

LOGOSSCOTLAND

**Faith, Family, and Belonging in
Scotland:**

A National Assessment of Church
Engagement and Attitudes on Scottish
Society

April 2026

Michelle Morrow, Caleb Ryan, William C.
Acker, Ethan Ni, Henry Quekemeyer,
Timothy W. Taylor Ph.D.

Executive Summary

Scottish Christians' perceptions of faith, family, belonging, and public life are rapidly changing in the current social and religious environment. Drawing on responses from more than 1,000 engaged Christians across denominations, generations, and socio-political backgrounds, this study offers a multifaceted examination of family dynamics, fertility trajectories, Christians' sense of belonging and loneliness, the Church's shepherding role in Scottish society, and comfort levels with public expressions of faith.

Children are an integral part of the family unit, and despite Christians having more children than the national average, it is still less than they desire. When asked about loneliness, respondents widely believed loneliness was a social problem, yet relatively few reported personally experiencing it. Both discoveries suggest there is a gap between people's perception and reality.

Cumulatively, these findings challenge simplified narratives about Christianity in Scotland. Scottish Christians are not disengaged, monolithic, or uniformly conservative. They are deeply committed to faith and internal community. Still, their outward expression of faith-based discussion and evangelism is limited to more private settings where they are most comfortable, shying away from conversations regarding Christianity in public spaces where they have more to lose.

Key Findings

- People are having, on average, 1 less child than they desire.
- 89% of Scottish Christians believe loneliness is an issue, but only 18% consistently feel lonely.
- 55% of Scottish Christians are confident and feel open to express their faith in public.
- As per frequency of church attendance, a reassuring pattern appears, those who attend church more often are less lonely.

Foreword

As Scotland increasingly secularizes, should Scottish Christians be concerned about the diminishing influence their voices have on religious representation and freedoms and how it affects family life and local communities? Scottish Christians need to understand their current role within a nation that has long since been shaped by Christian traditions but has undergone significant secularization in its public institutions and social norms. What is the trajectory of Christianity in Scotland, and what part can the Church and Christian communities play in emboldening members to spread the gospel and positively affect public life?

A previous survey commissioned by Logos Scotland, conducted January-April 2024, was the first national survey in Scotland on Christian faith and the public square. This second wave follows up by examining attitudes anew as the social environment lends to a subtle tightening of religious expression.

Methodology

This study draws on survey data collected from August-November 2025 through a research initiative sponsored by Logos Scotland and administered by the Verity Research Lab. The survey captured the perspectives of self-identified Scottish Christians on questions of belonging and public engagement, yielding 1,016 responses. The sample reflects a broad cross-section of Scottish Christian life, allowing for descriptive and comparative analysis across key demographic and religious characteristics. Additional details regarding the survey instrument, sampling approach, and demographic composition of respondents are provided in the Appendix.

Context

Before directly addressing statistical findings detailed in this report, it is necessary to highlight the overall religious makeup of Scotland while paying specific attention to the recent shifts in affiliation, as reported in the 2022 census. The religious landscape of Scotland has shifted dramatically over the last two decades, with the most recent data, released in May 2024, denoting that for the first time, a majority of Scots now report having no religious affiliation. The Scottish census highlights that 51% of Scots identify as non-religious, a stark 14% increase from 2011's report of 37%.¹

According to the census data, Christians now make up a minority of the population, at 39%. Within that percentage of Christians, Presbyterians, as represented by the Church of Scotland, remain the single largest denomination. However, they have experienced a steep decline in membership in recent years. In 2022, 20% of the total Christian population expressed membership in the Church of Scotland; this is a significant 12% drop from the 2011 statistic of 32%. However, the Scottish census data does not tell the entire story, and while it may provide the most comprehensive quantitative snapshot of religious affiliation, it does not address denominational life or the lived reality of Christianity across the country. Other reports help fill these gaps by offering a more nuanced portrait of how Scots relate to Christianity. Unlike census data, a report by *Barna Group* differentiates between categories of Christians based on beliefs, practices, and self-reported engagement with faith.²

1 "Scotland's Census - Ethnic Group, National Identity, Language and Religion." May 21 2024.

2. "Scotland: Lessons for Effective Ministry in a Post-Christian Context." Barna Group. August 27, 2015.

Context

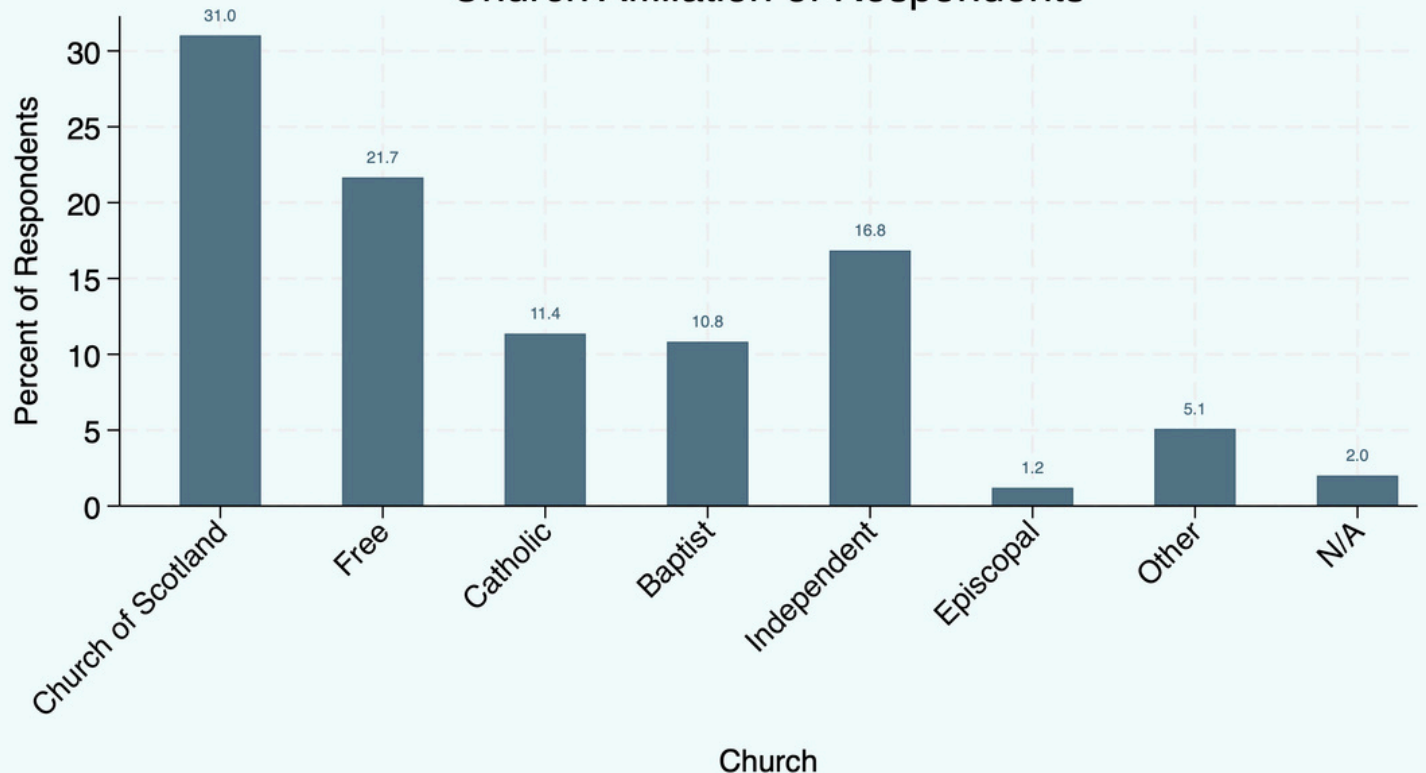
One of the most important findings is that 70% of self-identified Christians in Scotland are “legacy Christians,” individuals who claim a Christian identity but “do not believe basic elements of Christian doctrine or express personal faith in Jesus.” These attitudes help explain why traditional denominations have declined, as reported in the most recent census, even in regions that have historically identified as more religious.

But the Logos Scotland Phase I report from 2024 was the first of its kind, much different than what the census or other reports have tried to quantify. The Phase I report focused on how Christians have reacted and adapted to changing circumstances in Scotland’s public square. This second report comes before a critical election where Christians are voicing concern. In this sense, the Phase II (2026) report serves not only as a continuation of Phase I (2024) but also as a timely indicator of how religious anxiety and mobilization may shape Scotland’s society moving forward.

Demographics

National census data and supplementary analyses highlight the contemporary Scottish Christian landscape as marked by institutional decline and significant variation between cultural affiliation and active belief. This broader context provides the necessary backdrop for interpreting the Phase II findings of this report. The following section therefore turns from national-level trends to the specific demographic composition of the survey sample, outlining respondents' affiliations in order to situate subsequent analyses of belief, practice, and public engagement.

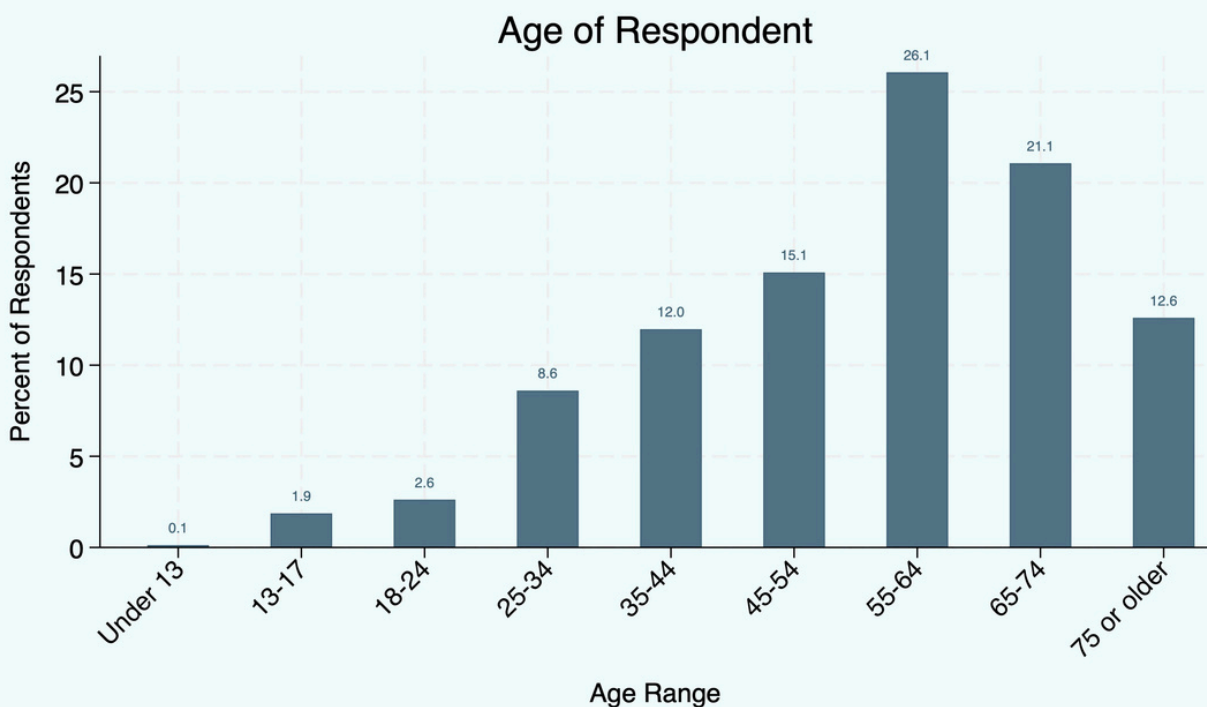
Figure D1
Church Affiliation of Respondents



Demographics

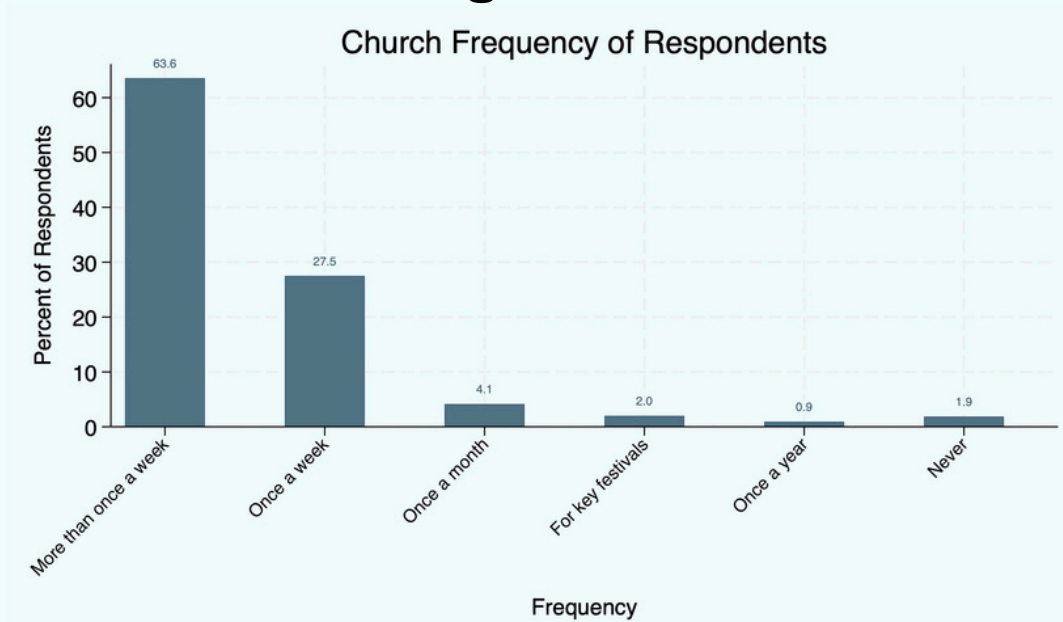
The denominational patterns reflected in Logos Scotland’s survey align with the broader religious landscape described in Scotland’s most recent national data. While this study does not aim for absolute conformity with the Scottish population, the broad distribution of denominational affiliation among respondents, as displayed in *Figure D1*, lends credence to the proportional nature of the survey data. However, the most noticeable difference is the large number of respondents who identified themselves as a part of the Free Church of Scotland, approximately 23%. The key difference between this data and that of the Scottish census was Logos Scotland’s intentional identification and surveying of actively engaged adults, as demonstrated in the high church attendance (*Figure D3*), rather than Christian individuals whose affiliation is primarily cultural.

Figure D2



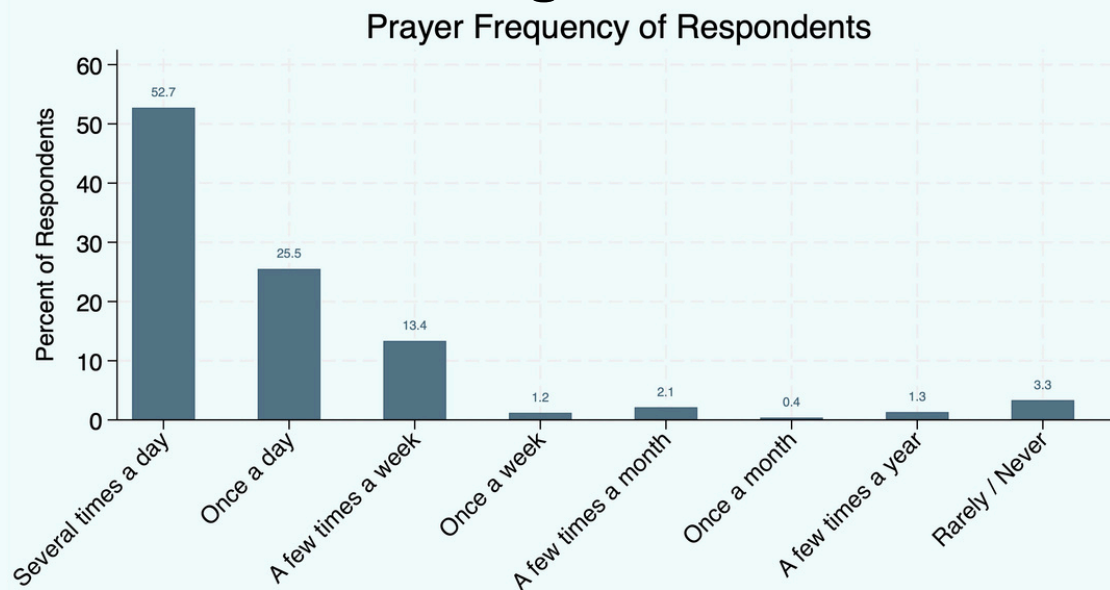
Demographics

Figure D3



To accomplish this, the survey methods used incorporated screening for frequency of church attendance and frequency of prayer in an attempt to observe genuine religious commitment and consistency of practice. This allowed the identification of a small number of respondents who were marked as insincere in practice. However, as the tables highlight, overall, a vast majority of respondents were very active in their Christian faith.

Figure D4





**Children &
Flourishing**

Children & Flourishing

One of the most noteworthy findings in the study emerges from responses to the question, “In your view, what is the ideal number of children for a family to flourish?” Although simple, this question carries significant sociological and cultural weight, as it reflects underlying assumptions about family life and social responsibility. Rather than capturing mere personal preference, responses illuminate broader visions of what constitutes both a healthy and desirable family structure.

For the purposes of data collection, ‘flourishing’ was left open to interpretation by the survey respondents; instead, the survey wording implied a pursuit of something more than a mere ‘want.’ That is to say, the research team intentionally did not survey how many children respondents desired but rather attempted to quantify perceptions of fulfillment and totality in family formation.

When situated within the contemporary Scottish context—where fertility rates remain among the lowest in the United Kingdom—these findings take on added significance. Recent data from the *National Records of Scotland* indicate that in 2024, Scotland recorded the lowest number of births ever documented in a single year. The total number of births (45,763) fell more than 16,500 below the number of deaths recorded during the same period (62,291), underscoring the severity of the country’s imbalance. Nationally, the average fertility rate remains approximately 1.3 children per family, one of the lowest levels observed in Europe.³

3. “Vital Events Reference Tables 2024.” National Records of Scotland, August 26, 2026. <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/vital-events-reference-tables-2024/#top>.

Children & Flourishing

Fertility Rates Cannot Be Explained By Lack of Desire

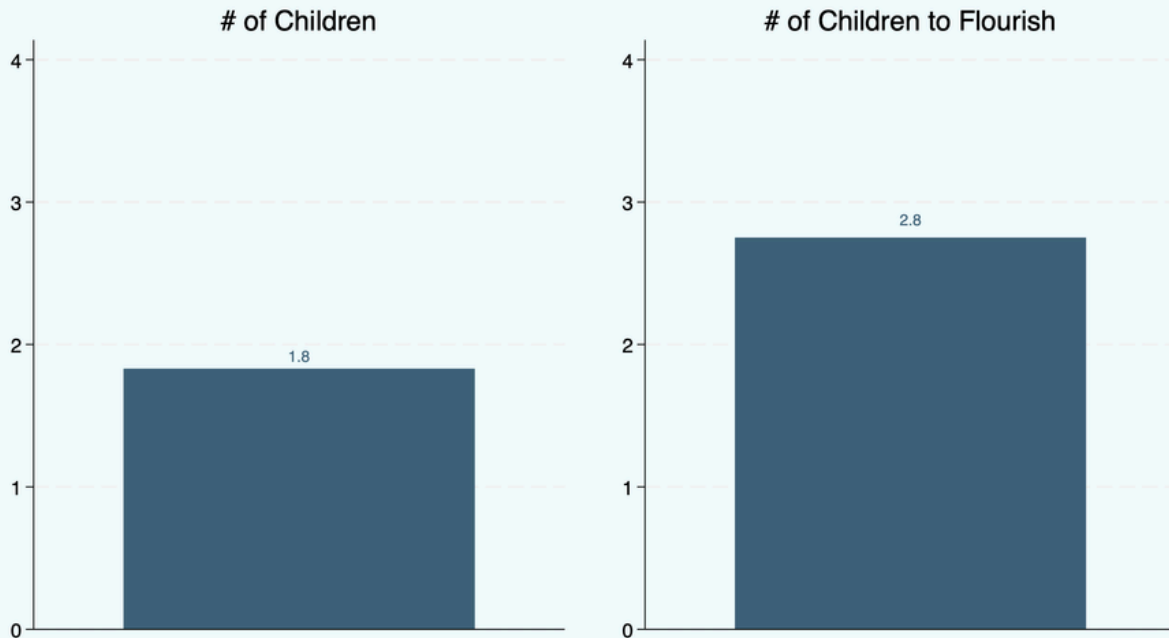
Against this backdrop, the responses of committed Christian communities stand out as a marked departure from prevailing national trends. The patterns observed in this dataset, therefore, offer insight not only into individual attitudes toward family size but also into how active Christian communities conceptualize familial flourishing in a demographic environment characterized by sustained population decline.

When examining the data, a clear gap emerges between the average number of children Scottish Christians currently have and the number of children they believe would make up an ideal family size. As summarized in *Figure C1*, respondents reported an average of approximately 1.8 children, while indicating that an average of 2.8 children would be ideal for familial fulfillment. This difference of roughly one child per family reveals a meaningful divergence between lived reality and family aspirations among committed Christians in Scotland, and the discrepancy suggests that relatively low fertility within this population cannot be explained solely by a lack of desire for larger families.

Children & Flourishing

Figure C1

People Have Fewer Children Than They Desire



Instead, the data points to the presence of constraining factors for the observed phenomenon, and while this survey did not attempt to discover a "why," economic, social, cultural, or institutional factors are amongst the realms of possibility that shape family outcomes despite stated preferences. In other words, while respondents articulate a vision of flourishing that includes larger families than the national average, their lived experiences align more closely with Scotland's broader pattern of sub-replacement fertility. Importantly, this gap underscores the distinction between values and outcomes as the consistency of respondents' aspirations across the sample indicates that the preference for larger families is not idiosyncratic, but shared within this community.

