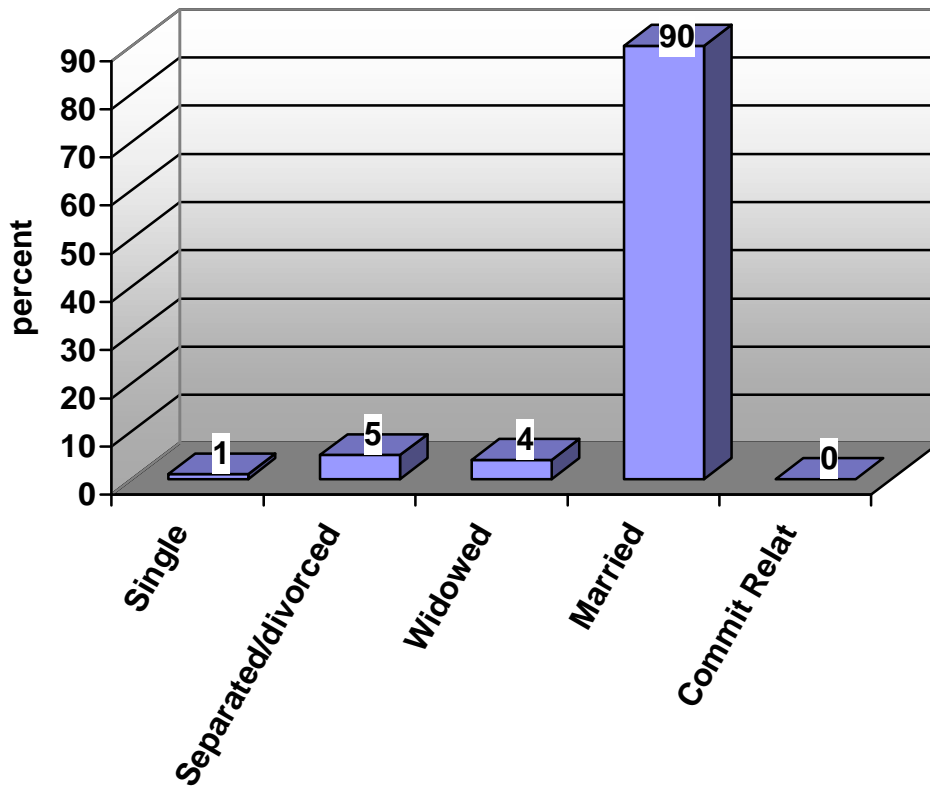
**Gender**

Male -- 39%  
 Female -- 61%

**Ethnic Background**

White – 97 %  
 Hispanic – 1%  
 Native American – 1%  
 Mixed – 1%

**Marital Status**



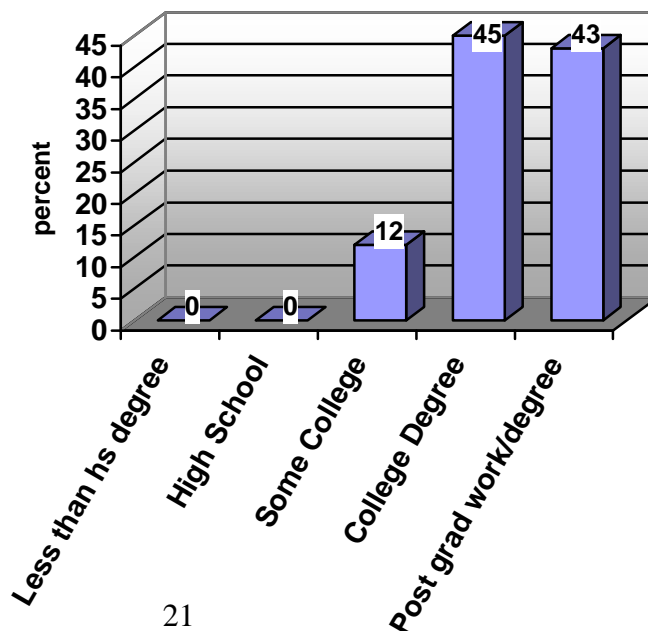
Of those who have children, Number of children in age range:

	# of Children
Birth - 5 years old	25
Six - 12 years old	39
Thirteen - 18 years old	49
Nineteen and over at home	20

Which best describes your current household?

	Percent
One person living alone	8
A couple without children	44
One adult with child/children	2
Two or more adults with child/children	45
Several adults living in same household	2

