

Does Church and its Leadership Influence Wellbeing?

WHAT WE DID

We surveyed 6 evangelical churches in the United States:

- 115 subjects responded anonymously using Survey Monkey about:
 - their background
 - personal wellbeing
 - perceptions of the church and its leadership.



WHAT WE FOUND

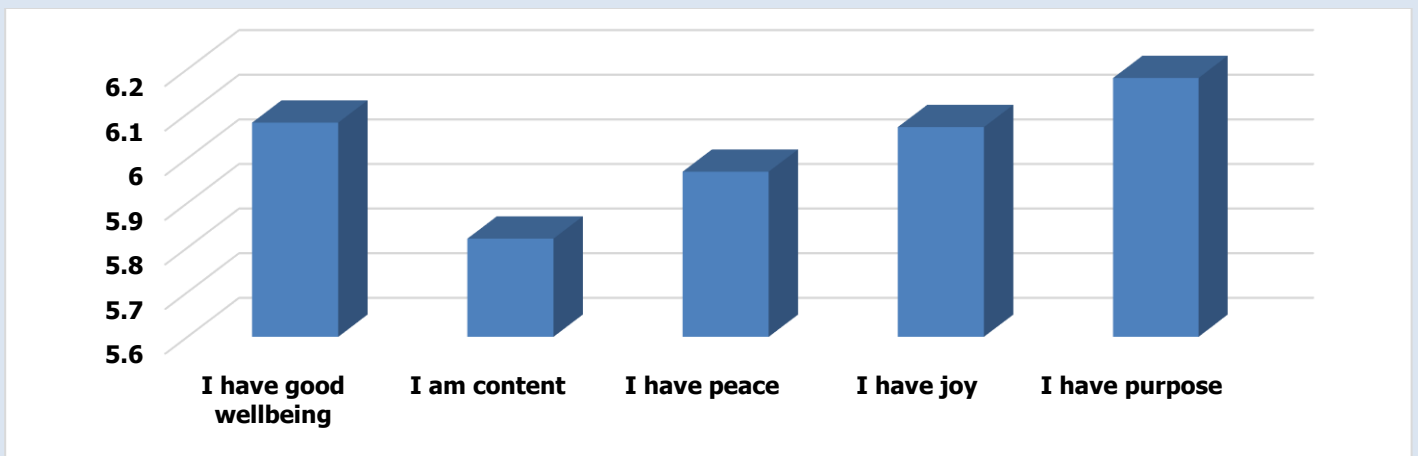
The majority of respondents:

- were Evangelical Christians (97%)
- expressed confidence in:
 - their acceptance by God based on grace (97%)
 - the security of their salvation (88%)

Wow, Christians have great wellbeing!

- 88% agreed/strongly agreed they had good wellbeing
- Many agreed they had contentment, peace, joy, purpose and God's acceptance, which are surrogate markers for wellbeing. See Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Wellbeing Scores (0 low – 7 high)



Leadership and Church Ratings



- Congregants rated pastoral staff, elders and small group leaders
- Ratings were quite positive for Biblical qualities (Figure 2)
 - Pastors received the highest rating
- Congregants most often were motivated to attend church because of Biblically related qualities of the church (Figure 3)

Figure 2 - Church Leadership Ratings

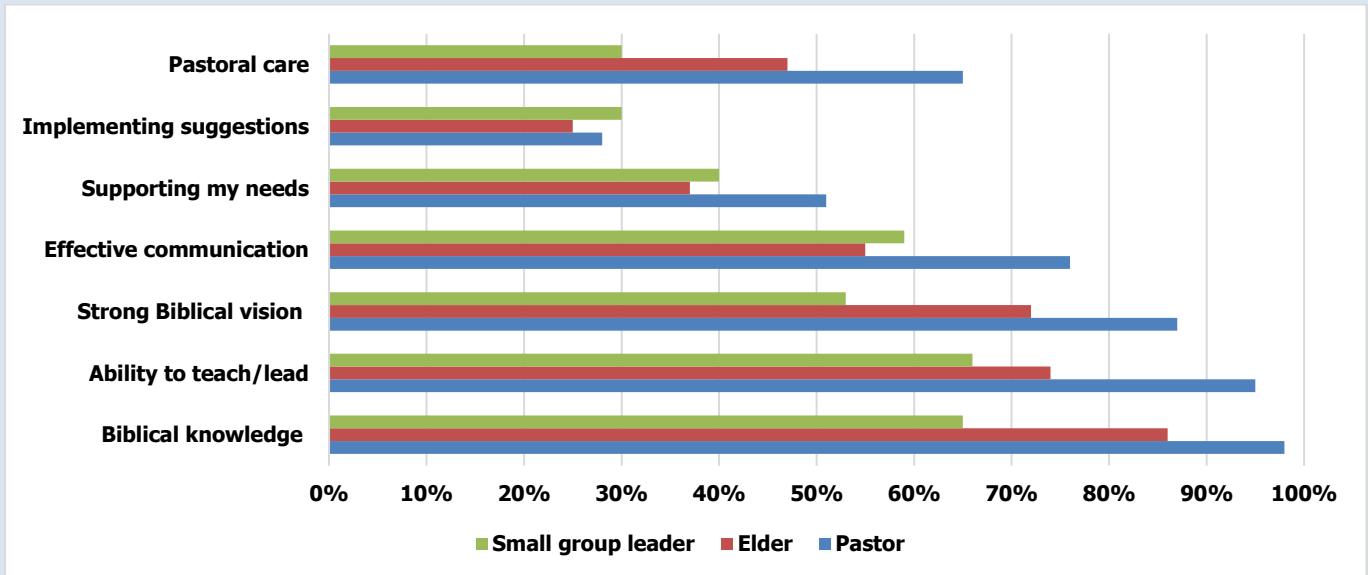


Figure 3 shows congregant reasons for attending church and small group.