Children & Flourishing

Christian Families Are Still Below The Replacement Rate

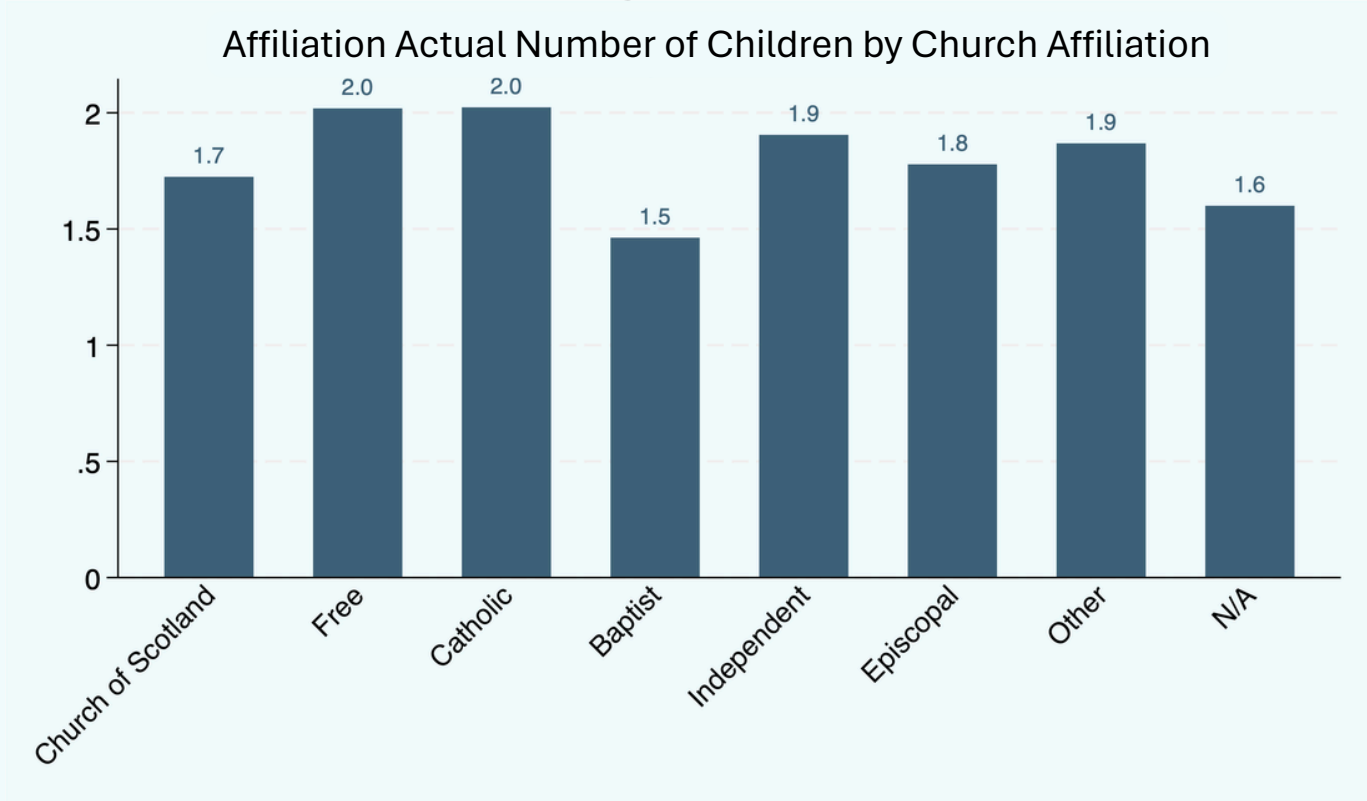
Christians in Scotland still maintain a greater birthrate than the national average by 0.5 children per family. However, this marginally higher statistic still leads to a shrinking population of Scottish Christians, as observed through the census. Even if 100% of Scottish Christians' children continue in the faith, factors such as immigration and emigration (where over 82,000 people moved to Scotland in 2023, while only approximately 35,000 people left) would still cause Christianity to decrease nationally in Scotland due to the majority of immigrants being Non-Christian.⁴

This context is crucial to interpreting respondents' input as showcased in *Figure C2*, given that when breaking the data down by church denomination, across the board, almost every single denomination identifies their ideal number of children for a family to flourish as being greater than 2.5, with some denominations reaching as high as 3.5, which is well above replacement levels.

4. Stewart, Kaukab. "Migration - Meeting Scotland's Needs."

Children & Flourishing

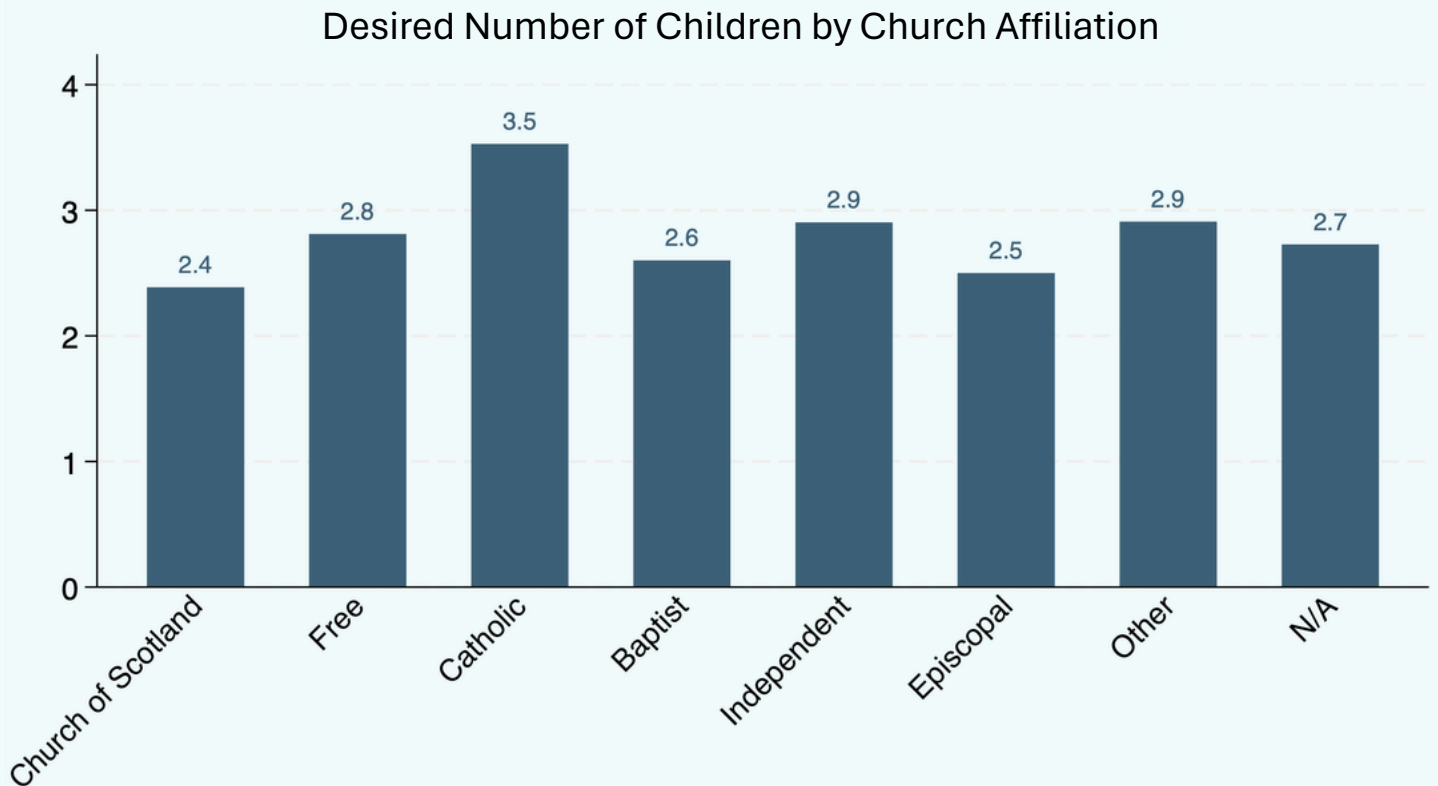
Figure C2



When further examining the data and controlling for age and education, the findings indicate each denomination has between 0.7 and 1.5 children per family fewer than they claim would provide fulfillment to their families. Although this makes sense considering the initial findings reported by *Figure C1*, the notable uniformity of this gap across denominations hints that this phenomenon reflects a broader trend rather than isolated denominational dynamics. Ultimately, the data shows a tight clustering of results, suggesting that most Christian communities in Scotland experience similar constraints on family formation despite shared desires toward larger families.

Children & Flourishing

Figure C3



Here, only the Church of Scotland answered less than 2.5 children per household, scoring 2.4. This calls into question the drop-off of Christianity across Scotland as witnessed in the last decade. Given that Scottish Christian families believe having an average of 2.8 children would fulfill their lives, compared to the rest of the nation, which averages 1.3 children per family, why have rates of Christianity decreased so drastically?

Although a multitude of variables are possible, there are two truly probable explanations: Either children within these devout Christian families, as highlighted via *Figure D3*, are not being brought up in the faith and are therefore not identifying as any denomination of Christian, or Scottish Christians are not actually having nearly as many children as they claim would make their family flourish.

Children & Flourishing

However, within this broader pattern Catholic respondents stand out as the divergence between the number of children Catholic families currently have and the number they associate with familial flourishing is significantly larger than that observed in other denominations. As illustrated in *Figure C3 and Figure C4*, Catholics (3.5) report an ideal family size of one more child compared to Church of Scotland (2.4). However, when the same baseline is applied to the actual number of children respondents report having, Catholic families fall well within the range observed across other Christian denominations. This means that despite expressing higher ideals regarding family size, Catholics do not, on average, have significantly more children than their non-Catholic counterparts. Their lived demographic outcomes therefore mirror broader Christian patterns in Scotland, even as their expressed number of children to flourish diverges more sharply.

This combination of elevated aspirations and comparatively typical outcomes results in Catholics exhibiting the largest average gap between desired and realized family size, and are therefore more likely than members of other denominations to report having fewer children than they believe would be necessary for familial flourishing. This finding suggests that strong pro-natalist norms, while clearly present, do not translate straightforwardly into higher fertility in practice.

Children & Flourishing

Figure C4

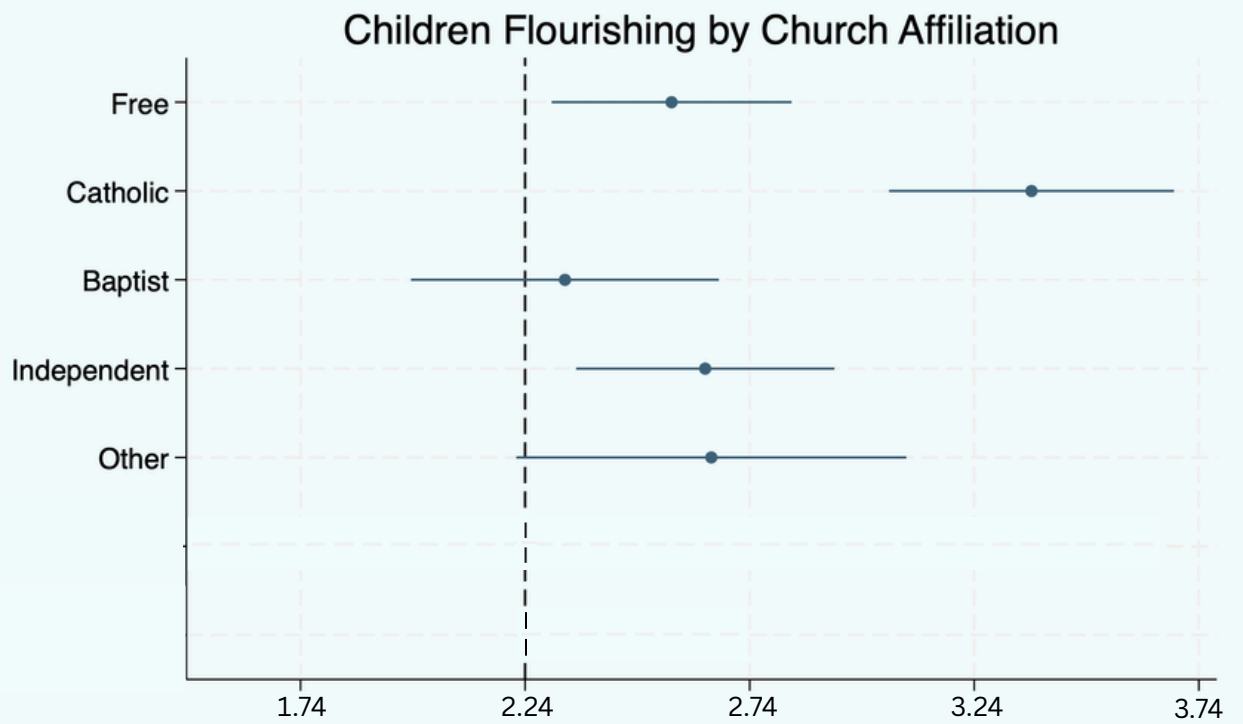
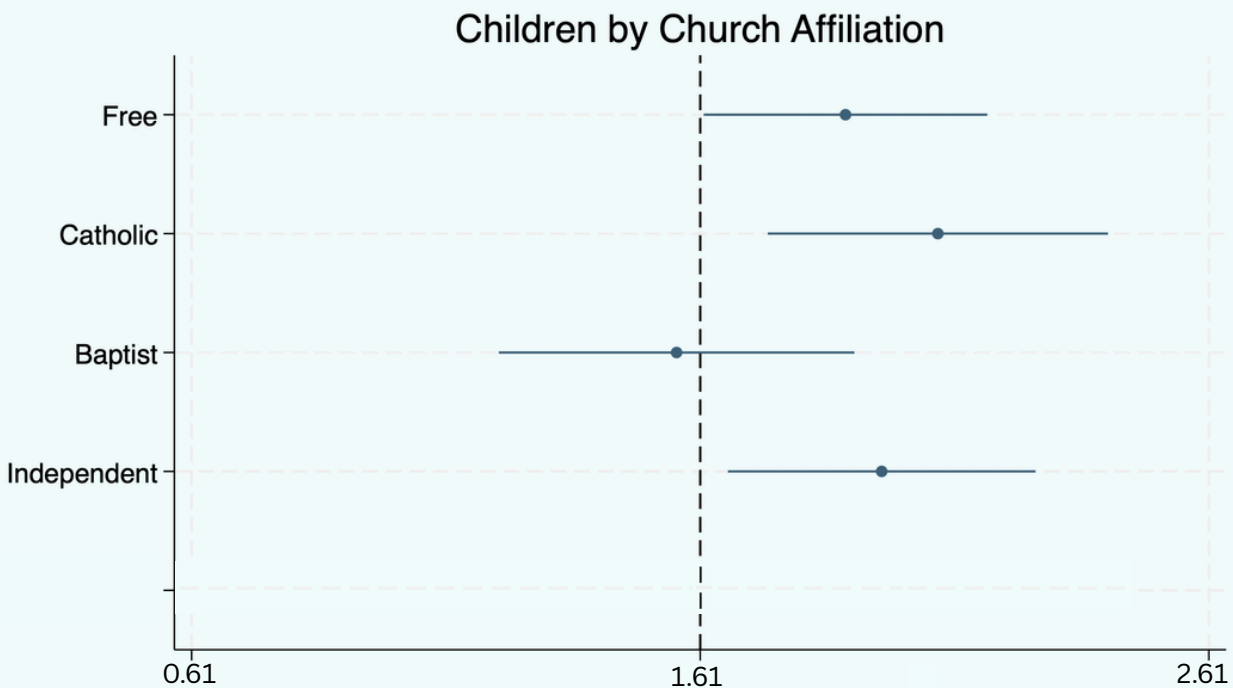


Figure C4: this coefficient plot shows how many children are needed to be flourishing by denomination. This controls for age, education, number of children, gender, frequency of prayer, and frequency of church attendance

Figure C5



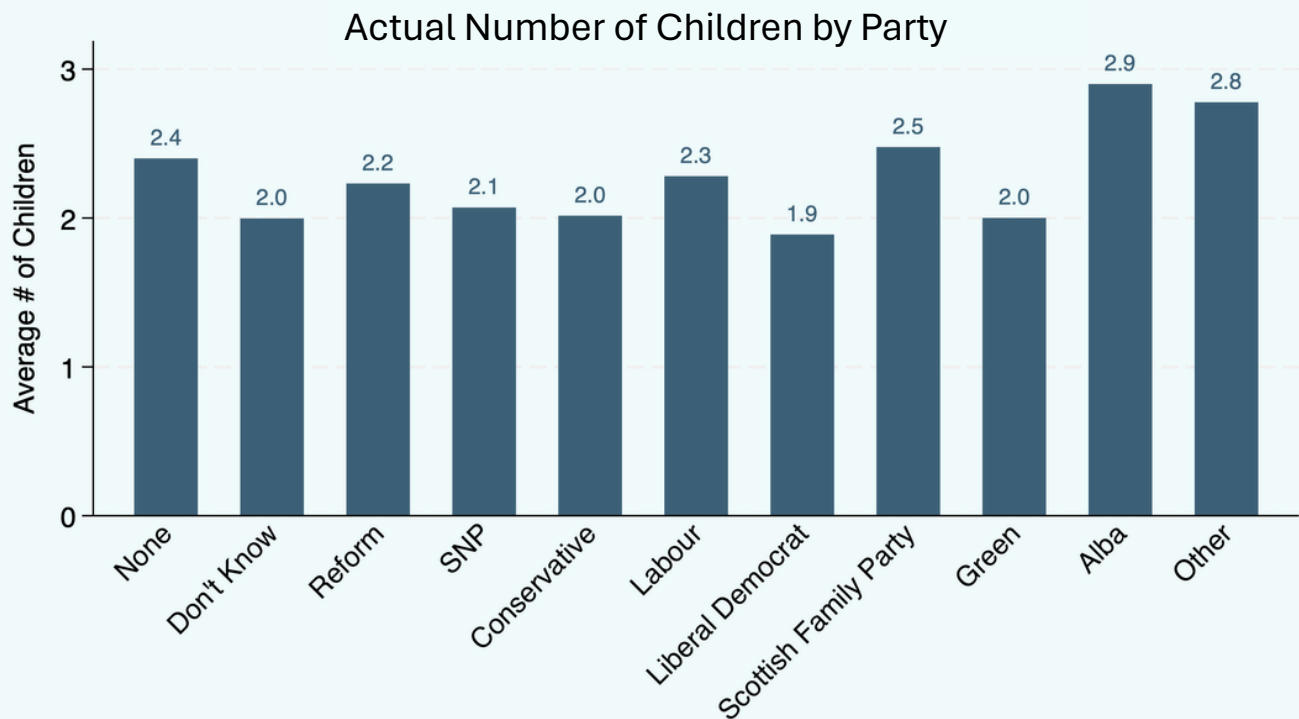
Children & Flourishing

Political Alignment Provides A Helpful Perspective

Although denominational identity revealed significant differences in fertility ideals, the data tells an equally unique story when respondents are grouped by political party affiliation.

When examining the actual average number of children per respondent, most political groupings cluster relatively closely around Scotland's broader demographic reality: modest family sizes, typically between 1.9 and 2.4 children. However, within this variation, two interesting deviations appear.

Figure C6



Children & Flourishing

Political Alignment Provides A Helpful Perspective

First, respondents aligned with the Scottish Family Party and Alba, report slightly larger average family sizes (2.5 and 2.9 respectively). These numbers, though not dramatically higher, reveal a subtle but important trend: political parties which emphasize social traditionalism, pro-natalist values, or cultural-nationalist identity tend to include Christians who already maintain larger-than-average family structures. This suggests that the connection between political and familial visions is not merely aspirational, but rather is being actively expressed.

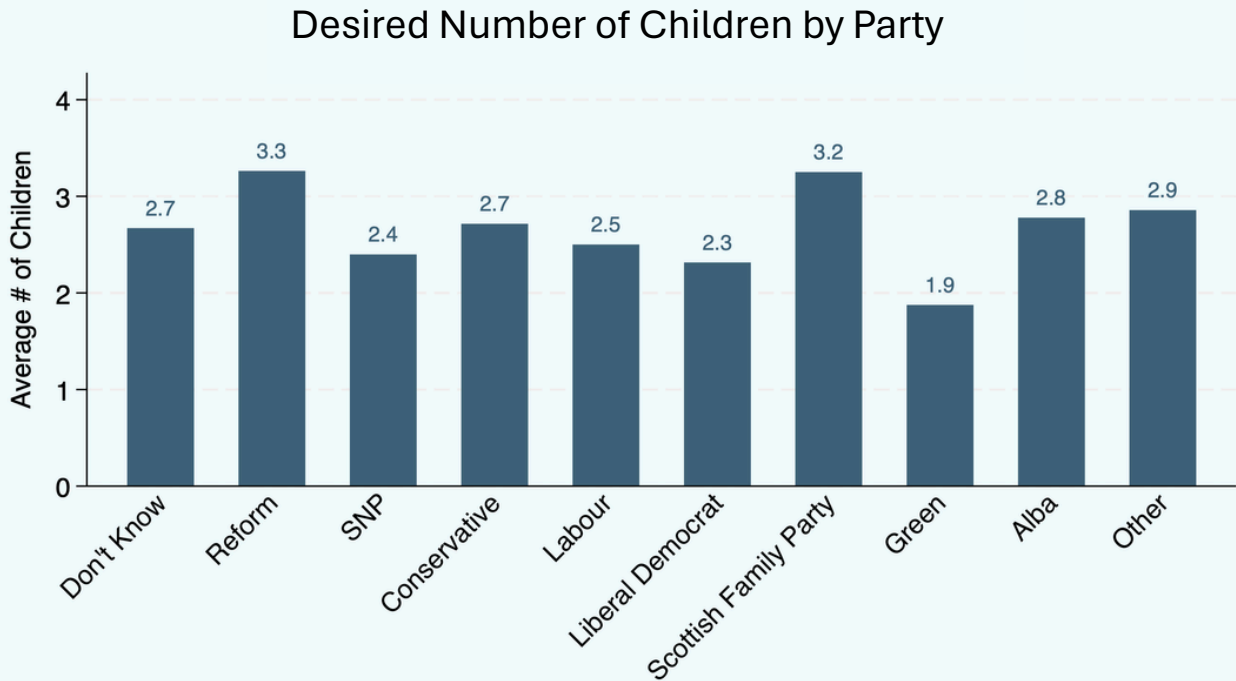
Second, respondents affiliated with the Liberal Democrats or Greens report the smallest family sizes (1.9 and 2.0). These groups generally represent political philosophies that emphasize sustainability, individual autonomy, and social liberalism, visions typically associated with delaying parenthood or optimizing for smaller family units. Again, the link between political identity and lived family reality is present even before identifying idealized responses.

When respondents were asked, “What is the ideal number of children for a family to flourish?”, the political divides became dramatically sharper and far more pronounced than differences in actual family size.

Children & Flourishing

Political Alignment Provides A Helpful Perspective

Figure C7



In *Figure C7*, several Christian political constituencies stand out as articulating notably larger ideal family sizes: Although seemingly minor deviations, these tenths reflect large, fundamentally different trends amongst narratives of flourishing between Scottish Christians' based on political affiliation. For some political identities, namely Reform, Alba, and the Scottish Family Party, family flourishing is imagined as expansive. For more left leaning parties, flourishing is perceived as more compatible with smaller families.

These political divides map closely onto known sociological patterns as Christian voters who lean toward conservative, nationalist, or pro-family platforms frequently hold pro-natalist moral imaginations, visions that understand children as central to communal vitality, tradition, and future stability. Meanwhile, Christian voters aligned with socially progressive parties like the Greens or Liberal Democrats tend to emphasize frameworks that often correspond with smaller ideal family sizes.

Children & Flourishing

Political Alignment Provides A Helpful Perspective

This means that political identity is operating not merely as a demographic descriptor but as a marker of one's understanding of familial flourishing. People may not yet live out these differences in behavior, but their vision of what a flourishing family is, and what a flourishing society needs, differs profoundly, and is represented through their political commitments.

In other words, political identity reveals something deeper about the cultural, moral, and spiritual frameworks Christians use to imagine the future. Groups like Reform, Alba, and the Scottish Family Party envision a more generative, growth-oriented family future, while Greens and Liberal Democrats envision a more constrained approach to flourishing.

This gap between *real fertility* and *ideal fertility* is precisely where political identity exerts its strongest influence. Actual family size may be shaped by economics, housing, age, or life circumstances, but ideal family size reflects worldview, one's commitments, social vision, and political narratives about what constitutes a good life.

This political pattern underscores a distinctive conclusion from the data: that Scottish Christians are not a monolithic demographic group. They carry significantly different visions of family, flourishing, and future culture depending on their denomination and political affiliation. These findings complicate the stereotype that Christians in Scotland are uniformly socially conservative, and instead, political identities divide Scottish Christians into subgroups with very different visions of familial flourishing.

Children & Flourishing


Conclusion

Scottish Christians report having significantly fewer children than they believe would allow their families to flourish. On average, respondents report approximately 1.8 children⁵, while identifying 2.8 children as ideal for familial flourishing. Although this discrepancy appears broadly across the sample, Catholics articulate the most expansive vision of family flourishing while they do not, on average, have more children than those in other denominations. As a result, Catholics exhibit the largest divergence between desired and realized family size.

Political identity emerges as a powerful predictor of how flourishing is imagined, even when it does not substantially affect actual family size. Christians aligned with parties such as Reform, Alba, and the Scottish Family Party consistently envision larger families as central to flourishing, while those aligned with the Greens or Liberal Democrats articulate more restrained ideals. These differences suggest that political affiliation functions as a marker of moral and cultural imagination rather than a simple demographic descriptor.

Taken together, these findings challenge the notion that Scottish Christians form a uniform demographic group. While lived family outcomes converge across traditions and political identities, visions of flourishing diverge sharply.