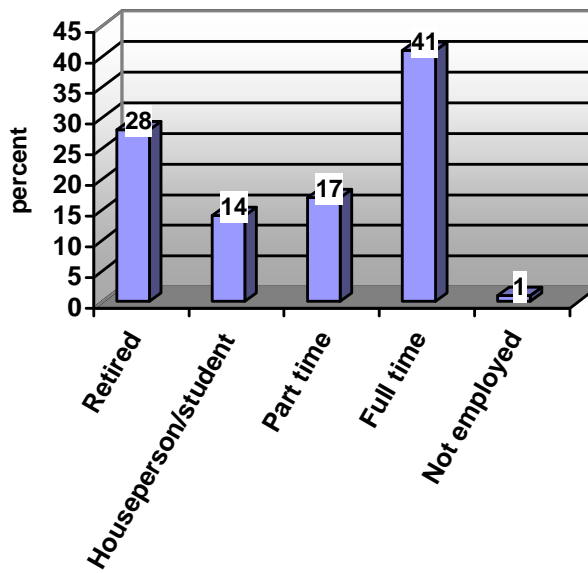
Level of Education



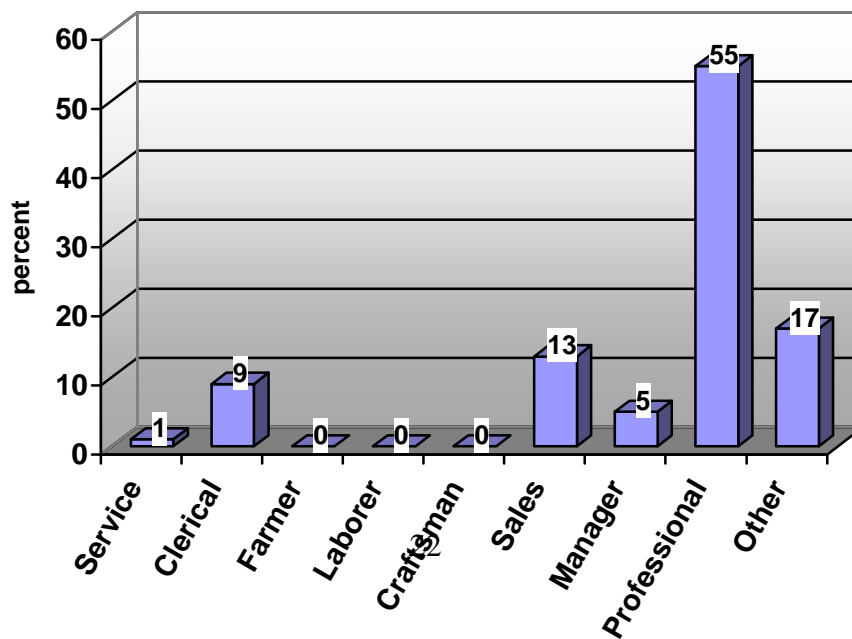
**Household Income Range** 143 respondents to this question

Under \$25,000	1%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	3%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	15%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	25%
\$150,000 or more	40%

**Employment Status**



**Occupation**



**Are you self-employed? 19 percent said yes**

**If you are married or living in a committed relationship, is your spouse/partner employed?**

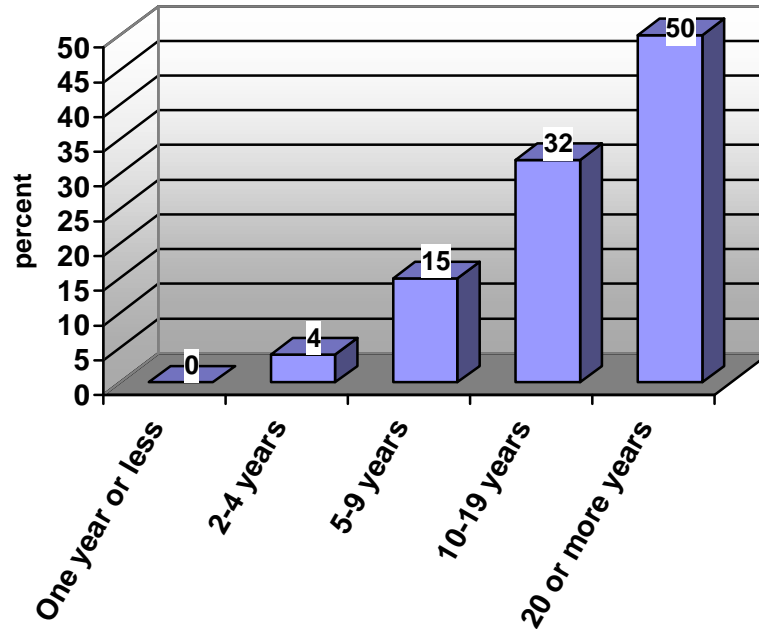
<b>Yes, full time</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Yes, part time</b>	<b>12%</b>

### **Religious Heritage**

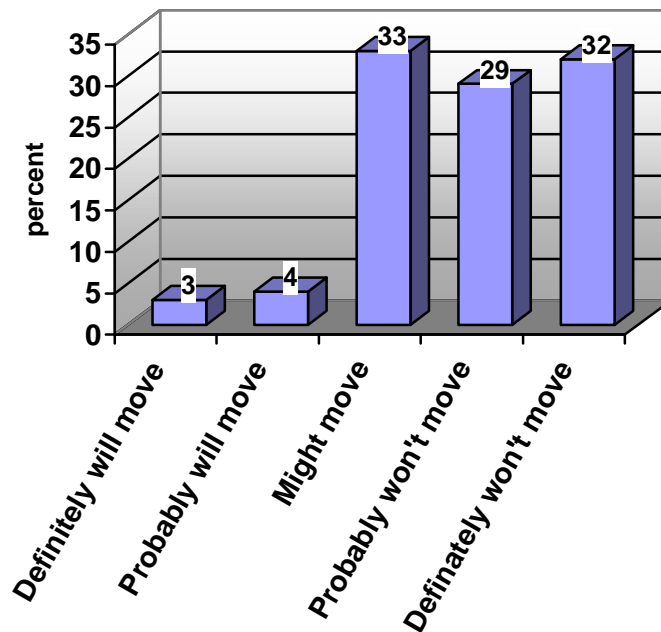
**Members were involved in the following denominations when they were growing up:**

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Baptist	8
Disciples of Christ	1
Episcopal	4
Lutheran	8
Methodist	9
Presbyterian	26
United Church of Christ	18
Unitarian Universalist	4
Other Protestant	6
Roman Catholic	13
Other	4
None	1

## How many years have members lived in this general area?



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



**How many of your closest friends attend this church?**