Figure 3 – Reasons for Attendance

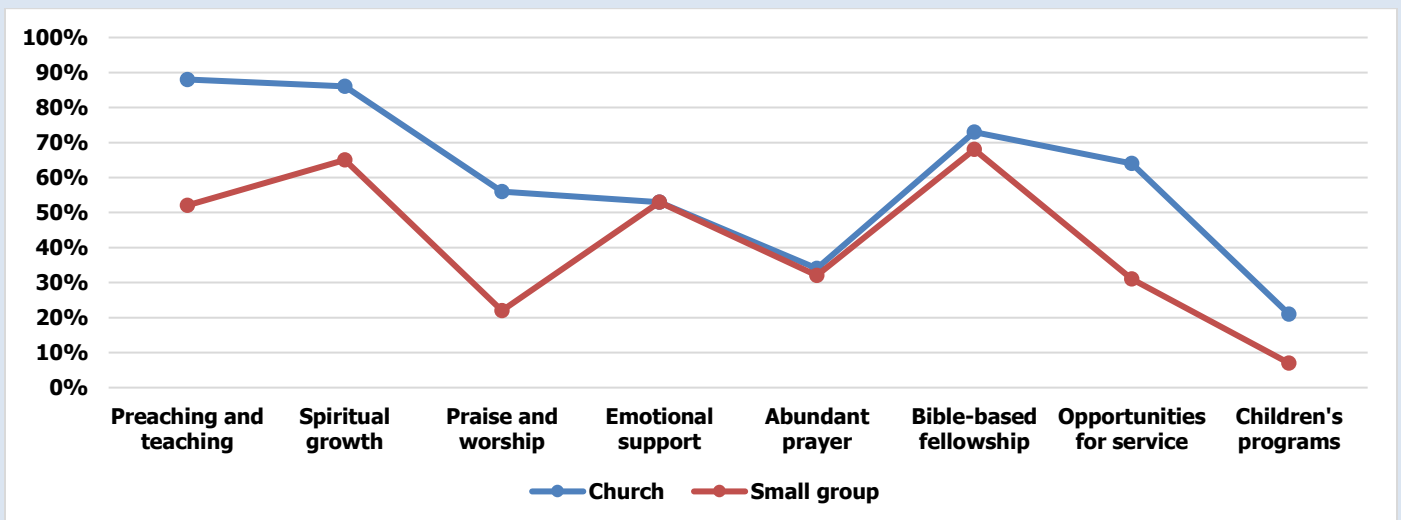


Figure 4 – Good Wellbeing Means Good Congregant Church and Leadership Ratings

Respondents with the best wellbeing gave higher leadership and church ratings than those with lesser wellbeing in approximately half of the question choices ($P < 0.025$).

| Questions | Responses | | Good wellbeing | Other wellbeing | P-value |
|--|---|---|----------------|-----------------|---------|
| | | | (n=47) | (n=68) | |
| I assess our pastoral staff to be mature in the following areas | Effective communication | Y | 36% | 41% | 0.024 |
| | | N | 5% | 18% | |
| | Pastoral care | Y | 32% | 33% | 0.011 |
| | | N | 9% | 26% | |
| If I regularly attend a small group, I assess the leader to be mature in the following areas | Effective communication | Y | 30% | 25% | 0.001 |
| | | N | 10% | 34% | |
| | Supporting my needs | Y | 21% | 17% | 0.019 |
| | | N | 20% | 42% | |
| If I am a member of a small group, I attend because of the following | Quality of Bible teaching | Y | 28% | 21% | 0.001 |
| | | N | 13% | 38% | |
| | Abundant prayer | Y | 17% | 13% | 0.019 |
| | | N | 23% | 46% | |
| | Bible-based fellowship | Y | 32% | 31% | 0.005 |
| | | N | 9% | 28% | |
| | Social interaction that makes me feel accepted/affirmed | Y | 23% | 19% | 0.007 |
| | | N | 17% | 40% | |

Why would church attendees with better wellbeing give higher church and leadership ratings?

Several explanations are plausible:

- Attendees who already demonstrated good wellbeing might have expressed a more positive perception in the survey because of their generally positive attitude.
- The church itself possibly made a positive impact on the attendees' wellbeing of these causing higher survey ratings. Past research indicate that church attendance may benefit wellbeing (1).

WHAT IT MEANS

Evangelical Christians generally have great wellbeing! Those with the highest wellbeing are more likely to rate their church and leadership more positively than those with lower wellbeing.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?



Church Members

Are you frequently critical of your church and/or leadership? Check yourself first! Applying biblical principles builds good wellbeing.

Before you criticize your church make sure you've done everything you can do to develop a godly character and good personal wellbeing. These steps will help ensure your assessments of the church are biblical and fair.

Pastors and Leaders

If you're frustrated with hypercritical members, engage them and assess their wellbeing and Christian habits. Since this survey indicates critical members often possess unmet personal needs, perhaps extra pastoral care and teaching might improve their Christian obedience, wellbeing and attitude towards the church.

1. MacIlvaine WR, Nelson LA, Stewart JA, Stewart WC. [Association of strength of religious adherence to quality of life measures](#). Complement Ther Clin Pract 2013;19:251-255.

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