5. Total children born in this Christian sample of 1.8 is higher than Scotland's national average of 1.3

A person is sitting on a swing, silhouetted against a bright sunset. The swing's chain is visible on both sides. The background is a warm, orange and yellow sky over a dark horizon. A white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text "Loneliness & Belonging".

Loneliness & Belonging

Loneliness & Belonging

A National Emergency?

Loneliness has emerged as one of the most pressing social challenges in contemporary Scotland, cutting across age, geography, and socioeconomic status. While often thought of as an individual emotional state, loneliness in Scotland operates as a widespread public health concern. The population is aging more rapidly than many of its European neighbors, leading to growing numbers of older adults living alone in both rural villages and densely populated urban centres. At the same time, younger Scots face their own forms of isolation amplified by digital life and the erosion of traditional community structures.⁶

Within this broader landscape, Christians in Scotland experience loneliness in ways that reflect both the strengths and shifting challenges of religious life. Historically, churches functioned as pillars of community cohesion, offering social support, regular gathering spaces, and intergenerational relationships. Yet as Scotland has become increasingly secular, many Christian communities have seen declining membership and less frequent participation, leaving individuals with fewer opportunities for consistent in-person connection. For Christians whose faith identity forms a core part of their social world, shrinking congregations and less visible public religious life can heighten feelings of isolation.

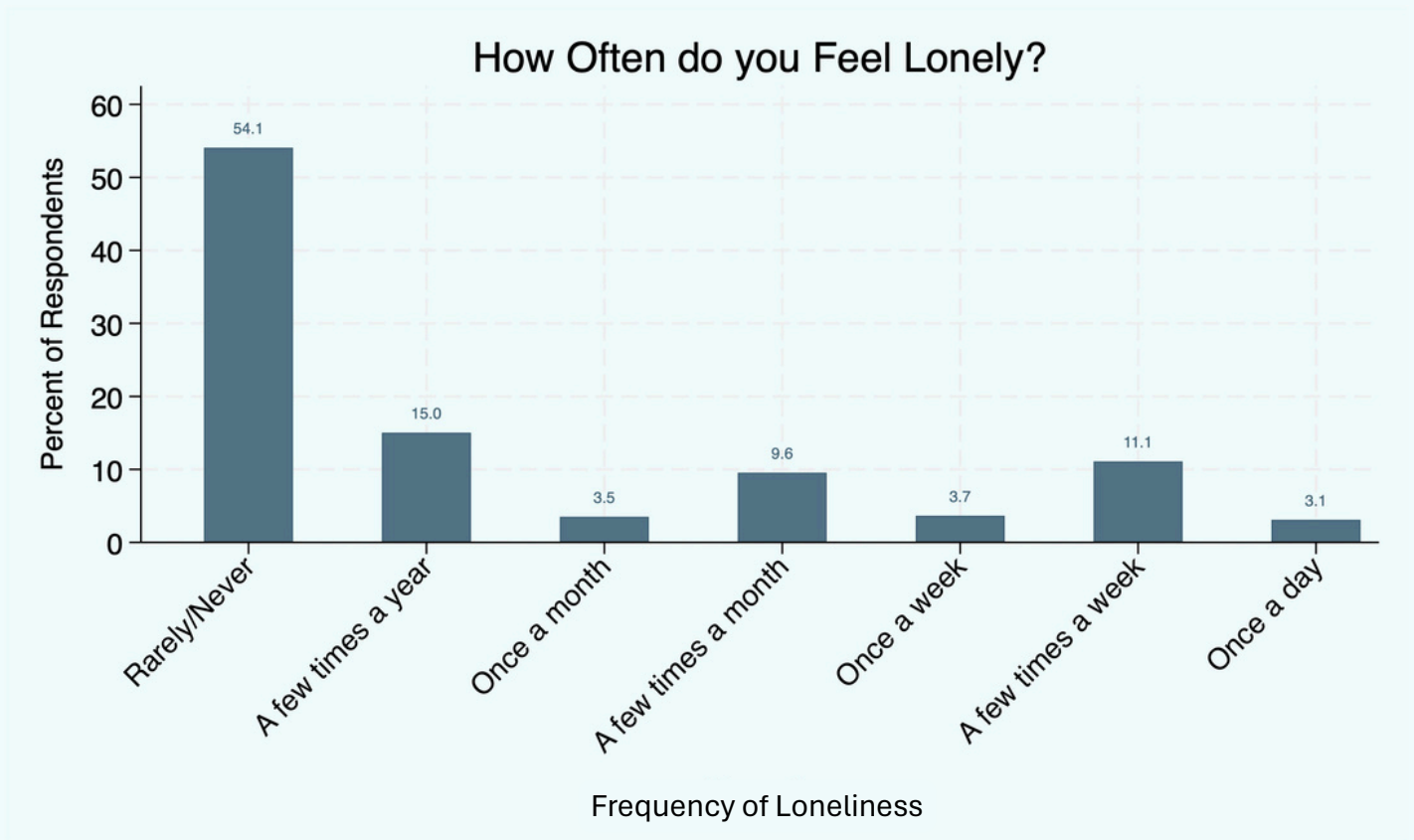
6. [Demographic Change in Scotland](#)

Loneliness & Belonging

People Are Not As Lonely As We Think

Figure L1, however, shows an interesting change in loneliness. 54% of respondents state that they were ‘Rarely/Never’ lonely. Still, a combined 28% of respondents feel lonely more than once a month. Furthermore, *Figure L2* shows that Scots still believe this is a major issue in society—virtually no respondents think it is not an issue within greater Scotland.

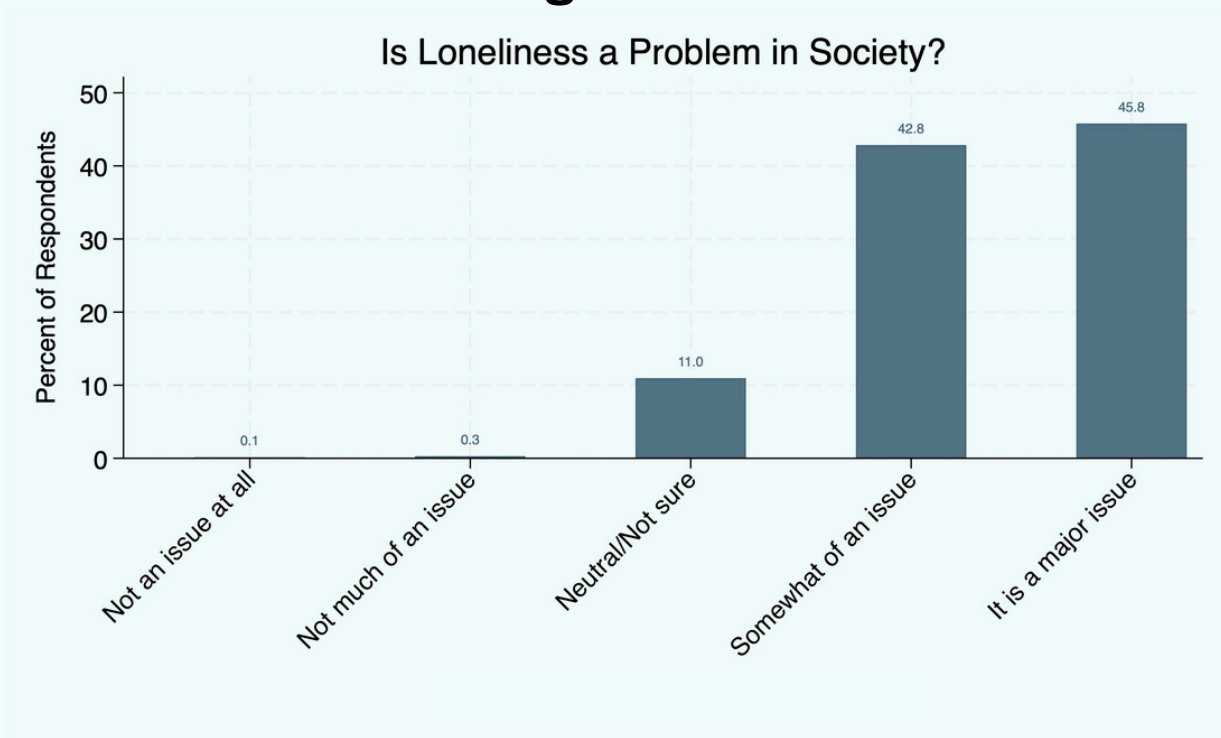
Figure L1



Loneliness & Belonging

People Think Loneliness Is A Problem

Figure L2



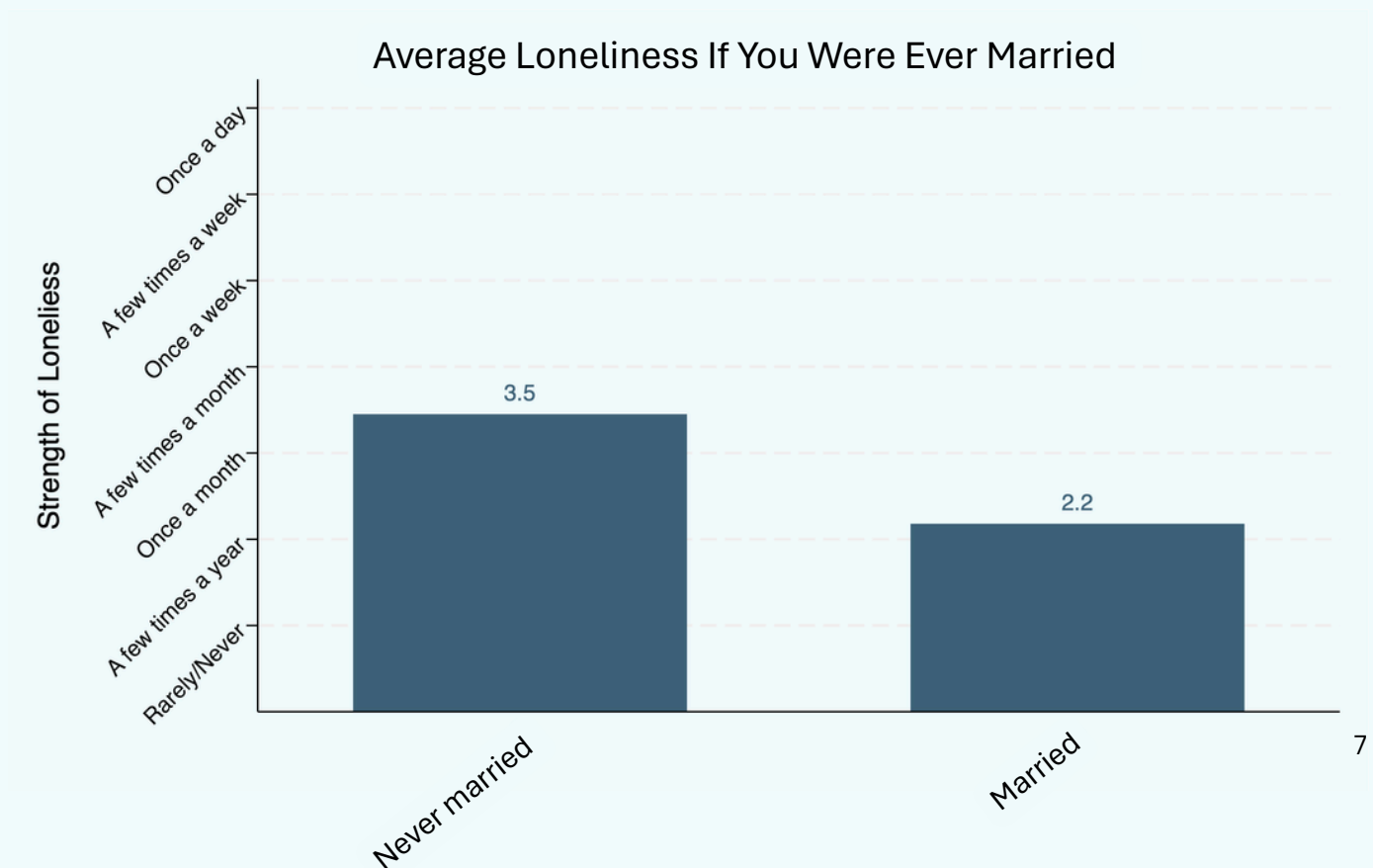
Recently, the government of Scotland has committed to addressing loneliness as a critical issue within greater Scotland; and by *Figure L2*, this has worked: when combining ‘somewhat’ and ‘major issue’ responses, 89% of respondents believe loneliness is an issue in society. This section goes on to engage possible trends and highlights additional significant statistics related to loneliness & belonging, examining how experiences of isolation vary across dimensions such as family relationships, religious involvement, and other social or demographic factors.

Loneliness & Belonging

Familial Relations Matter

Reports often show that loneliness is tied to familial relations: marriage, living situations, and whether one has children. These factors shape the daily social environment individuals inhabit, influencing both the frequency and depth of interpersonal interaction. In many cases, stronger or more stable family structures correlate with reduced loneliness, while fragmented or limited familial ties can heighten feelings of isolation. *Figure L3* shows that for those who are currently or have been married, it significantly reduces loneliness by 35% compared to those who have never been married.

Figure L3



7. Variable taken from responses of marriage, “Never ” being “single”, & “yes” including “Married”, “Widowed” or “Divorced”

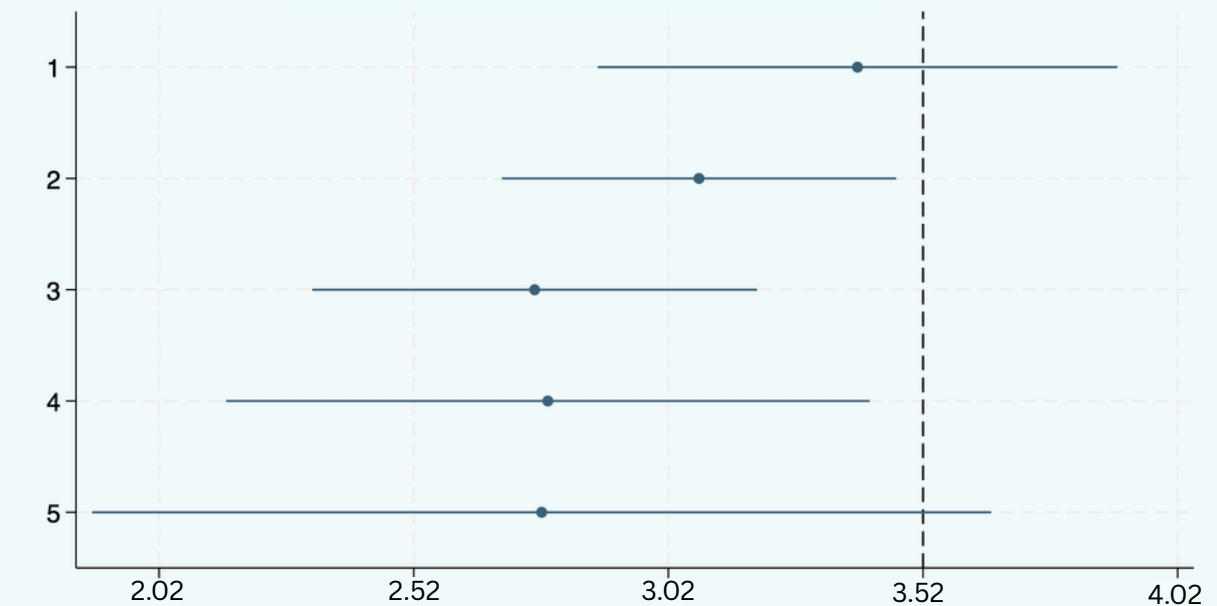
Loneliness & Belonging

Having Children Correlates With Being Less Lonely

Additionally, as seen by the *Children & Flourishing* section, Scots are having significantly fewer children than they would prefer to be having (in order to be considered ‘flourishing’). Indeed, *Figure L4* clearly shows a correlation that those who have more children are less lonely on average, especially jumping from 0-1 child to 2+ children. This suggests that having more children is directly associated with reduced loneliness. As the number of children increases, the scale of loneliness decreases. The presence of additional children may increase daily interaction, broaden familial support networks, and create more opportunities for meaningful relational connections.

Figure L4

Loneliness by Number of Children



Controlled for age, education, frequency of church & prayer. Omitted variable: No Children mean = 3.52 p value = .00

8

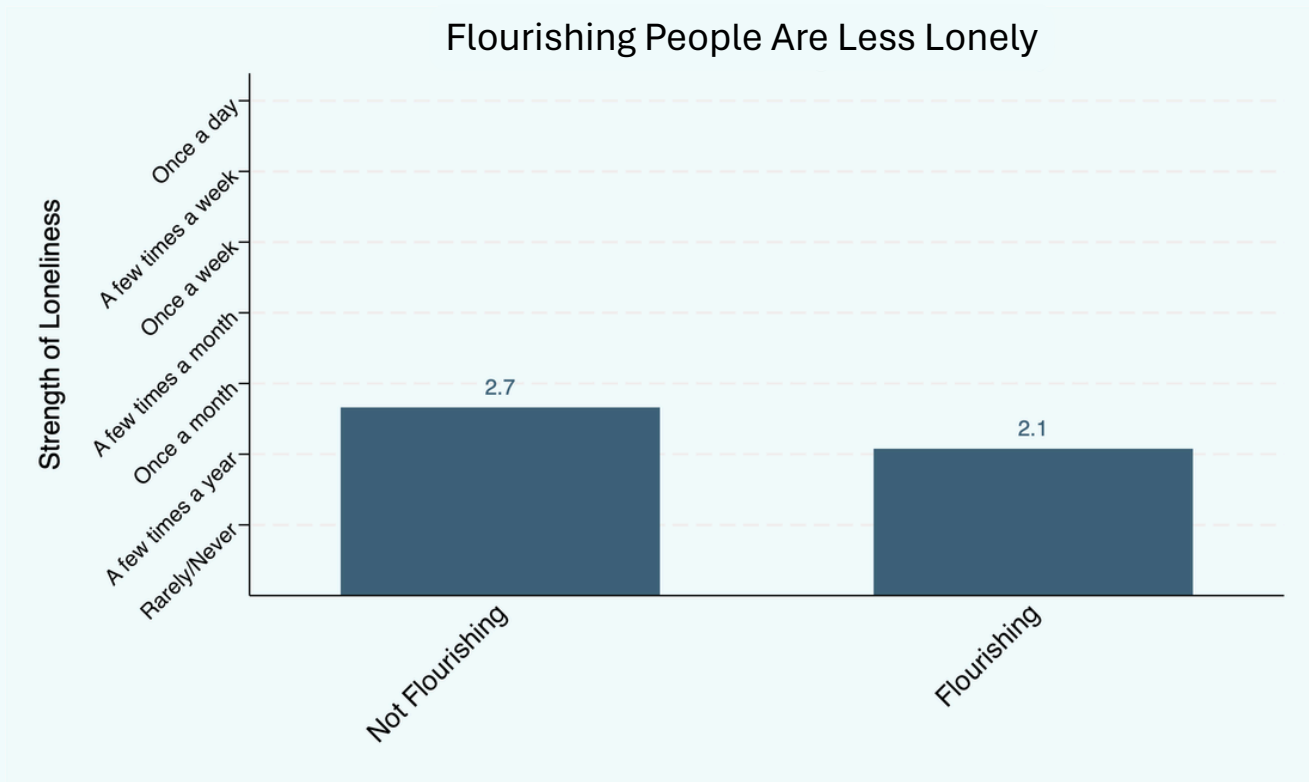
8. This coefficient plot shows an average how lonely one is by how many children they have. This controls for age, education, gender, frequency of church attendance and frequency of prayer.

Loneliness & Belonging

Having Children Correlates With Being Less Lonely

Figure L5 shows a continuity in this field: Those that have their desired number of children to be flourishing are, on average, less lonely than those who do not have their desired number of children.

Figure L5



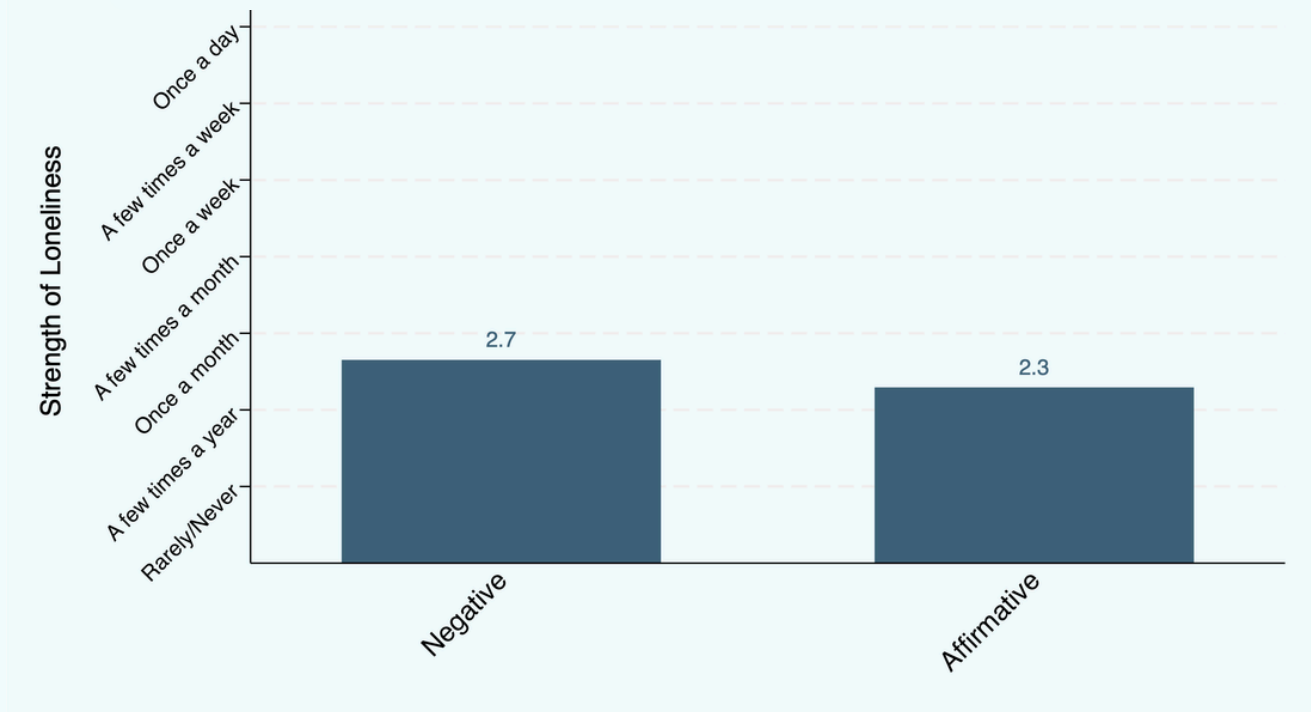
Loneliness & Belonging

Loneliness Is Linked To Less Interest In Fertility

Figure L6 suggests those who believe the government should promote fertility report being 15% fewer instances of feeling lonely. This may indicate that people who value larger families or stronger pro-family policies already experience more robust relational networks, or that their support for fertility promotion reflects a broader orientation toward community, connection, and long-term social investment.

Figure L6

Those That Are Less Lonely Want The Government to Promote Fertility



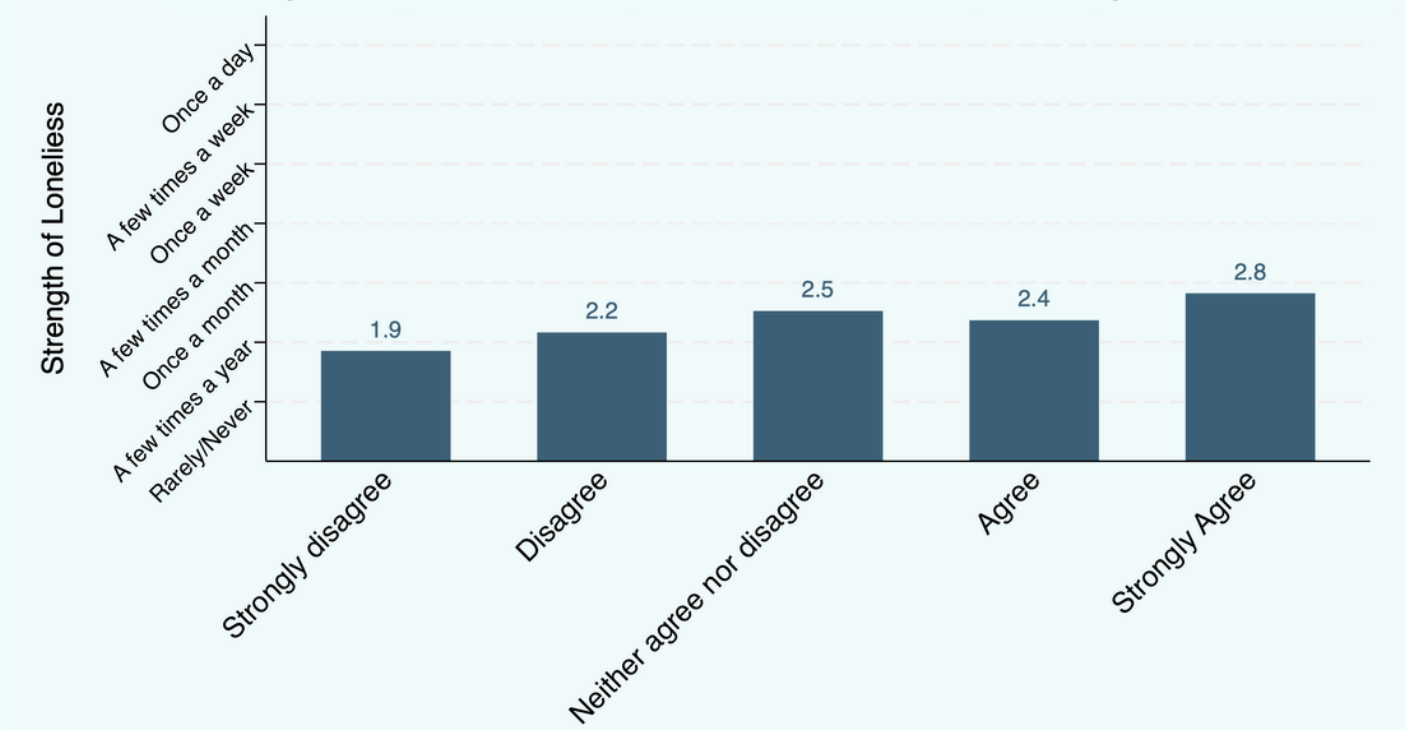
Loneliness & Belonging

Seeing Prejudice is Linked to Being More Lonely

Those who report having witnessed prejudice against Christians (response to “I have personally experienced or witnessed prejudice or discrimination because of their faith”) tend to experience higher levels of loneliness on average, suggesting that exposure to discrimination may heighten feelings of social isolation or reduce their sense of belonging within their broader community.

Figure L7

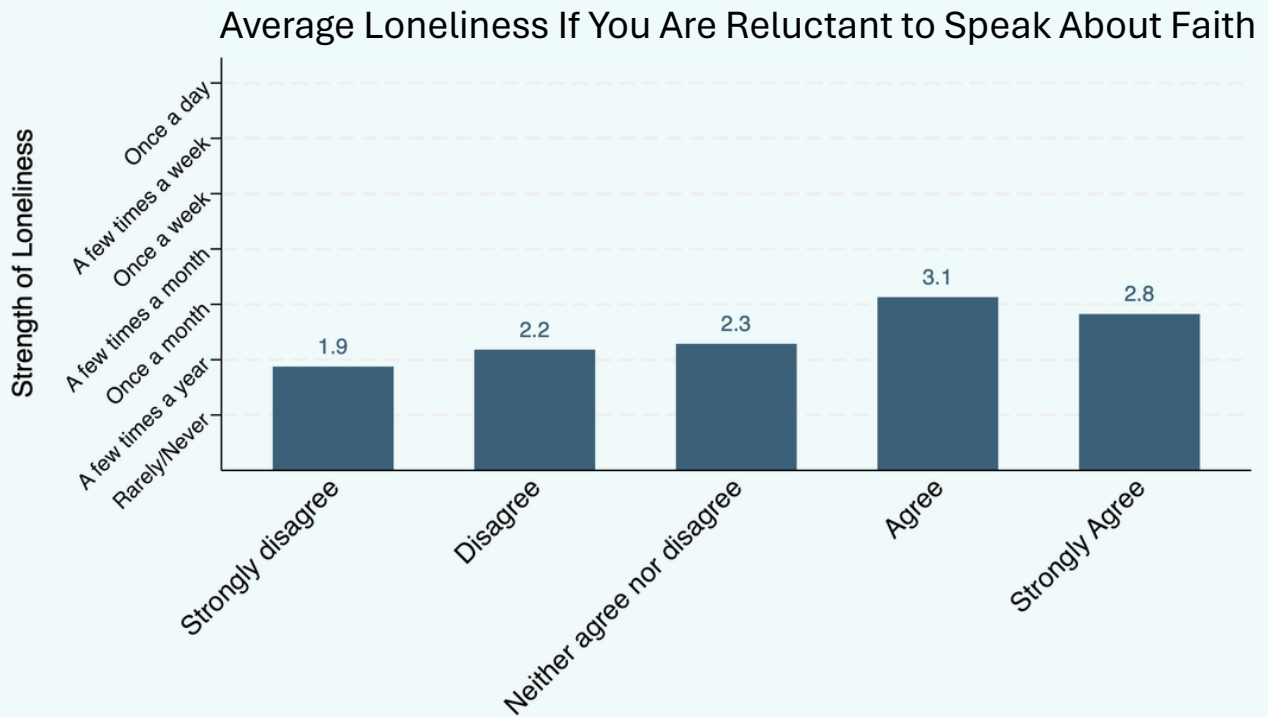
Average Loneliness If You Have Witnessed Prejudice Against Christians



Loneliness & Belonging

Lack Of Confidence Correlates With Increased Loneliness

Figure L8



Those who responded more in agreement to “I am reluctant to speak about my Christian faith because of the possibility of a negative reaction” (see *Figure E10*) also were lonelier on average than those who were not afraid of a negative reaction. Once again, this is a clear continuity: those who feel that they cannot relate or connect with others through their faith lack a sense of belonging within their greater community—thus increasing loneliness.

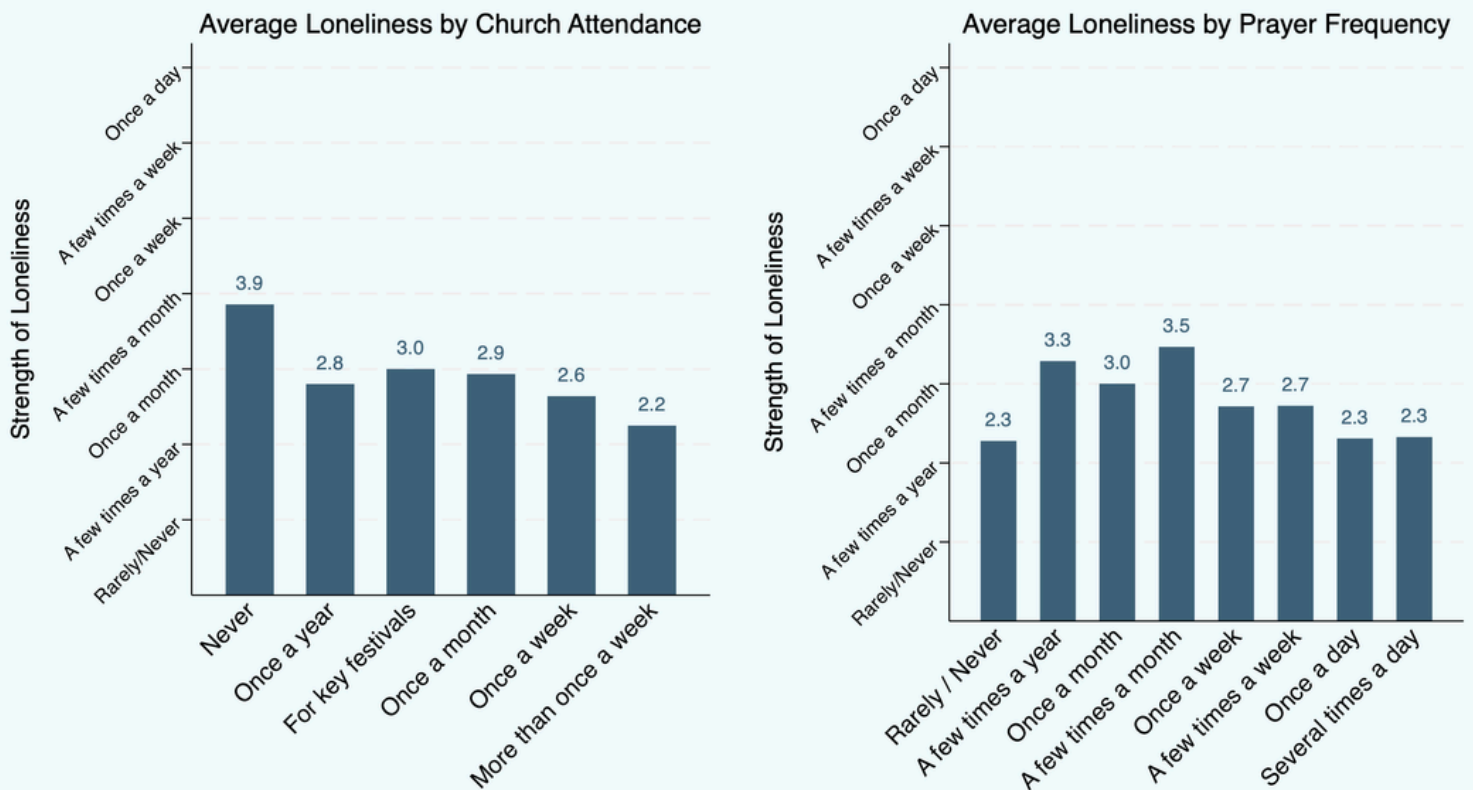
Loneliness & Belonging

Church Attenders Are Less Lonely

As per frequency of church attendance, a reassuring pattern appears, those who attend church more often are less lonely. However, the same cannot be said for frequency of prayer. This may suggest that community has a greater effect on the loneliness of the individual than the frequency of individual prayer.

Figure L9

Church Attendance v. Prayer Frequency on Loneliness



9. Includes those that affiliate with a church

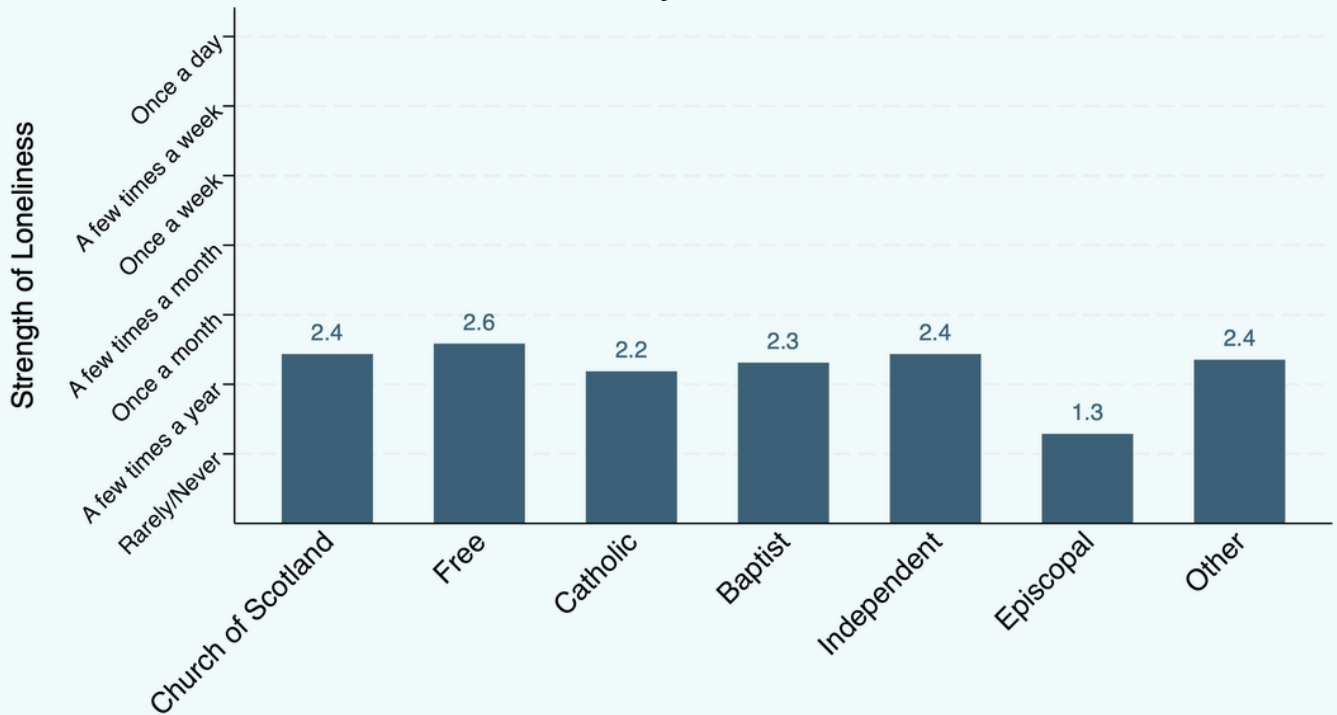
Loneliness & Belonging

Church Attenders Are Less Lonely

When narrowing to church affiliation, the report suggests there is little differentiation amongst denominations, therefore confirming (to a large extent) that church attendance is more significant than church affiliation when it comes to loneliness & belonging.

Figure L10

Loneliness by Church Affiliation



Loneliness & Belonging

Younger Generations Are Lonely

Figure L11

Average Loneliness by Age Group



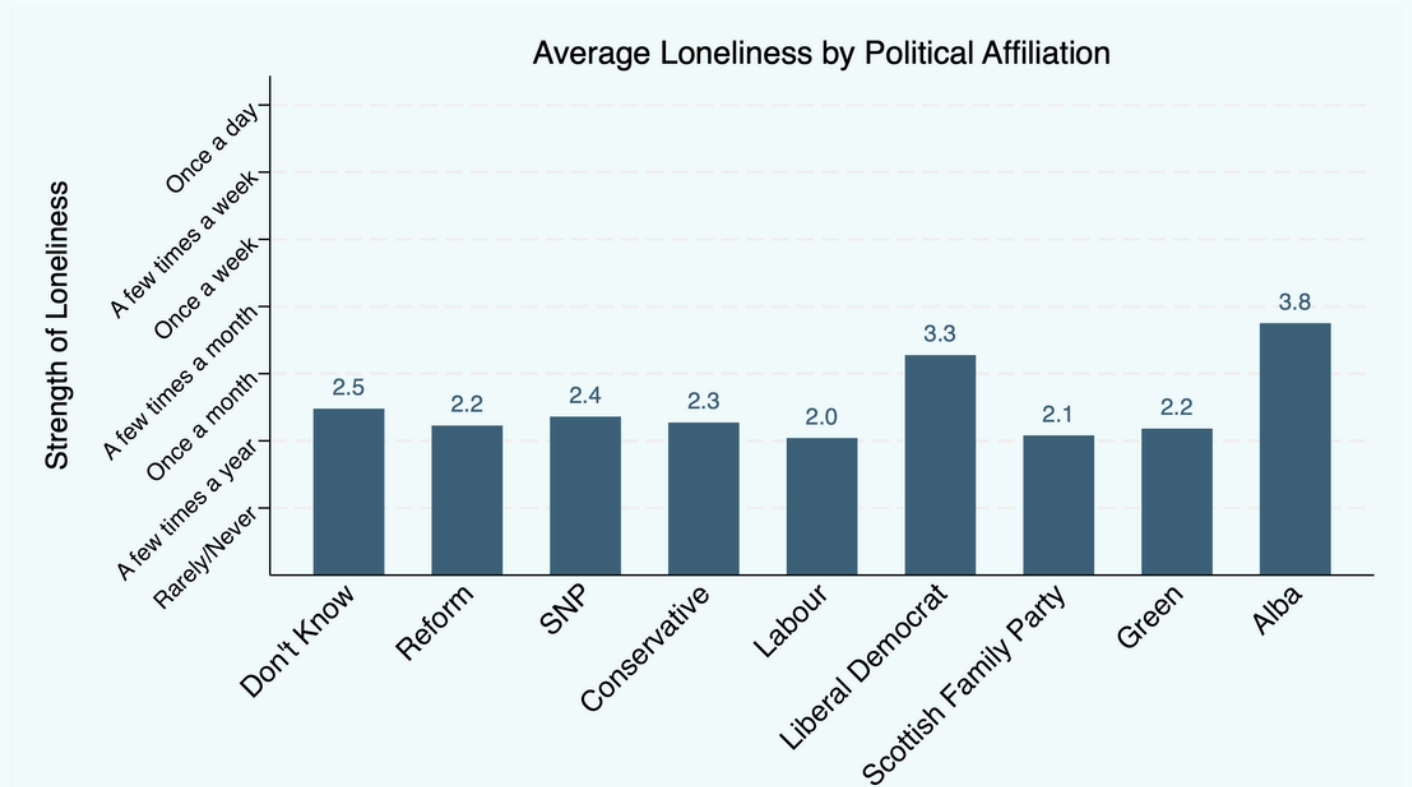
According to the 2022 Scottish census and other reports examining loneliness,¹⁰ there are claims that as one gets older, they are likely to be more lonely. However, this data clearly shows that younger generations are more lonely on average than older generations. This could be for several reasons, but the primary and most likely reason would be that this data mostly shows Christians, and therefore Christians are an exception to the norm within larger Scotland, that older generations are lonelier.

10. [On Every Street: How Loneliness is Affecting Older People in Scotland](#)

Loneliness & Belonging

Liberal Democrats and Alba Are More Lonely

Figure L12



Overall, there are no large gaps between political affiliations and loneliness, except for Liberal Democrats, who stand out by far among the rest. Thus, political affiliation is not a large factor of loneliness amongst respondents, unless one identifies as a Liberal Democrat. In such case, however, there are other trends that could be affecting, such as Liberal Democrats having less children on average than others (see *Figure C6*).

Loneliness & Belonging

Conclusion

Taken together, the data illustrate a complex but revealing portrait of loneliness among Scottish Christians. While many respondents report rarely feeling lonely, sizeable minorities continue to experience isolation—and these patterns consistently track with deeper social, familial, and religious dynamics. Stronger family structures, larger desired families, and regular church attendance all correlate with reduced loneliness, underscoring the central role of meaningful relationships and communal life. Conversely, experiences of religious prejudice, reluctance to speak openly about one’s faith, and diminished opportunities for connection appear to heighten loneliness and weaken individuals’ sense of belonging.

What emerges is a clear theme: community—whether through family, congregation, or broader social acceptance—remains the strongest buffer against loneliness. For Christians in an increasingly secular Scotland, these findings highlight both the resilience of faith-based communities and the pressures they face as public expressions of faith become more constrained. As the report moves forward, these insights invite wider reflection on how Scottish institutions, churches, and public policy might strengthen the social frameworks that foster belonging, connection, and well-being for Christian Scots and for the nation as a whole.



**Christian
Faith
Engagement**

Christians Engagement in Society

The following sections of this report evaluate Christians' interactions with the church and with society. The church health of Scotland can be determined by assessing how frequently each respondent prays, how many times they visit church per week, how willing and ready they are to speak about Christianity to others and tie into the news (2 separate responses), and how often church pastors are talking about real-time issues.

Additionally, this section examines Scots' personal confidence to express their Christian faith across various private and public settings. It also assesses how respondents perceive Christians' level of faith engagement with the collective public. The 'private' settings are separated into the categories at home, with family, and with friends. 'Public' settings are considered to be with neighbors, at school, at work, and in the public at large. The public includes exchanges at hospitals, gatherings on errands, with service industry members, or during other social interactions. These four settings are deemed public spaces because people generally cannot choose who is present to interact with in each context, whereas the three private settings often involve deliberate associations.

Furthermore, this part of the report measures how open respondents feel about discussing their Christian faith across different settings and to what degree they are reluctant to do so. This is compared to how they view Christians' overall reluctance to mention their faith in daily discussions on society, given a possible negative reaction.

The results below show high levels of church participation and practices, indicating healthy church bodies, but only occasional discussion of current events. People feel very comfortable expressing their faith in private settings, and of all the public settings, they feel most open at work. While Christians individually report less reluctance than is socially assumed (25% personally reluctant vs. 65% perceived reluctance), only 47% report personal willingness to discuss their faith.

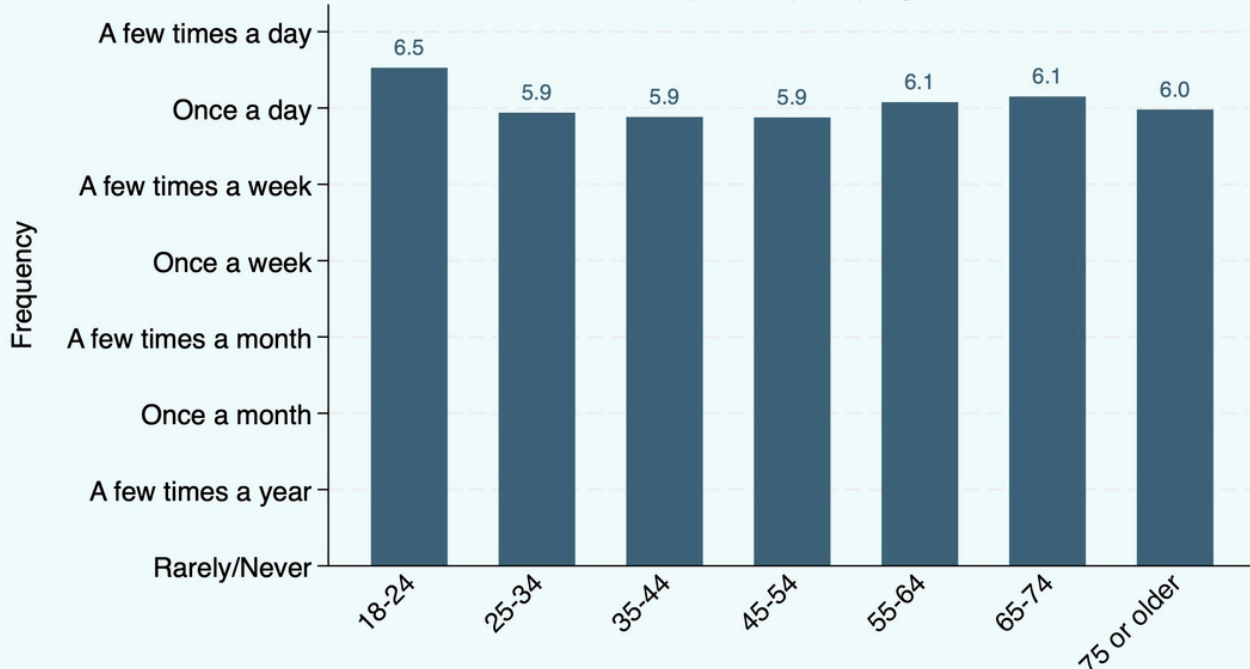
Christians Engagement in Society

Most Christians Pray At Least Once Daily

The first two variables chosen to quantify a broad church health were the frequency of one's prayer life and church attendance, where questions were asked to quantify how church life impacts an individual. As seen in *Figures D3 & D4*, most respondents were highly engaged in both church and prayer. Over 90% of respondents surveyed attend church at least once a week. This is encouraging, as it was also found that the majority of churchgoers are attending more than once a week (64%). Furthermore, over 75% of respondents said they pray at least once a day, with just over half praying more than once a day (53%).

Figure E1

Frequency of Prayer by Age Group



When breaking down the prayer variable used to indicate church health, *Figure E1* shows that, on average, most Christians of all ages pray at least once a day. However, a notable finding was that the youngest age bracket (18–24) prays more frequently on average — several times daily — compared to older age groups.

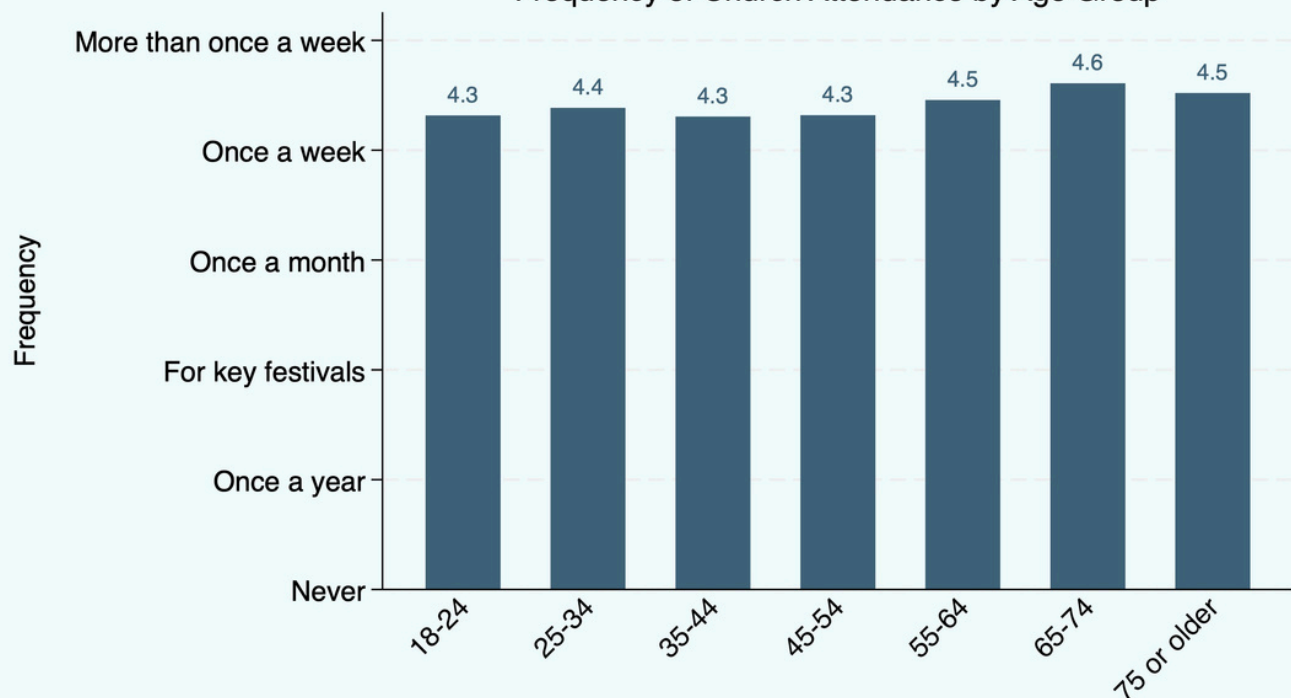
Christians Engagement in Society

Church Is Regularly Attended Across All Ages

While there is no concrete explanation for why younger adults pray more than their older counterparts based on this survey, the result does suggest that amongst the younger generation of Christians in Scotland, there is a social norm of praying. Which, in turn, might suggest a stronger connection to the spiritual aspect of Christianity.

Figure E2

Frequency of Church Attendance by Age Group



When analyzing the data on church attendance, *Figure E2* found nearly constant levels of variance between age categories of the Christians surveyed. This is a positive result and something to be encouraged by, as it appears that churches have all ages attending regularly. However, *Figure D2* shows that the survey had more respondents in the older age groups than the younger ones, signifying that the church is much older on average.

Christians Engagement in Society

Attendance Is High Across Denominations

Figure E3

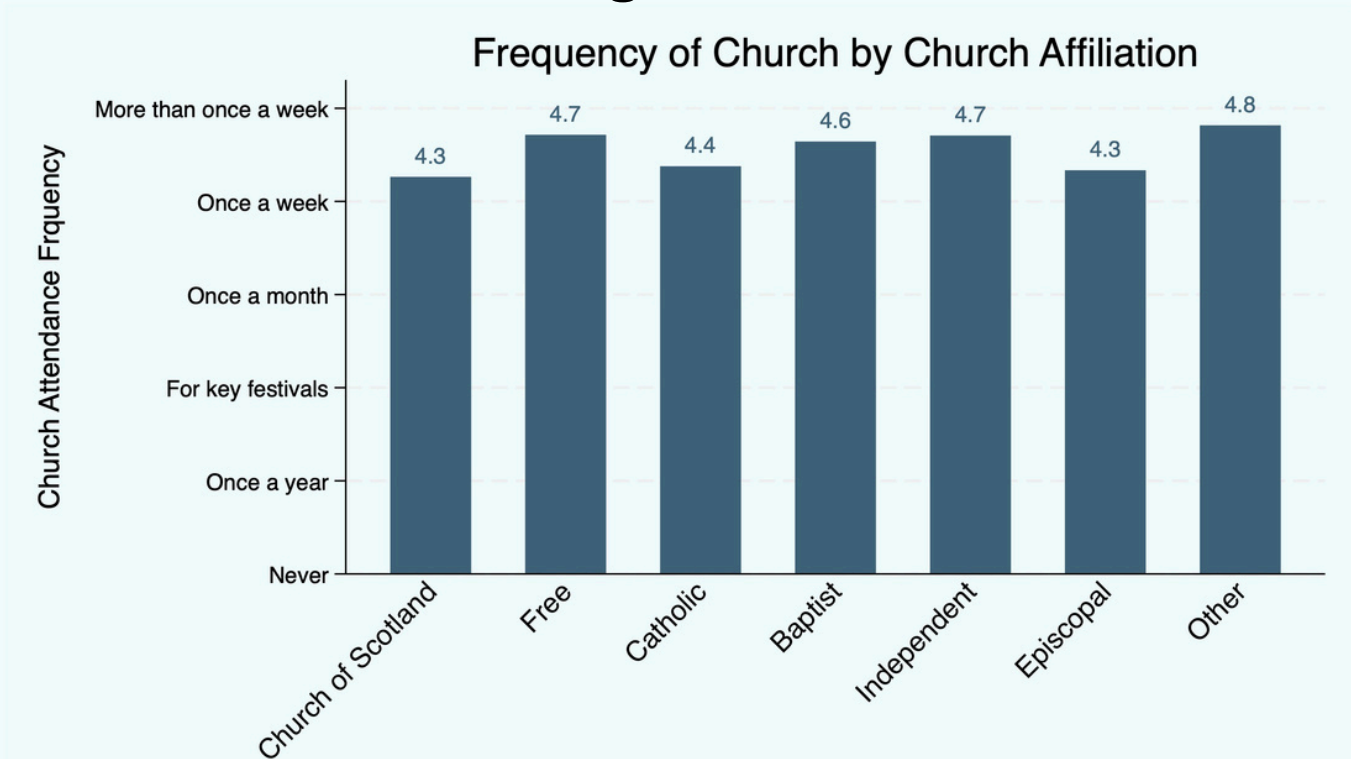
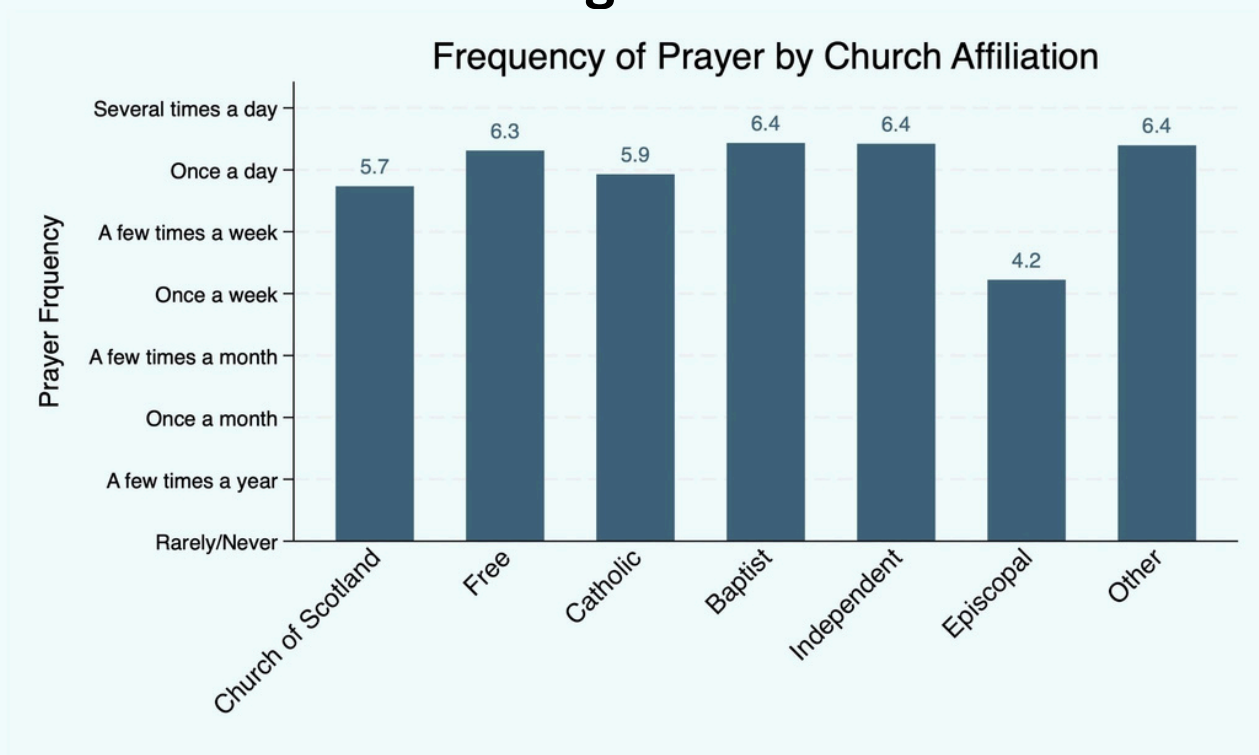


Figure E3 further separates the respondents' average weekly church attendance by denominations. In many ways, this question in the survey served as a helpful guide to see how church attendance was portrayed amongst different Christians in Scotland. *Figure E3* demonstrates that, on average, every denomination's population attends church at least once a week. What was particularly interesting in this finding was the statistically significant difference between the Free Church and the Church of Scotland, where almost the entirety of members from the Free Church attend church multiple times a week; by contrast, the Church of Scotland members rank out at the bottom of the surveyed denominations at 4.3, closest to attending church just once weekly (which would be a 4.0).

Christians Engagement in Society

Considering the historical context of these two church denominations makes this statistic so much more significant. Both the Free Church and the Church of Scotland come from the Presbyterian strand of Christianity. The split occurred in 1843 over the differences between state-run churches and Reformed theology. To see a very similar denomination split by this wide a margin is a key finding in the research (see *Figure E3*). When broken up by church denomination, considerable variance in church engagement starts to emerge. Notably, there is a statistically significant gap between the Church of Scotland (4.3) and the Free Church (4.7), as the two variations of Presbyterianism encompass almost the whole range of recorded responses in *Figure E3*.

Figure E4

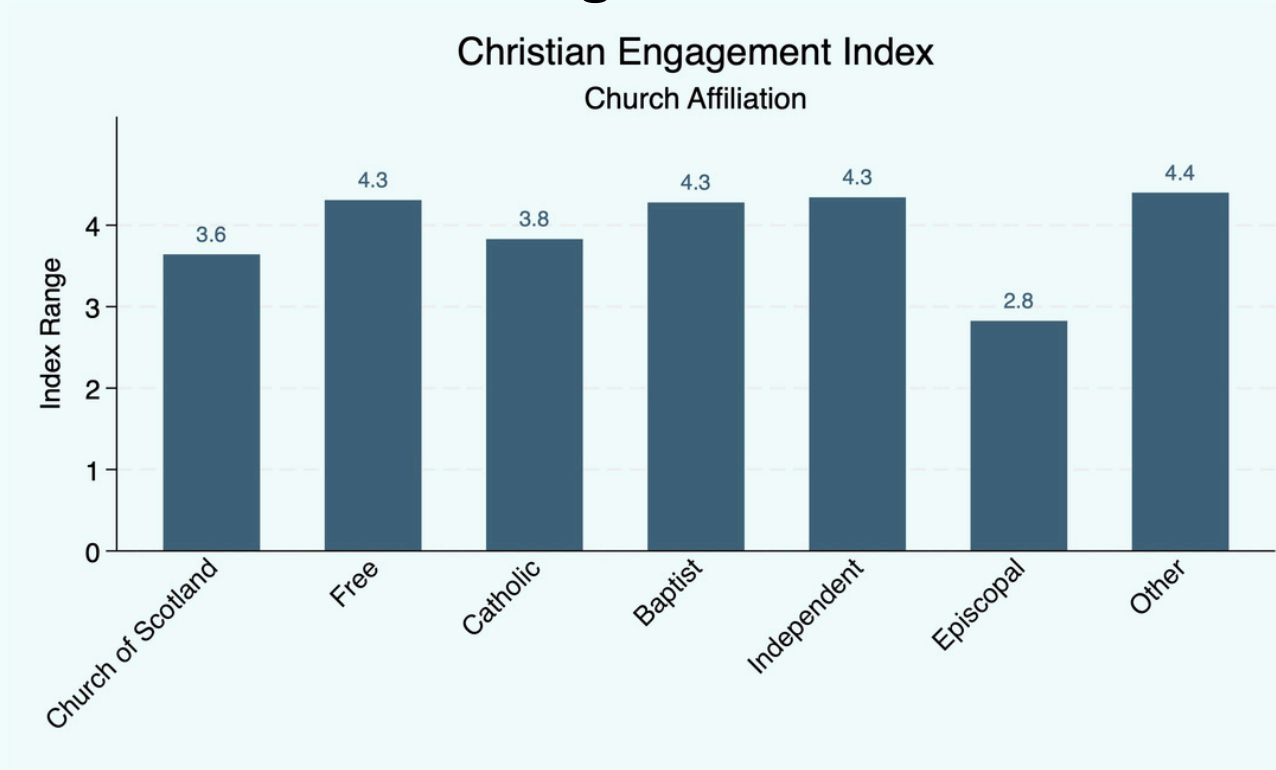


Christians Engagement in Society

Prayer Is High Across Denominations

Figure E4 provides another look into how church-affiliated attendees view prayer. One of the main findings was that the Episcopal Church lags behind the rest of church affiliations, with its attendees praying only once a week. While there was no straightforward answer to why this might be, it can be said that the survey sample of Episcopal churchgoers was smaller than the rest. Overall, these findings are encouraging and should be celebrated amongst the larger Christian Church. When broken down by church affiliation, the overall results are positive, as Christians regularly engage in faith practices like prayer in their personal lives, regardless of what denomination they belong to.

Figure E5



Christians Engagement in Society

High Christian Engagement In Faith Practices

In *Figure E5*, a new variable called ‘Church Engagement Index’ (CEI) was created for further analysis. Multiplying the church attendance and prayer variables together overlaps the survey’s involvement questions, depicting a more holistic view of church engagement and health. This variable was generated on a 1-5 scale; 5 indicates that a churchgoer, or in this case a church denomination, goes to church “more than once a week” and prays “several times a day.” A zero indicates the opposite, where the members never go to church and never pray. The median value is 4.3, and the average value is 3.9 out of 5.

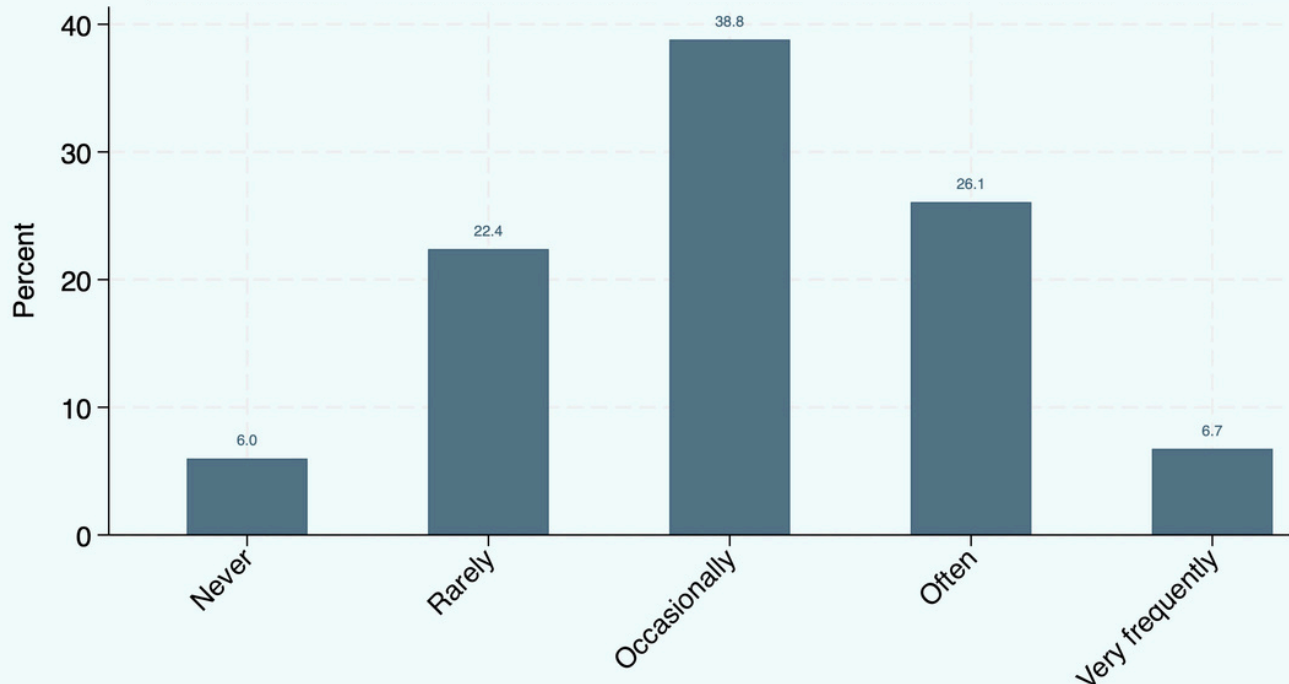
Due to the shrunken scale, a small increase in *Figure E5* implies a large change in overall church engagement. For example, this difference is notable between the two Presbyterian congregations (Church of Scotland and Free). While it is hard to quantify what this might mean in everyday life, it does indicate that, on average, the Free Church (4.3) will be more engaged with active participants in its congregations than the Church of Scotland (3.6). Also similar to *Figure E5*, the Episcopalians had a low CEI score.

Christians Engagement in Society

Current Issues Are Not Discussed Often In Church

Figure E6

How Often Churches Are Speaking on Current Issues

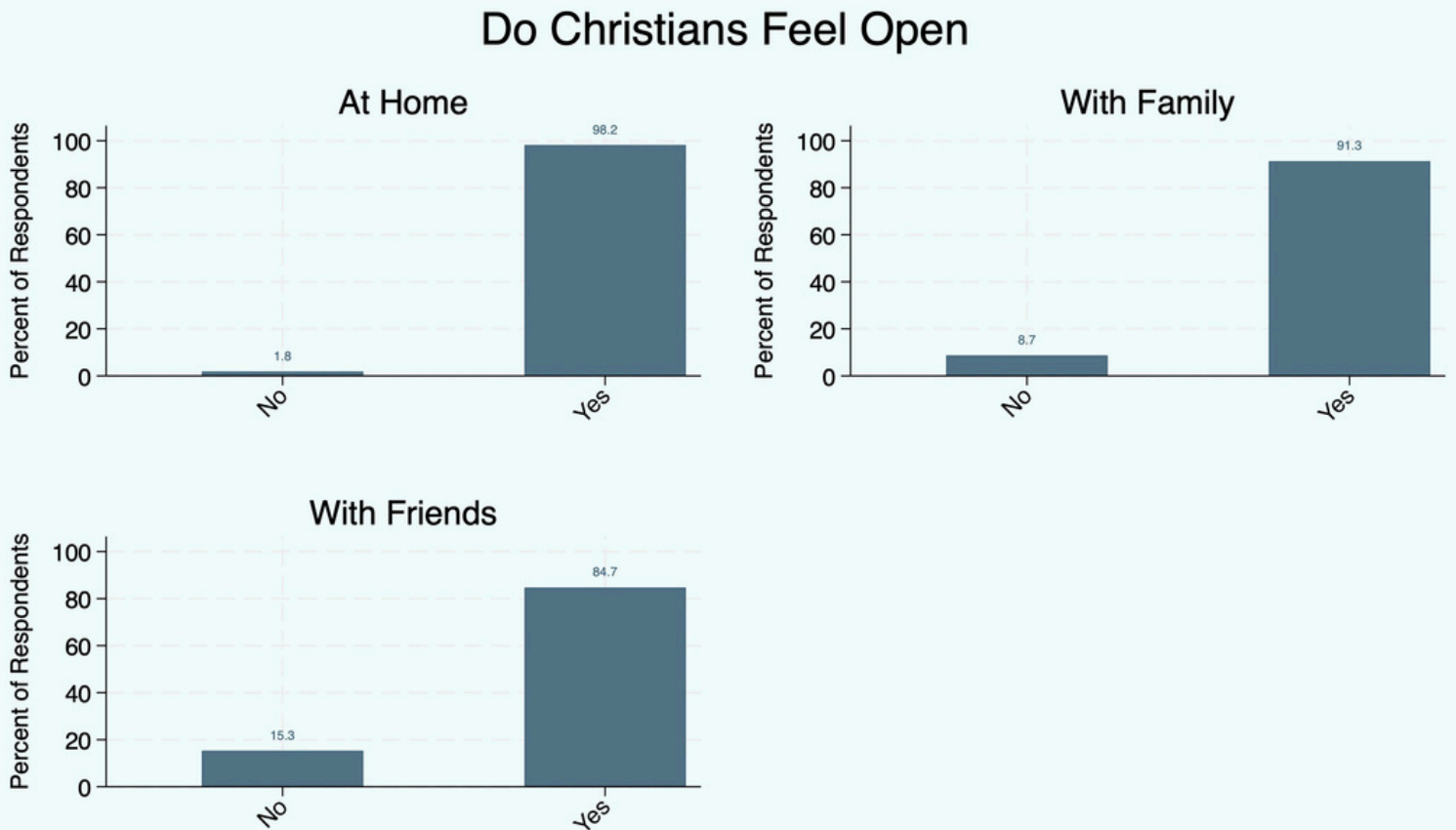


Another way to define how healthy the church is in Scotland can be viewed by how involved the members and staff are in the current issues of the local community or country. By surveying respondents on this principle, it was found that when asked, “To what extent does your church discuss issues facing Scotland today and encourage members to get involved?” most respondents said “occasionally”. The majority of respondents found that their church does not talk about current issues, as *Figure E6* shows, 67% of respondents do not find that their church frequently discusses issues facing Scotland today. Since this was not divided amongst denominations or political lines it appears to be a common theme amongst Christians in Scotland. While Christians are found to be engaged in their church, as found in *Figure E5*, it appears that the church does not handle issues within Scotland frequently.

Christians Engagement in Society

Christians Feel Very Open In Private Settings

Figure E7



As shown in *Figure E7*, Christians overwhelmingly reported feeling open to expressing their faith in private settings. 98% of Christians are comfortable discussing their faith at home, 91% of individuals with family, and 85% with friends. These are strict 'Yes' responses, where individuals are confident to express their faith in the previously stated settings. (2% reported they are not comfortable expressing at home, 9% 'No' with family, 35% 'No' with friends.) This sense of openness is an encouraging trend that has continued from the Phase I 2024 survey.

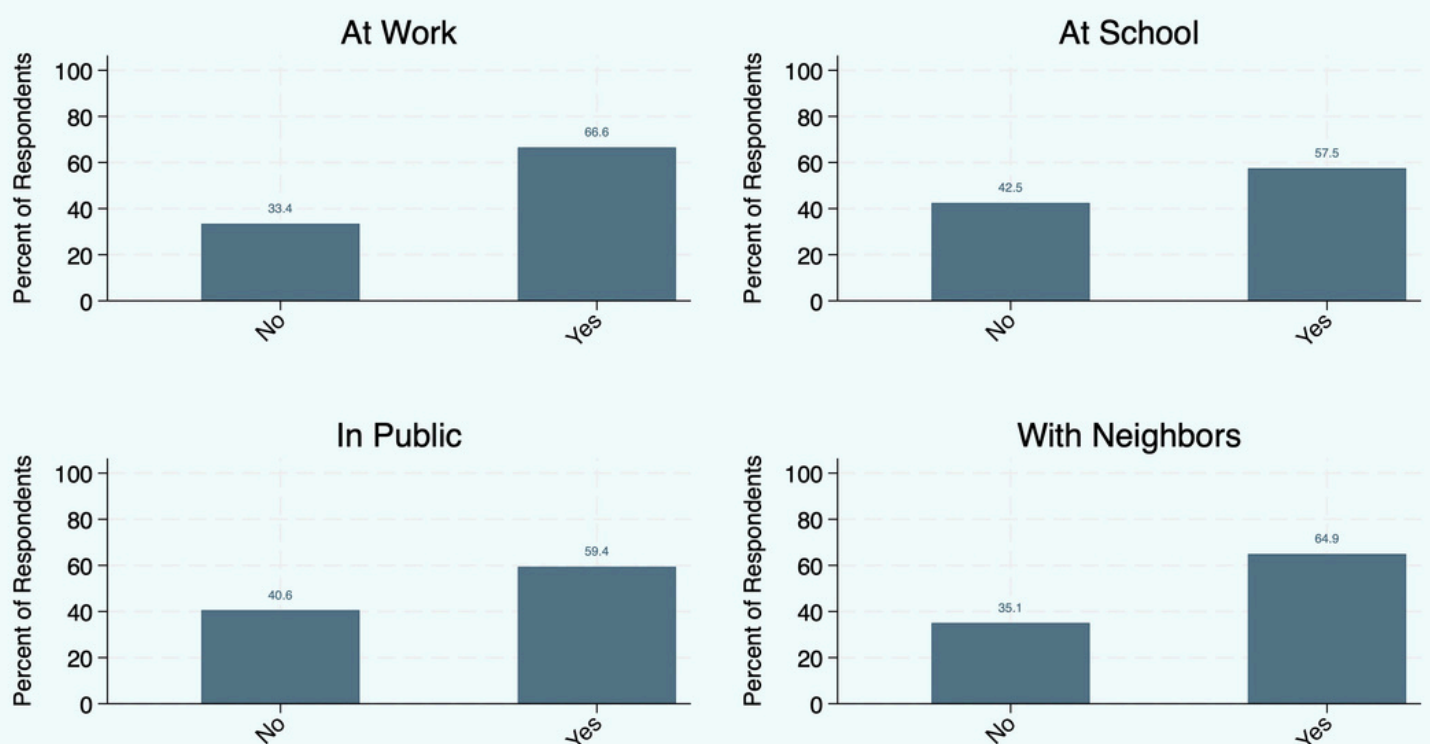
Christians Engagement in Society

Christians Feel Less Open In Public

Referring to *Figure E8*, on a personal level, Christians reported that they felt most open to express their faith in public at work. In progressing order, 58% of individuals at school, 59% in public, 65% with neighbors and their community, and 67% of respondents at work report they are confidently open to and comfortable with expressing their faith in the public square. These ‘Yes’ responses record individuals who are confident to express their faith in the previously stated settings. (43% reported they are not comfortable expressing at school, 41% ‘No’ in public, 35% ‘No’ with neighbors, and 33% ‘No’ at work.)

Figure E8

Do Christians Feel Open



Christians Engagement in Society

Openness To Express Faith Is Higher In Private

It is encouraging that more than half of Christians feel they are able and willing to express their faith in the public square. While not uniform, the responses in *Figure E8* are within 10% of each other, suggesting no particularly drastic disparities between public settings and people's openness. Nevertheless, Christians feel less emboldened or comfortable openly expressing their faith in the public square—ranging from 58% (school) to 67% (work)—than they do in private settings, as displayed in *Figure E7* (with family, friends, and at home, which are each at 87% or more).

Given that the workplace fosters camaraderie and teamwork as individuals work alongside like-minded people, it makes sense that Christians feel most open to express and discuss their faith with people they interact with frequently. However, it is interesting that in academic settings, where employees also frequently interact with the same people, individuals are least comfortable showing their faith at school. Interactions in public settings, like at hospitals or restaurants, have the least time commitment, chance of repetition, and relational investment, but according to the responses received in *Figure E8*, individuals would rather relate their faith in the general public than at school. The social, environmental, and mental pressures at school seem to suggest a more cautious approach to faith expression compared to other public settings..

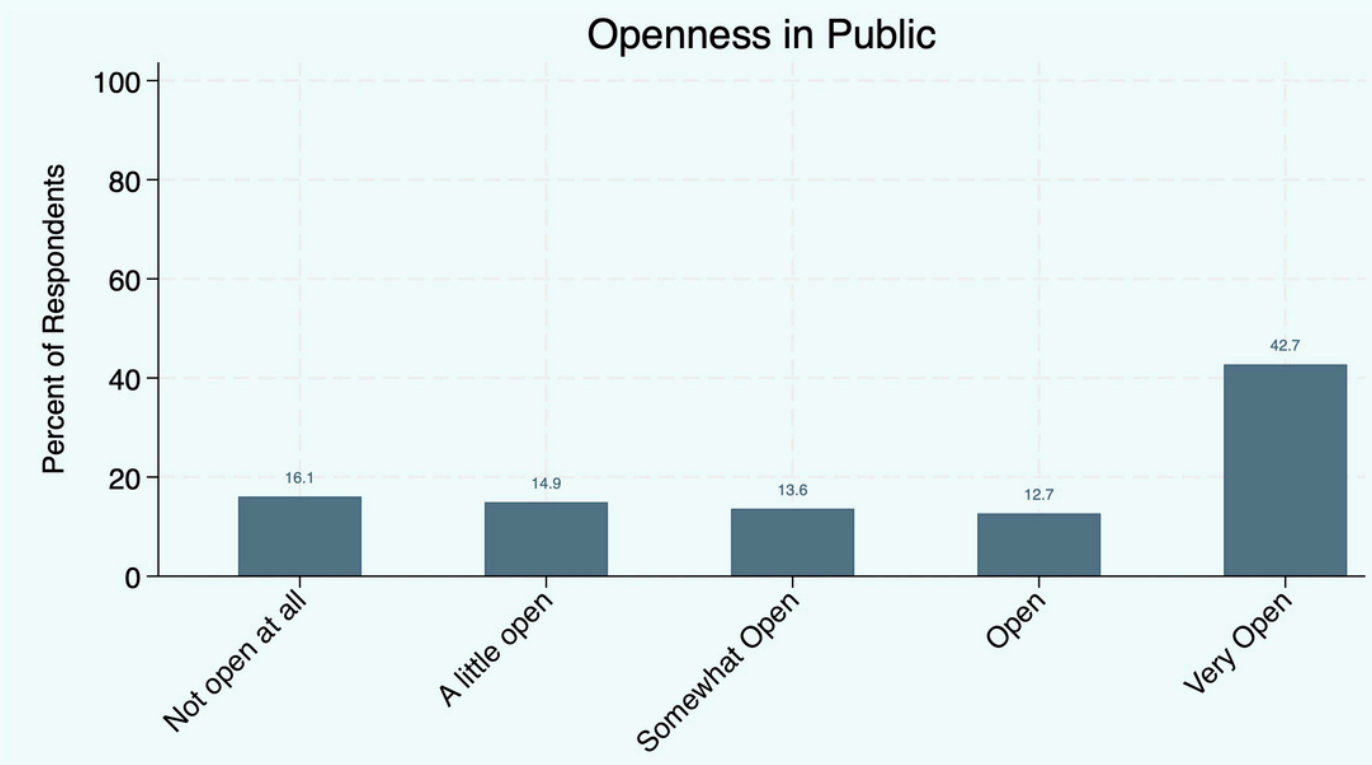
Christians Engagement in Society

A Majority Feel Able To Express Faith In Public

Figure E9 provides a composite score of people's general sense of openness for faith expression in the collective public square by compiling averages of respondents' answers across each of the four examined public settings; it then orders individuals on a scale of "openness" to varying degrees.

The test, displayed in Figure E9, finds that slightly over half of people (55%) are confident expressing their faith in the public square, responding 'Open' to 'Very Open,' while 29% are 'A Little Open' to 'Somewhat Open,' and 16% feel 'Not Open at All.' Openness, to some level, in the overall public is at 84%.

Figure E9
Openness in Public



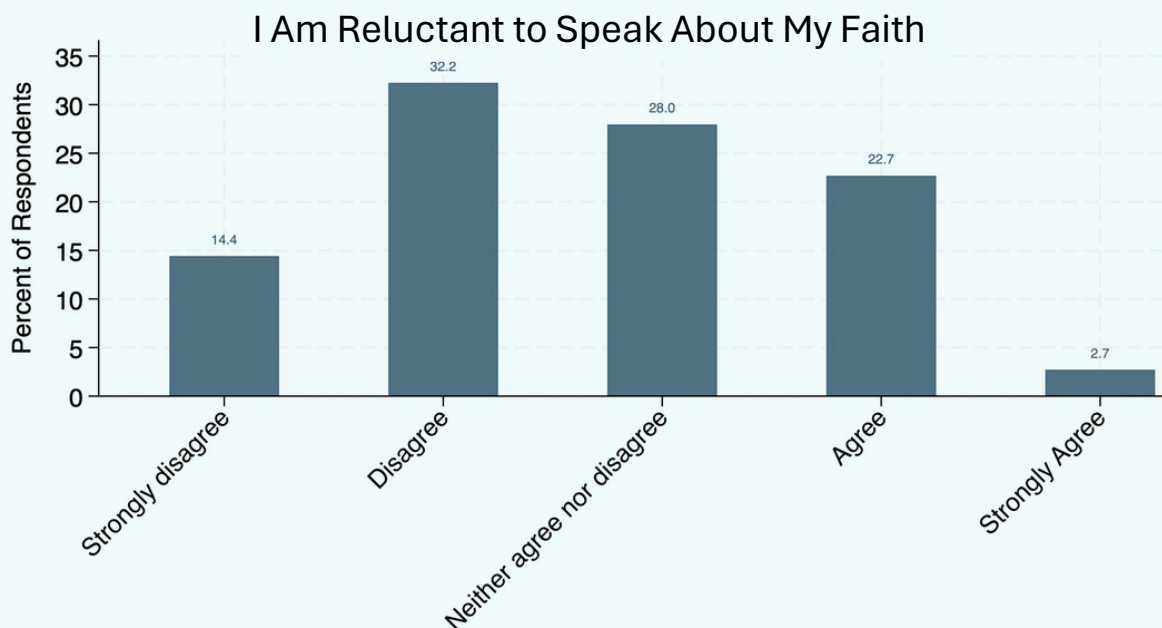
For a further breakdown of openness in public spaces, divided by church affiliation, see Figure A11.

Christians Engagement in Society

Roughly Half Of Christians Are Willing To Discuss Faith

Referencing *Figure E10*, 25% of Christians were personally reluctant or very reluctant to discuss their faith in the public square. 28% of respondents felt neutral about discussing Christianity, and 47% said they were willing to speak about their faith. It is disheartening that one quarter of Christians are reluctant to share their faith for fear of a negative reaction from the public. Roughly a third of respondents are neutral and indifferent to personally discussing their faith, and less than half are willing to do so. As indicated in *Figure L8*, those who are more reluctant to speak about faith tend to feel lonelier, contributing to the growing societal concern over people's well-being. 55% of respondents felt confident to identify as Christian across various public spaces (see *Figure E9*), and these percentages are much higher in private environments (see *Figure E8*). However, *Figure E10* demonstrates a gap in those willing to engage society: when faced with the prospect of opposition and negativity, the percentage of people willing to speak up about their faith and incorporate it into their interactions drops to 47%, compared to those who earlier said they felt open to being Christian and expressing faith in public.

Figure E10



Christians Engagement in Society

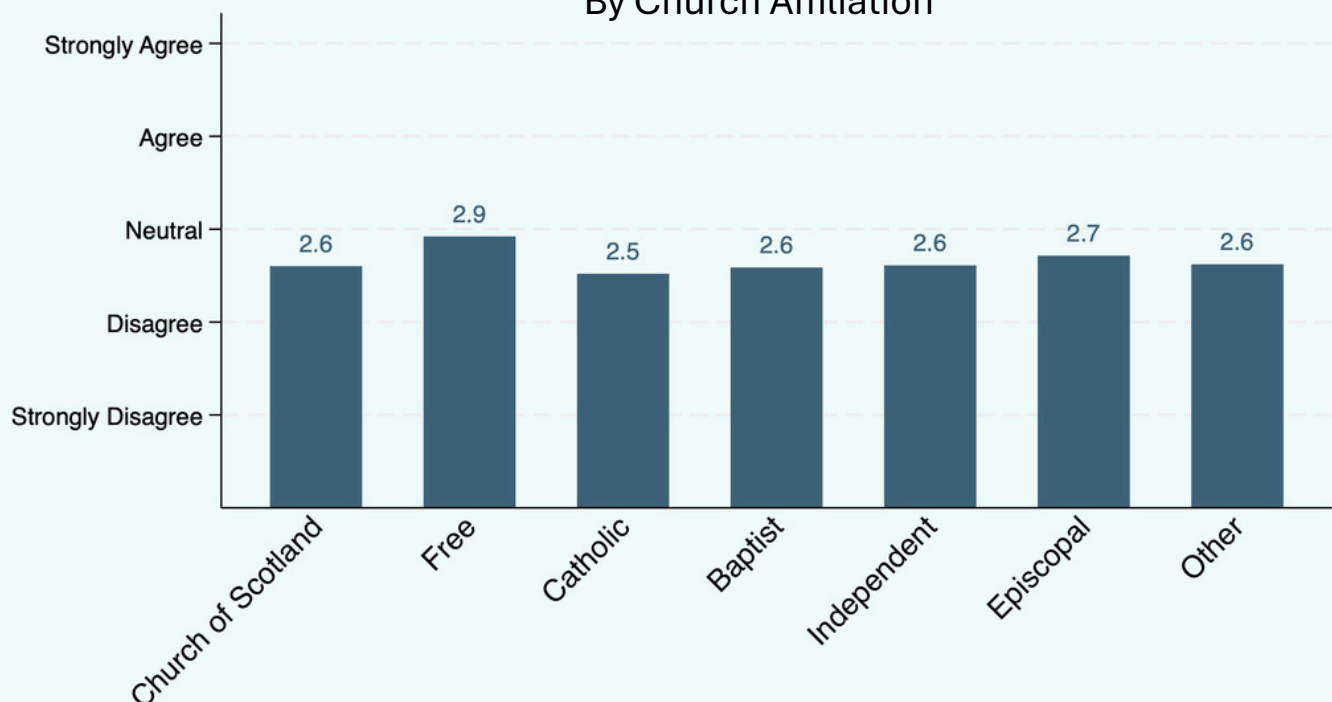
Personal Reluctance By Church Affiliation

Despite 84% of Christians expressing some level of openness in the public square (55% confidently open; see *Figure E9*), it is concerning that slightly over half of Christians report either reluctance or indifference to vocally spreading the gospel (53%; see *Figure E10*).

Figure E11 breaks down individual reluctance to speak about faith in public settings by church affiliation. It also indicates that across denominations, Christians are indifferent to personally discussing their faith where responses fall between 'Disagree' (scale value 2) and 'Neutral' (scale value 3). Catholic members are the most willing to share their faith (2.5), and Free Church members are most likely to be neutral (2.9), with a 0.4 difference in the spread where responses fall between 'Disagree' (2) and 'Neutral' (3).

Figure E11

I Am Reluctant to Speak About My Faith
By Church Affiliation



Christians Engagement in Society

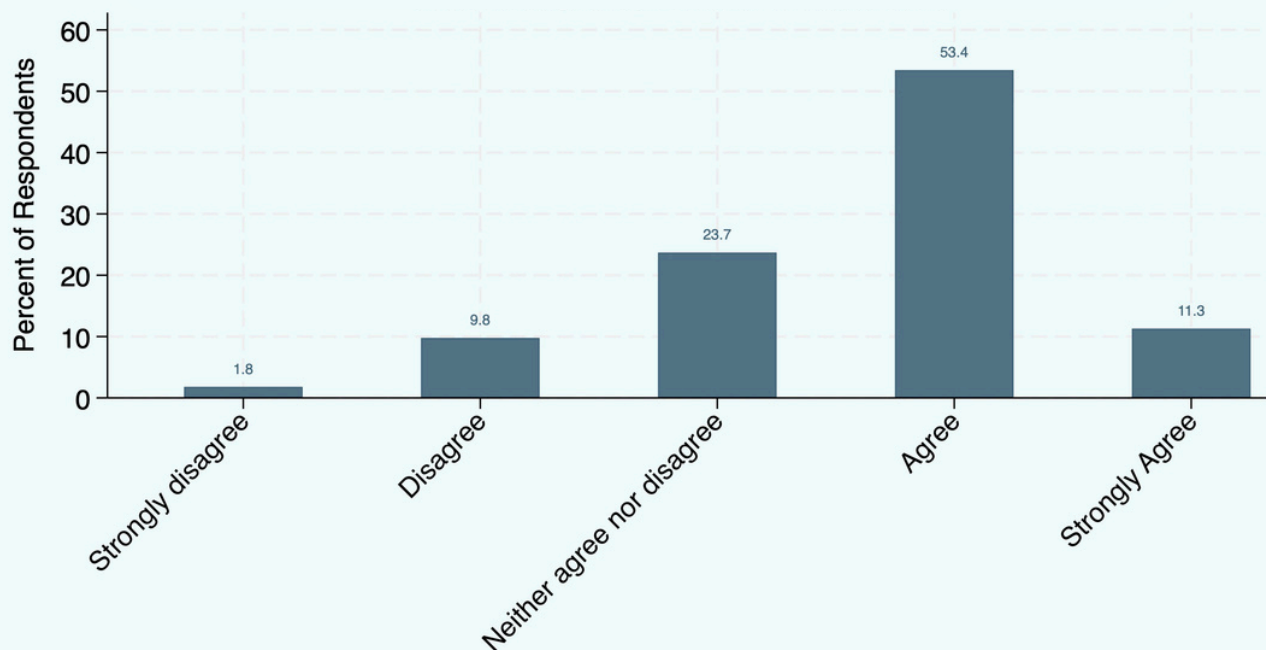
Christians Perceive Others As Being Reluctant

While individually, 25% of Christians reported being reluctant to share their faith in public for fear of criticism or a negative reaction (see *Figure E10*), they believe that Christians in general are much more resistant to discussing their faith in public settings. They do not have much confidence that their fellow Christians are speaking up for or defending Christianity.

According to *Figure E12*, 65% of respondents perceive Christians as reluctant to mention faith in discussions on society, 24% are neutral, and 12% see Christians as willing to partake in faith-based discussions, on varying levels. Neutral views on individual and societal reluctance remained about the same between *Figures E10 and E12*, respectively, but views on reluctance flipped from majority disagree (personal) to majority agree (societal).

Figure E12

Christians Are Generally Reluctant to Talk About Their Faith



Christians Engagement in Society

More Confidence Than Socially Perceived

It is a good sign that in Scotland, the reality greatly surpasses expectations, as Christians are much more willing to engage in faith conversations in public than many individuals estimate. This knowledge alone—that roughly 50% of Christians personally want and are willing to discuss their faith in the public square, despite potentially facing pushback from society—may help flip the rhetoric and embolden lukewarm Christians (see *Figure E10*). Those who are reluctant to speak about their faith due to possible opposition can feel more confident to evangelize once they realize they are not as alone in the task as they previously thought. In reality, many more people are willing to engage the public in conversations about faith (47% individually reported versus 12% socially perceived willingness; see *Figures E10 and E12*).

Reasons for this disconnect between an individual's level of engagement in faith discussions or actions in society and what they perceive Christians' level of engagement to be could be that many of these faith interactions are discrete, so the public is not taking notice, and the actions are not apparent from an outside perspective. Another possibility could be that while Christians do not think of themselves as reluctant to express their faith, the actual number of actions implemented does not meet or reflect the intended volume of interactions.

Christians Engagement in Society

Conclusion


Specifically in the private settings of home, family, and friends, most Christians said they can be open about their faith. This result is expected for a healthy church and community and is consistent with the Phase I report published in 2024. While not directly correlated to a church's vitality, families play a central role within the church by creating a space where individuals feel open with each other. This social behavior is praiseworthy and should be encouraged by church leadership to foster safe spaces for religious discussion outside the nuclear family or private settings, extending to daily interactions as well.

It is commendable that Christians are active members of their church communities across age groups and denominations, attending church regularly and praying daily. The majority of Christians feel sufficiently prepared or equipped to discuss their faith and share the gospel with those around them (74%; see *Figure A14*). The goal that Scottish Christians can now aim to address is boosting their confidence and willingness to engage to follow through with faith-related conversations in public settings, and frequently so, no matter the social, political, religious, or cultural environment. The church can also actively support its members as they interact with Christians and non-Christians alike in society.

Acknowledgements



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The image is a collage of four mountain landscape photographs. The top-left and top-right photos show misty, rocky mountain peaks. The bottom-left photo shows a steep, rocky mountain slope with a small figure of a person. The bottom-right photo shows a grassy mountain slope with several sheep grazing. A semi-transparent white rectangle is centered over the collage, containing the word "Appendix" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Appendix

Appendix

Figure A1

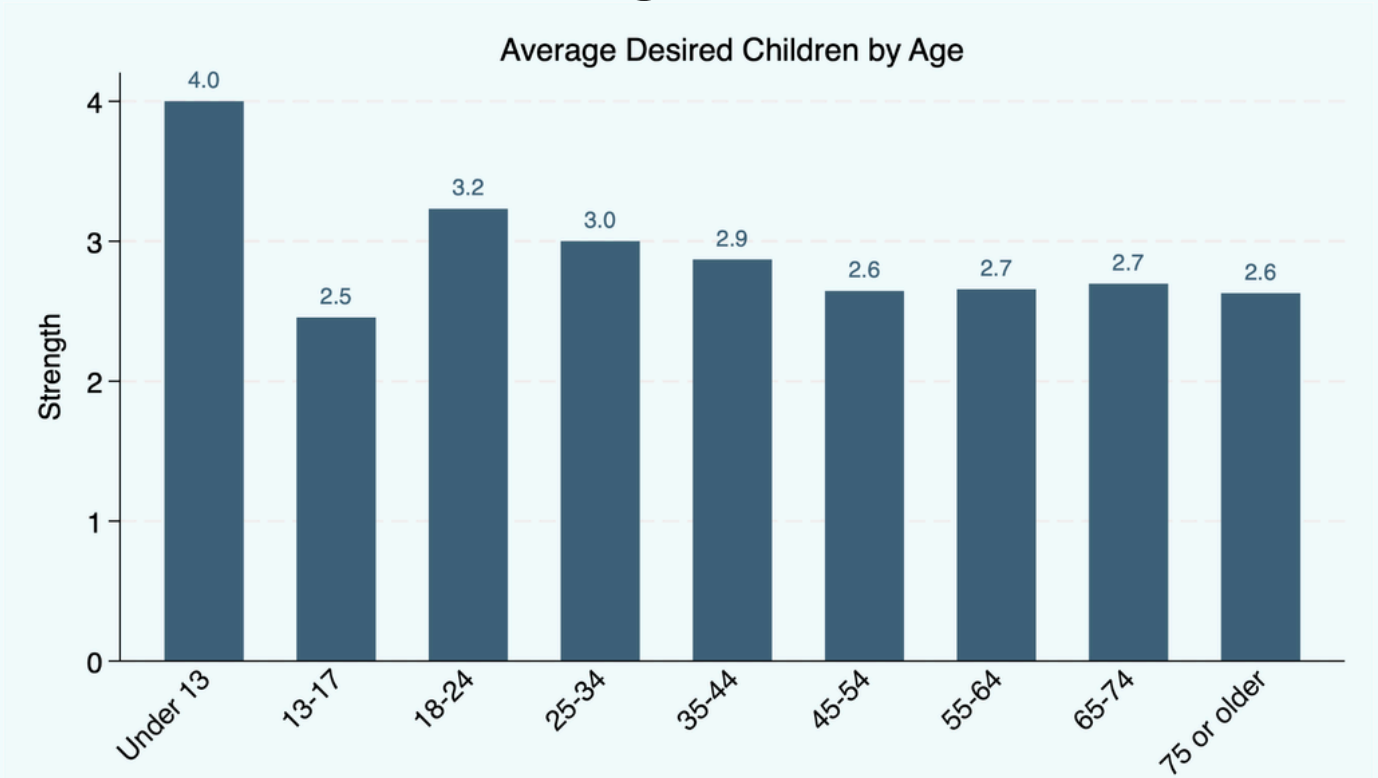
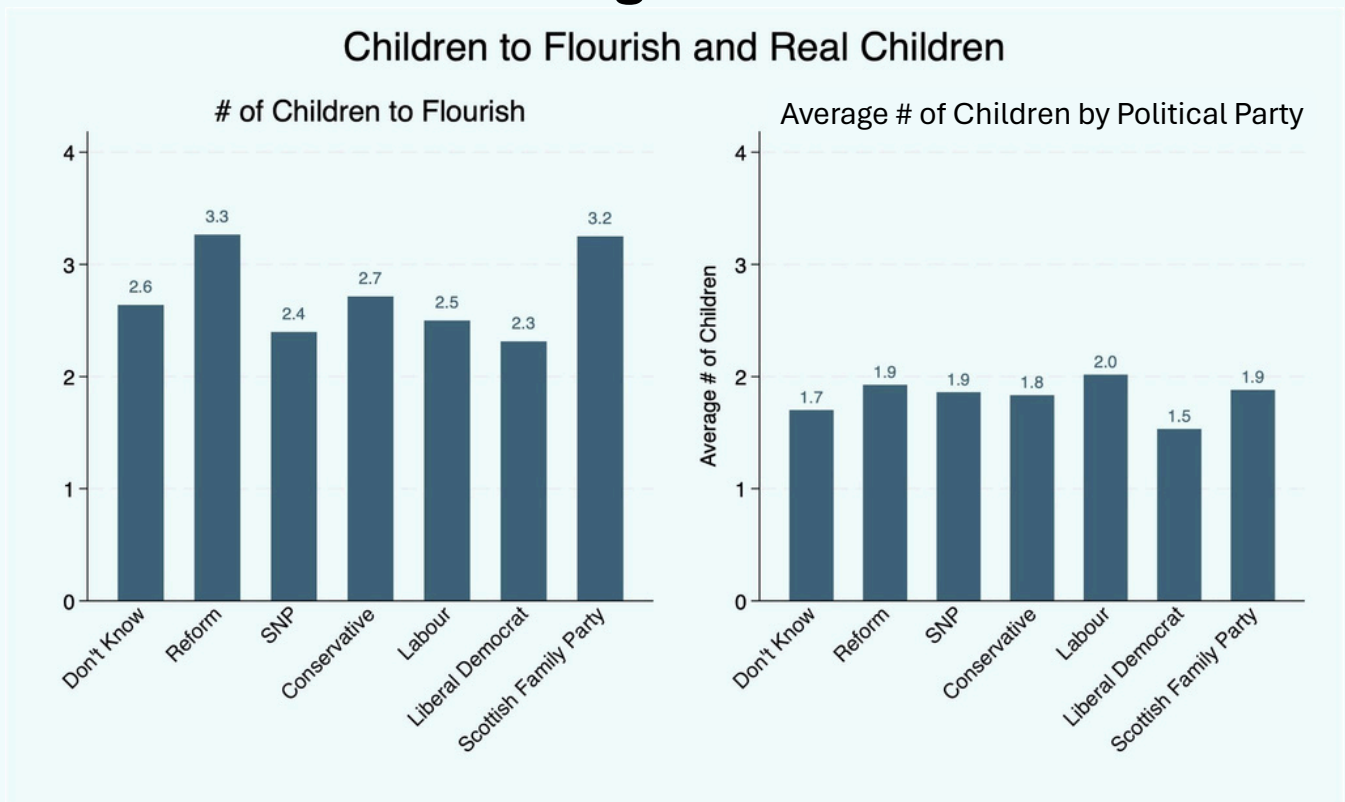


Figure A2



Appendix

Figure A3

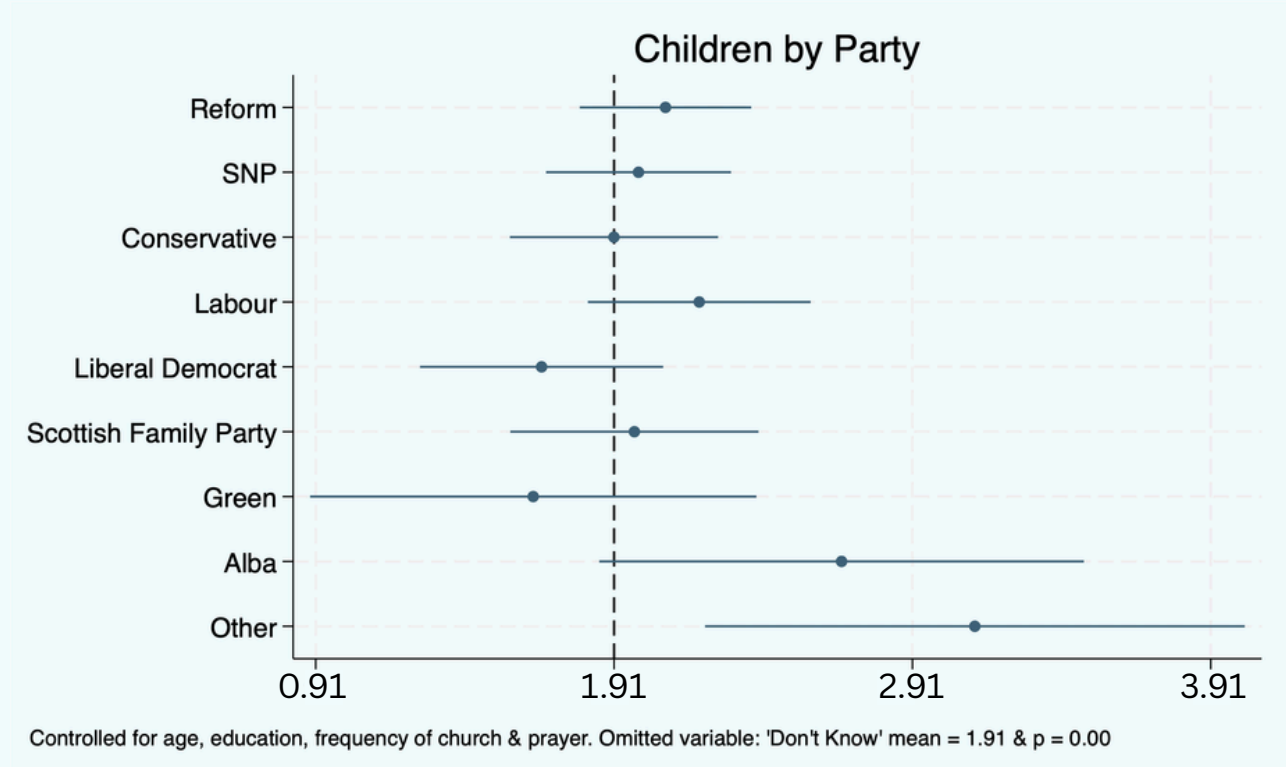
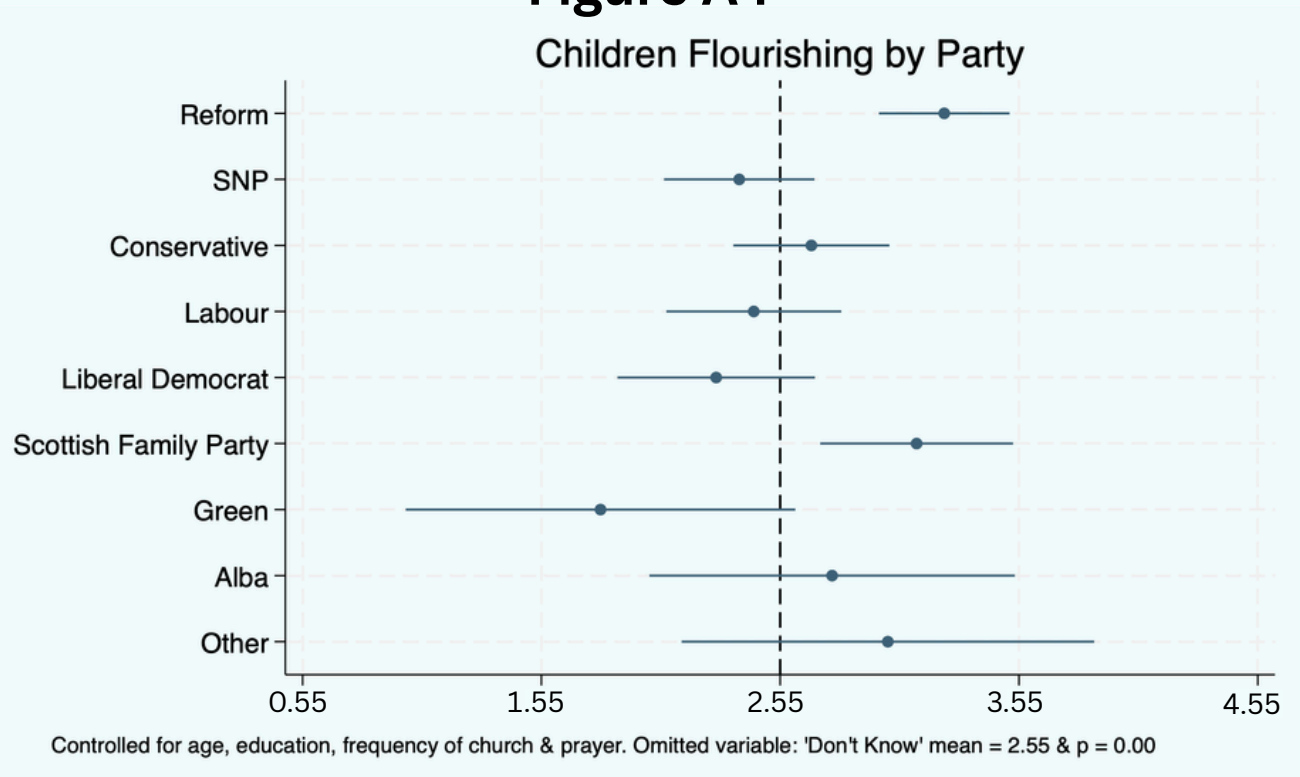


Figure A4



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Figure A5

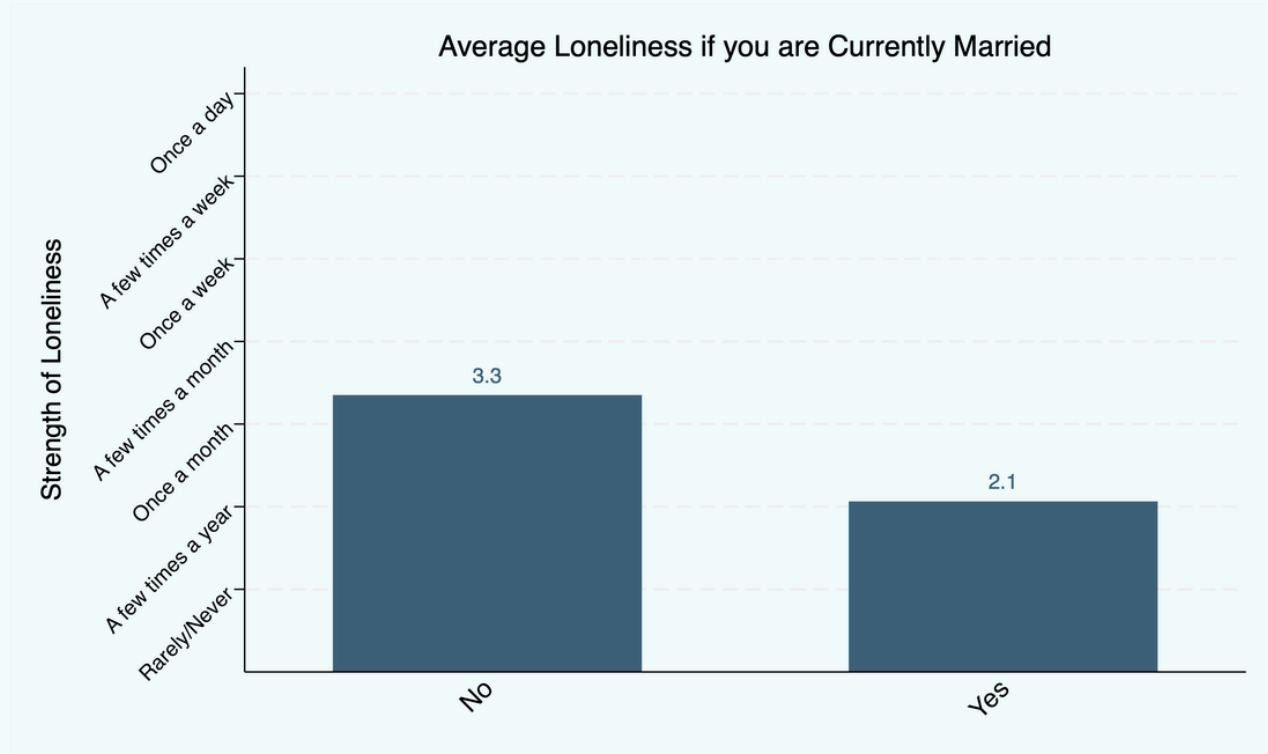
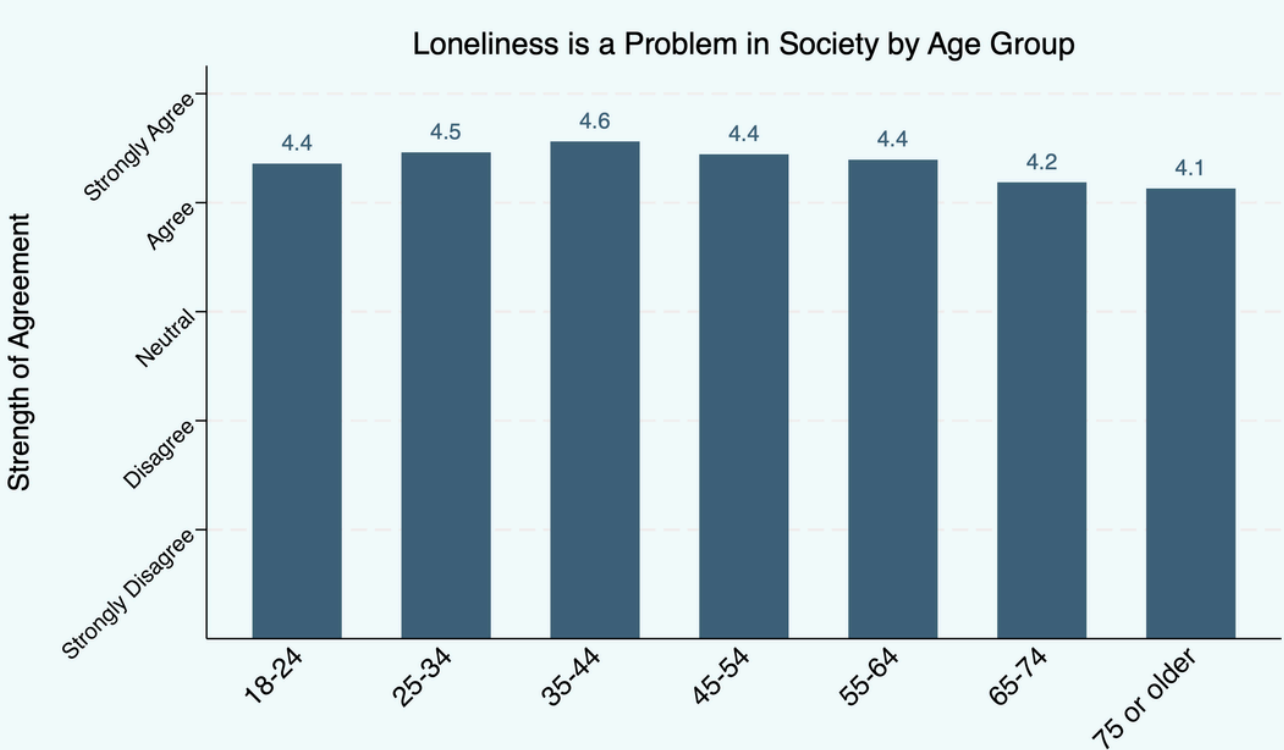


Figure A6



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Figure A7

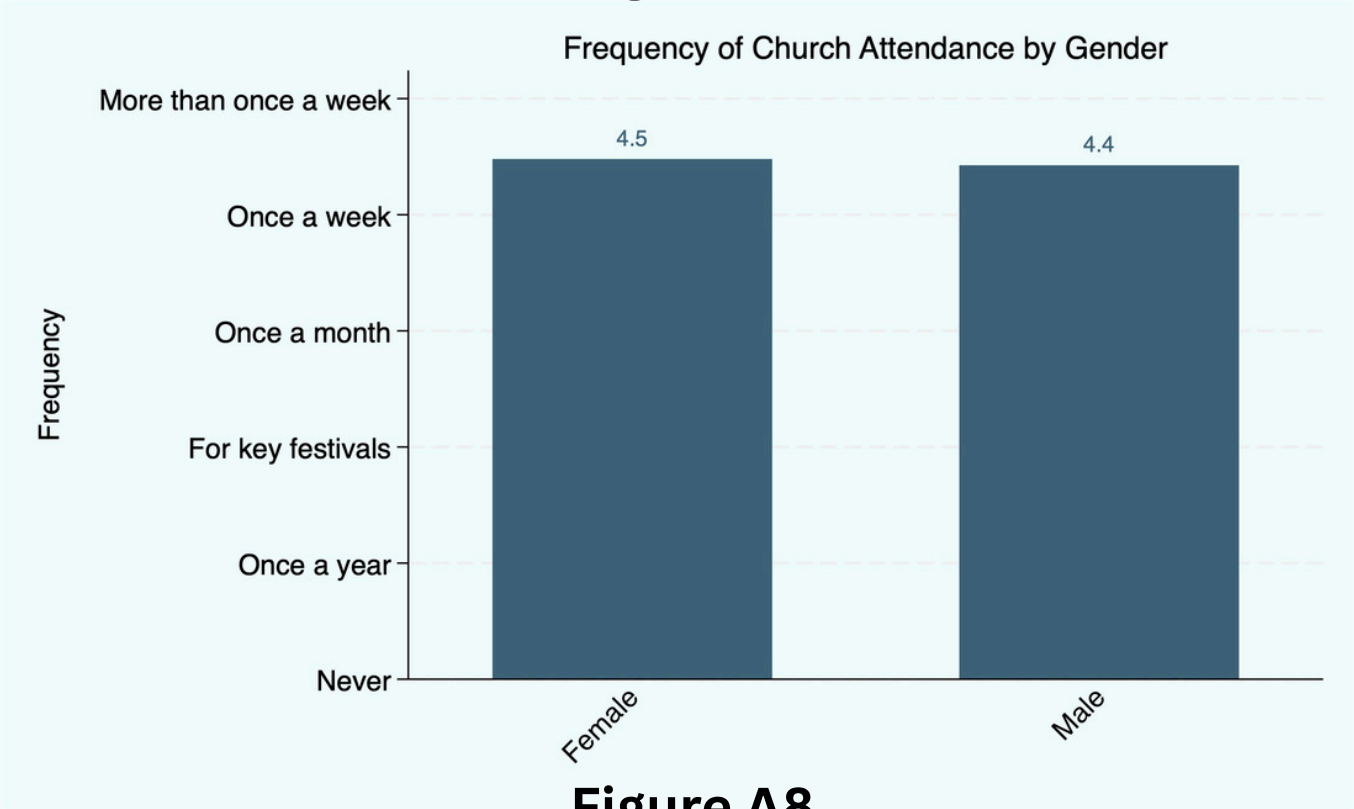
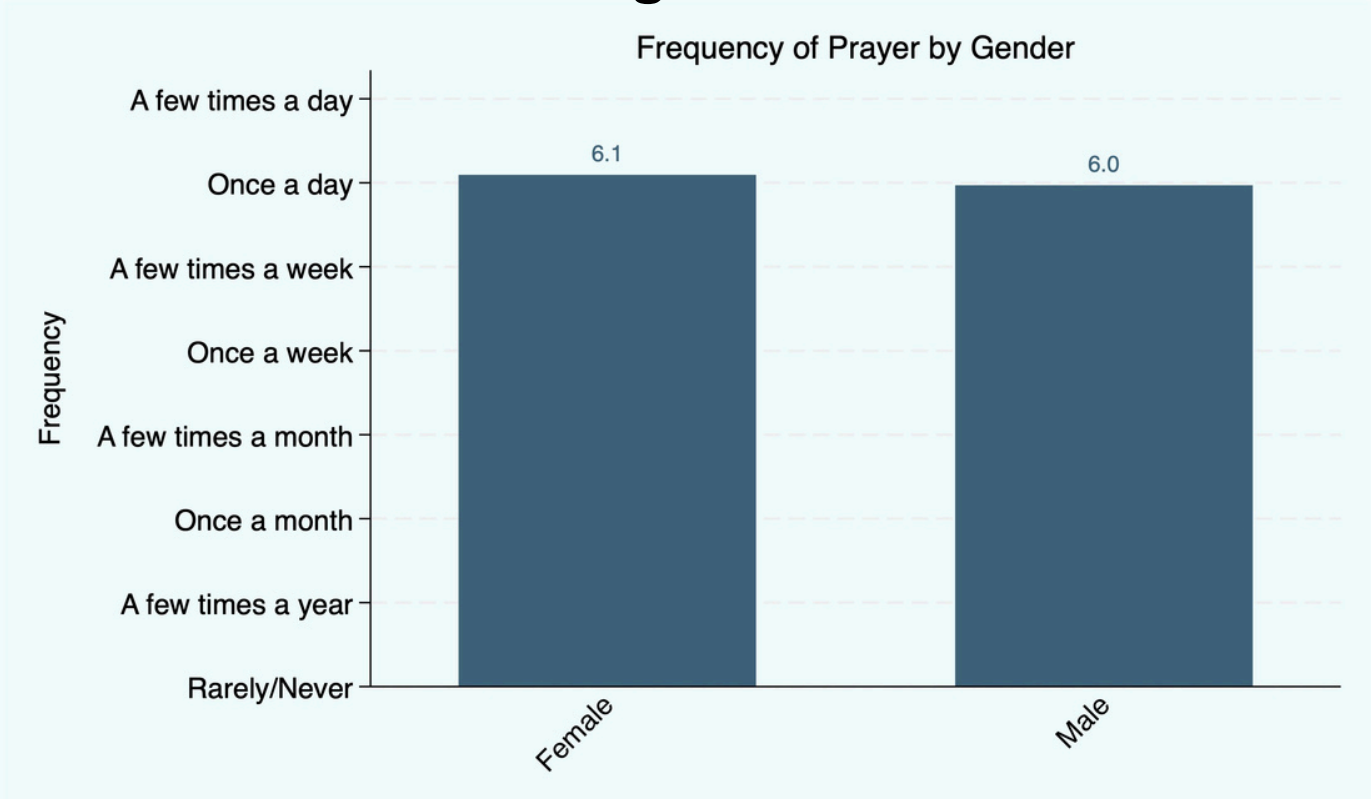


Figure A8



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Figure A9

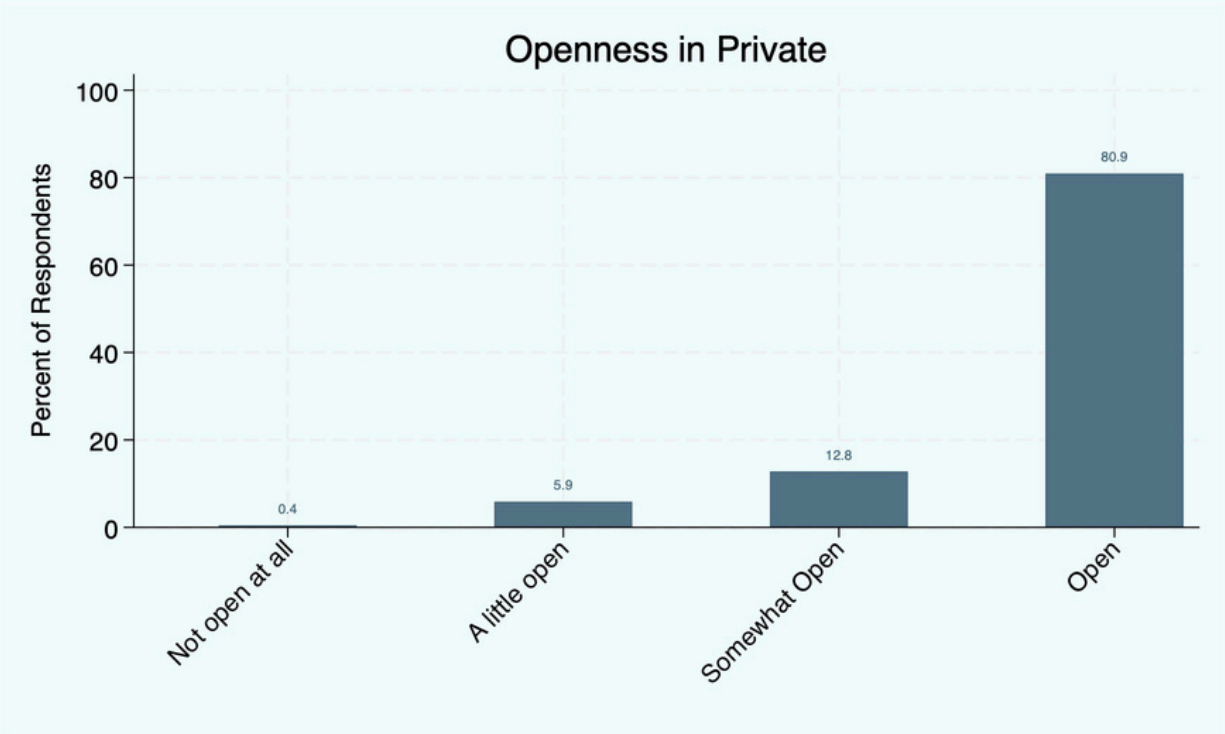
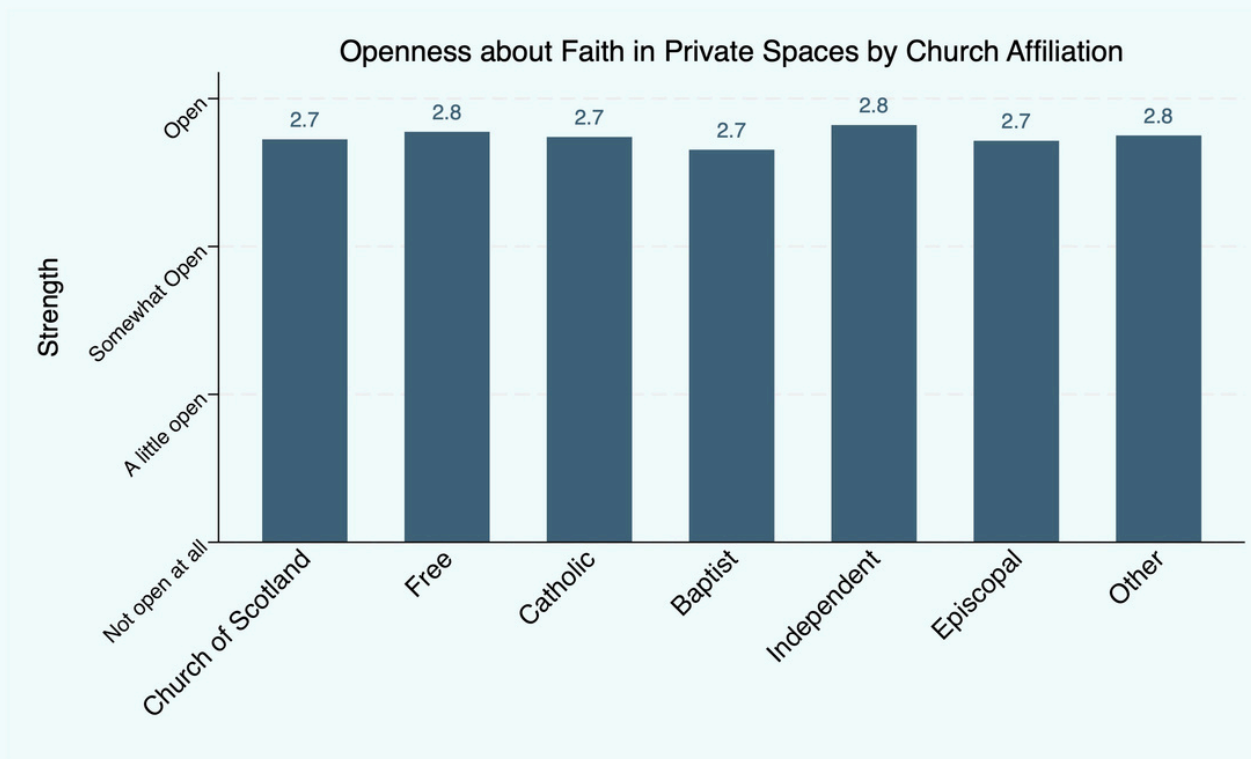


Figure A10



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Figure A11

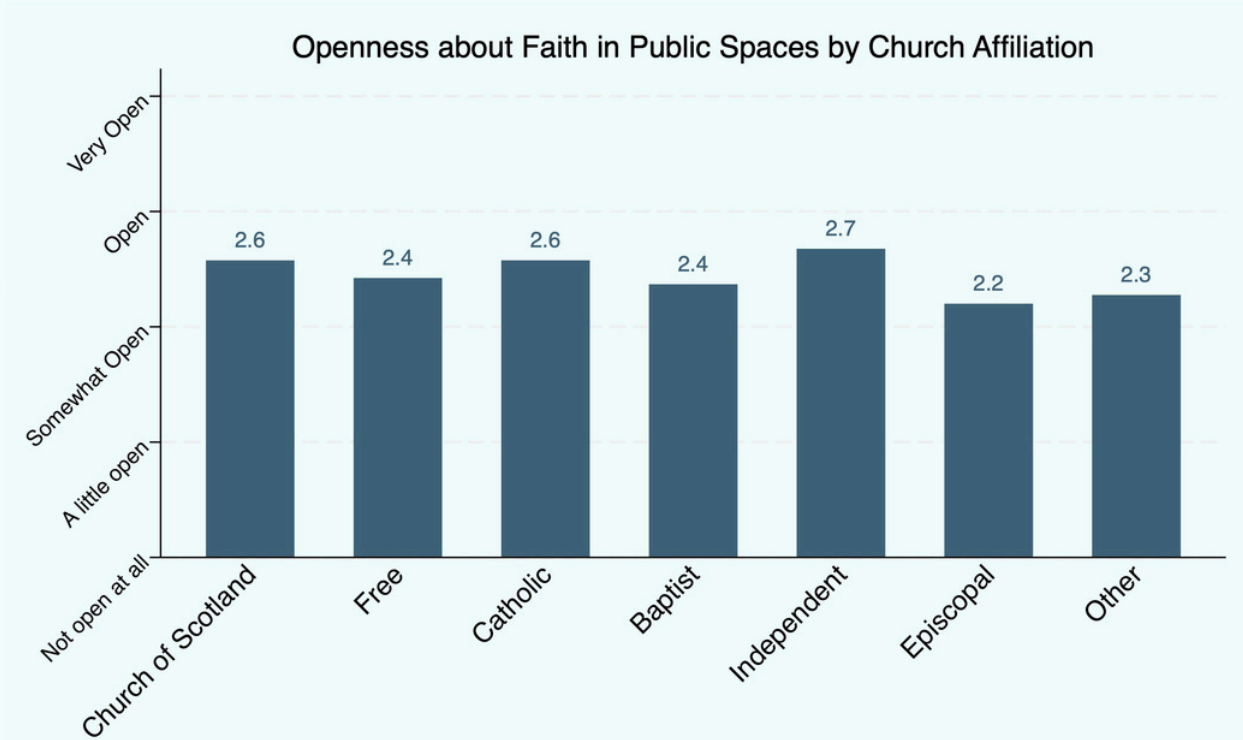
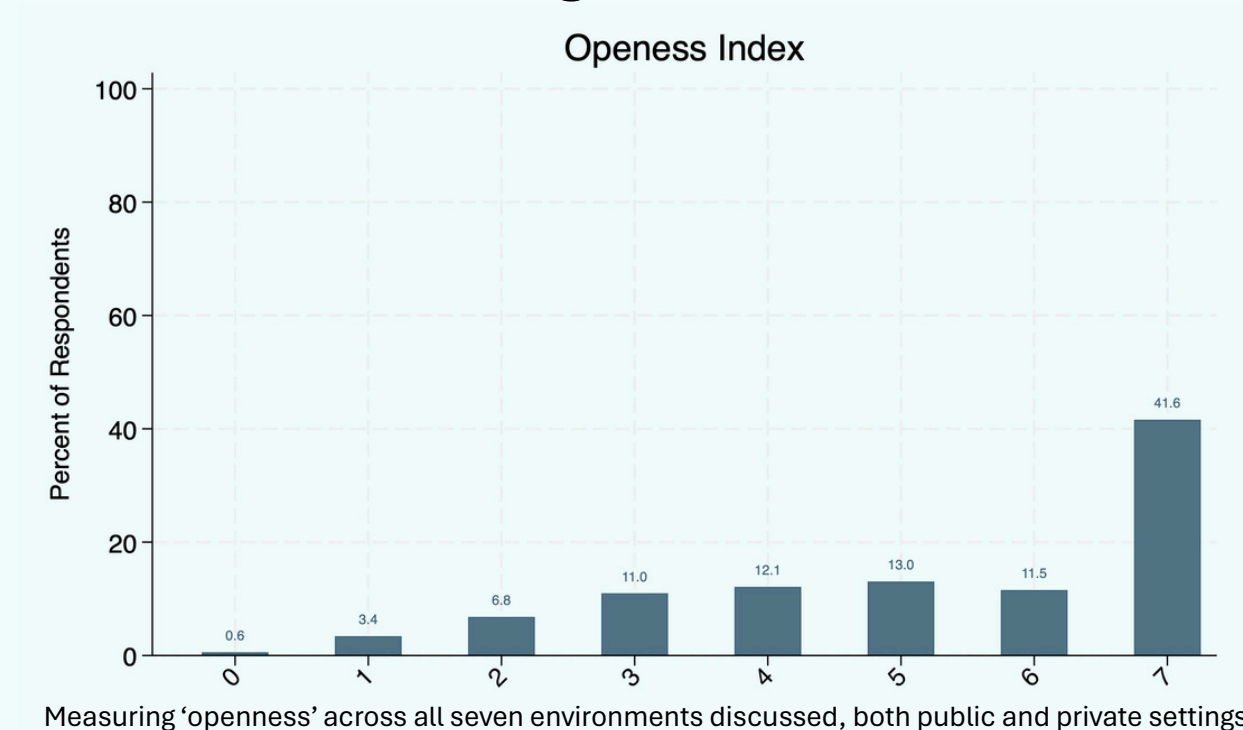


Figure A12



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Figure A13

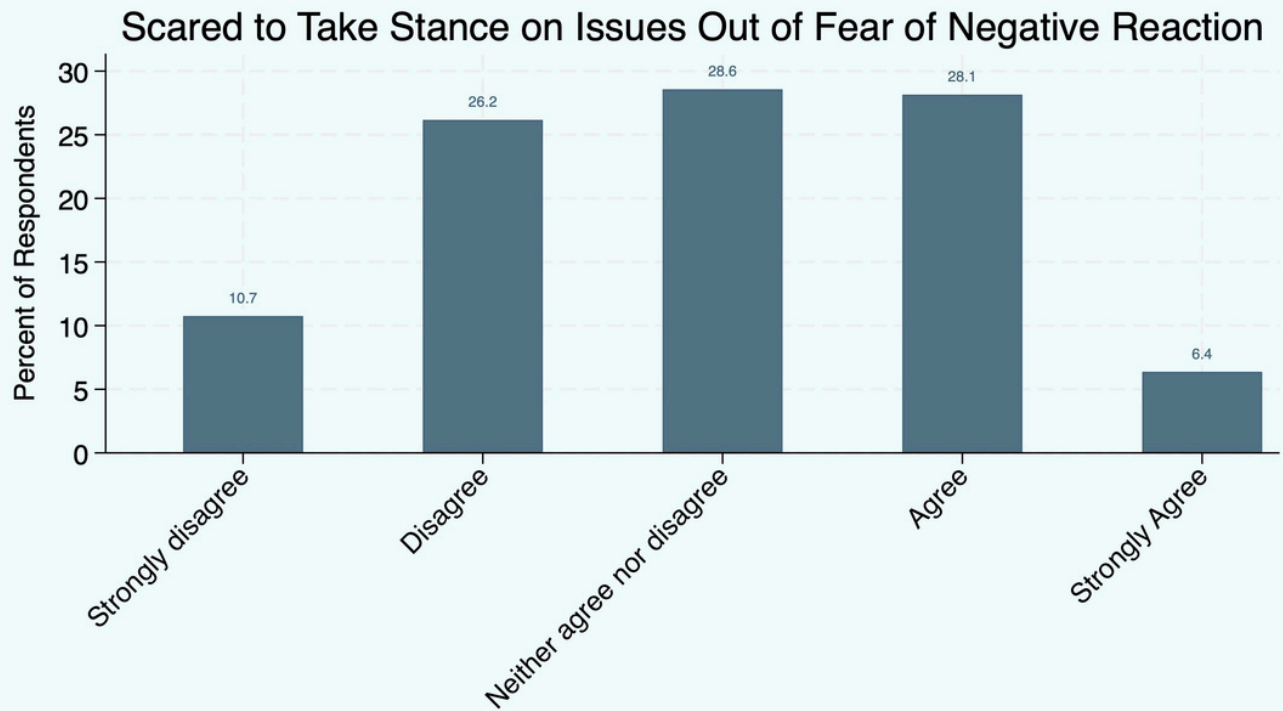
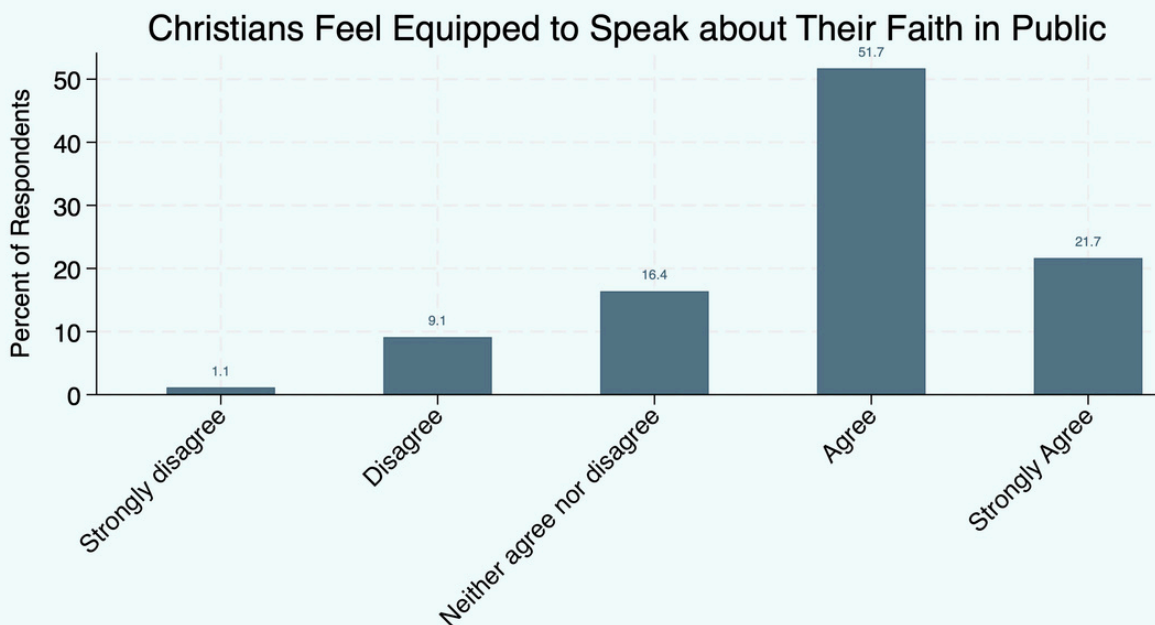


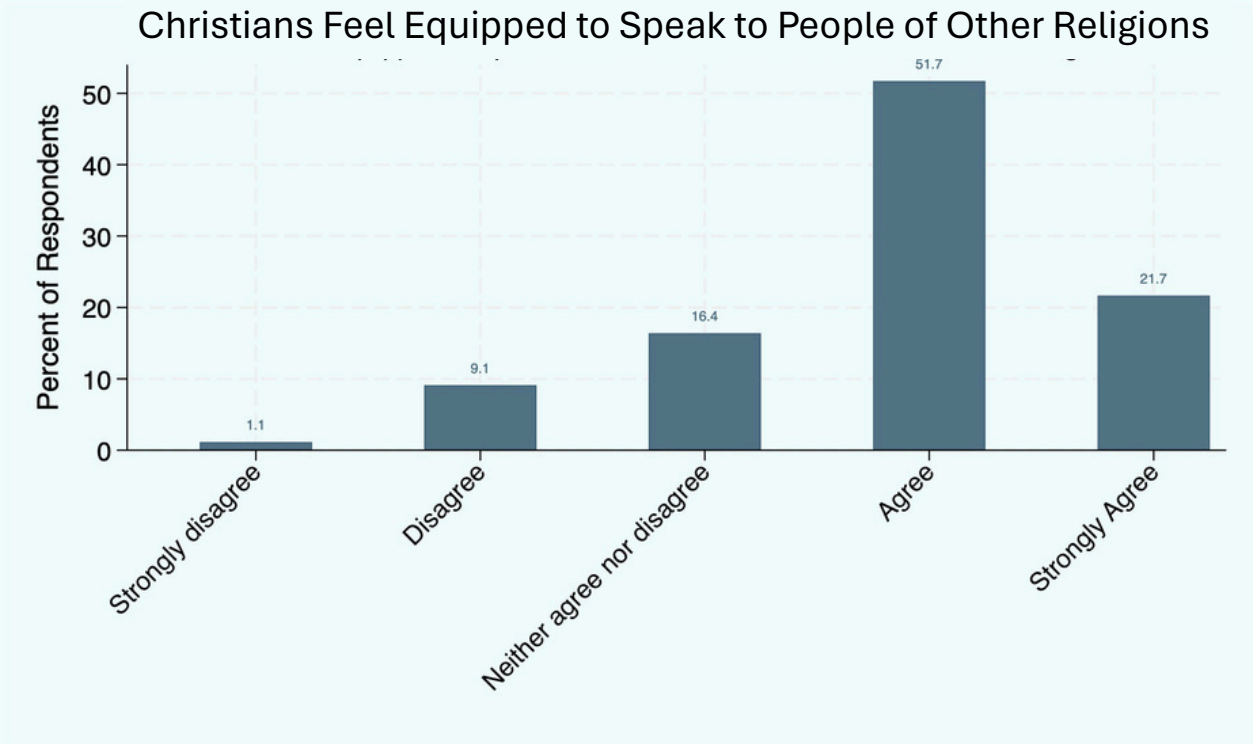
Figure A14



Response to 'I feel adequately equipped to speak about my faith with those who hold different religious or secular views'

Appendix

Figure A15



Appendix

Figure A16

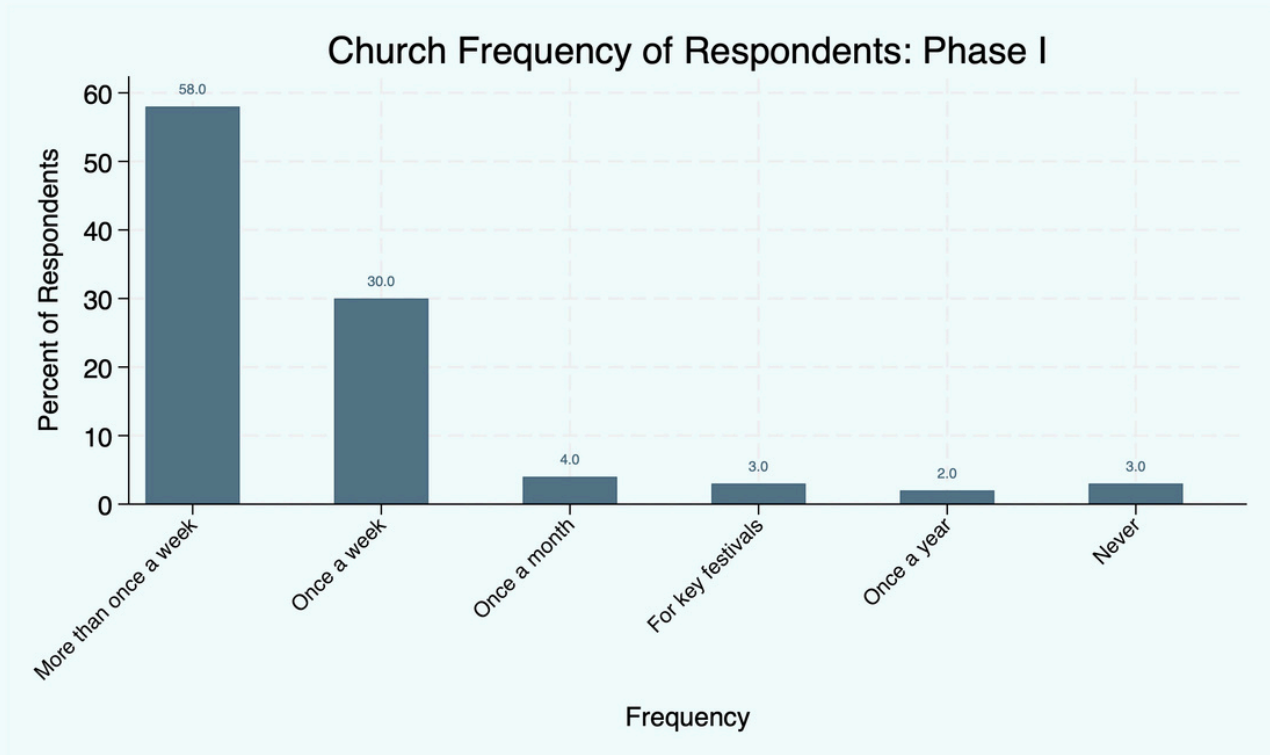


Figure A17

