

Churchgoer Views of Prison Ministry

A SURVEY OF 1,006 AMERICAN CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway **research**

Sponsored By:



**CORRECTIONAL
MINISTRIES INSTITUTE**



PRISON
FELLOWSHIP®



Correctional Ministries and
Chaplains Association



**Kairos Prison Ministry
International**

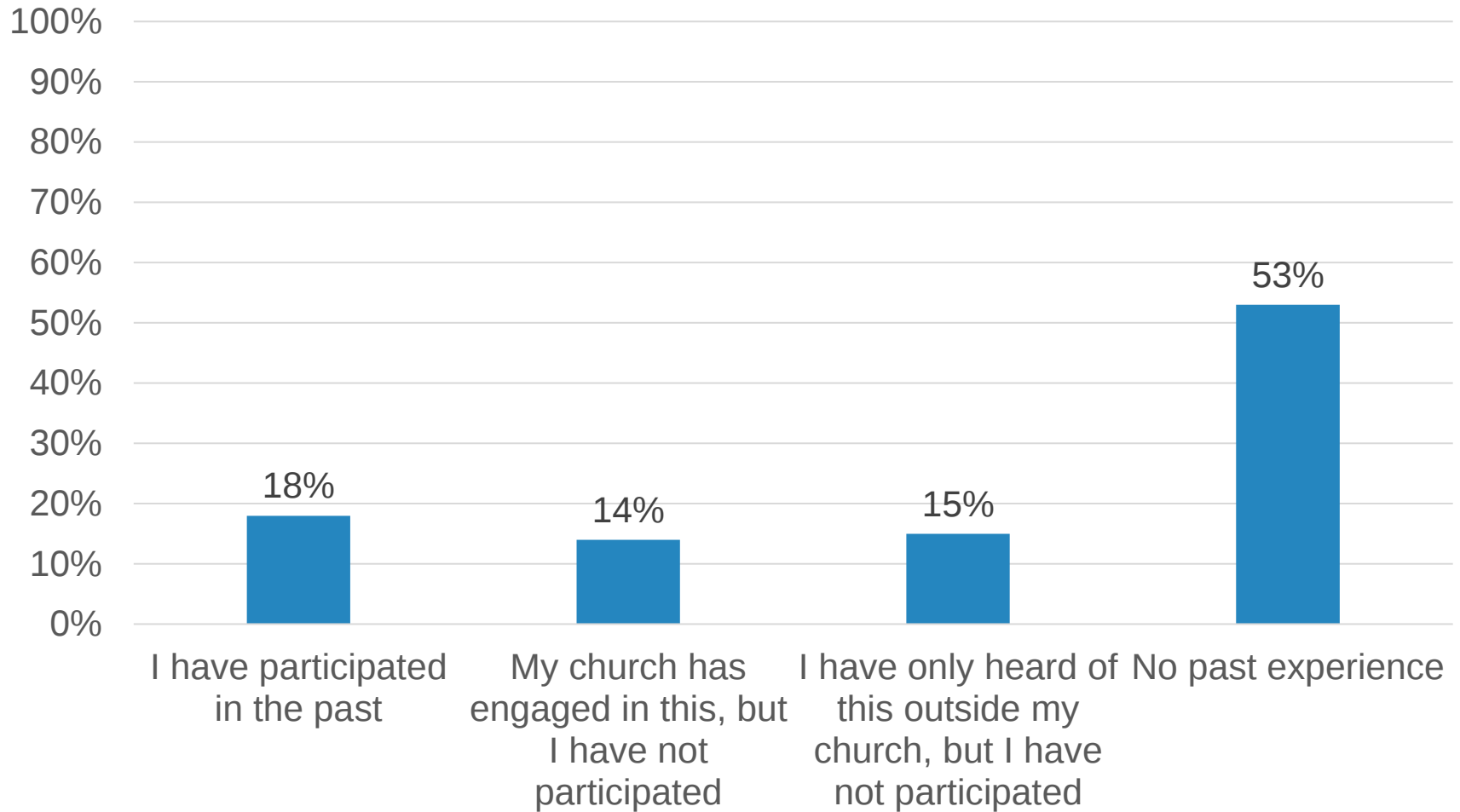
Methodology

- The study was sponsored by Correctional Ministries Institute at Wheaton College Billy Graham Center, Prison Fellowship, Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association, and Kairos Prison Ministries
- The online survey of 1,006 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted January 8-12, 2024, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attend religious services at least once a month
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and religion to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,006 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Percentages may not total due to rounding

Churchgoer Experience with Prison Ministry

Writing letters or cards to prisoners

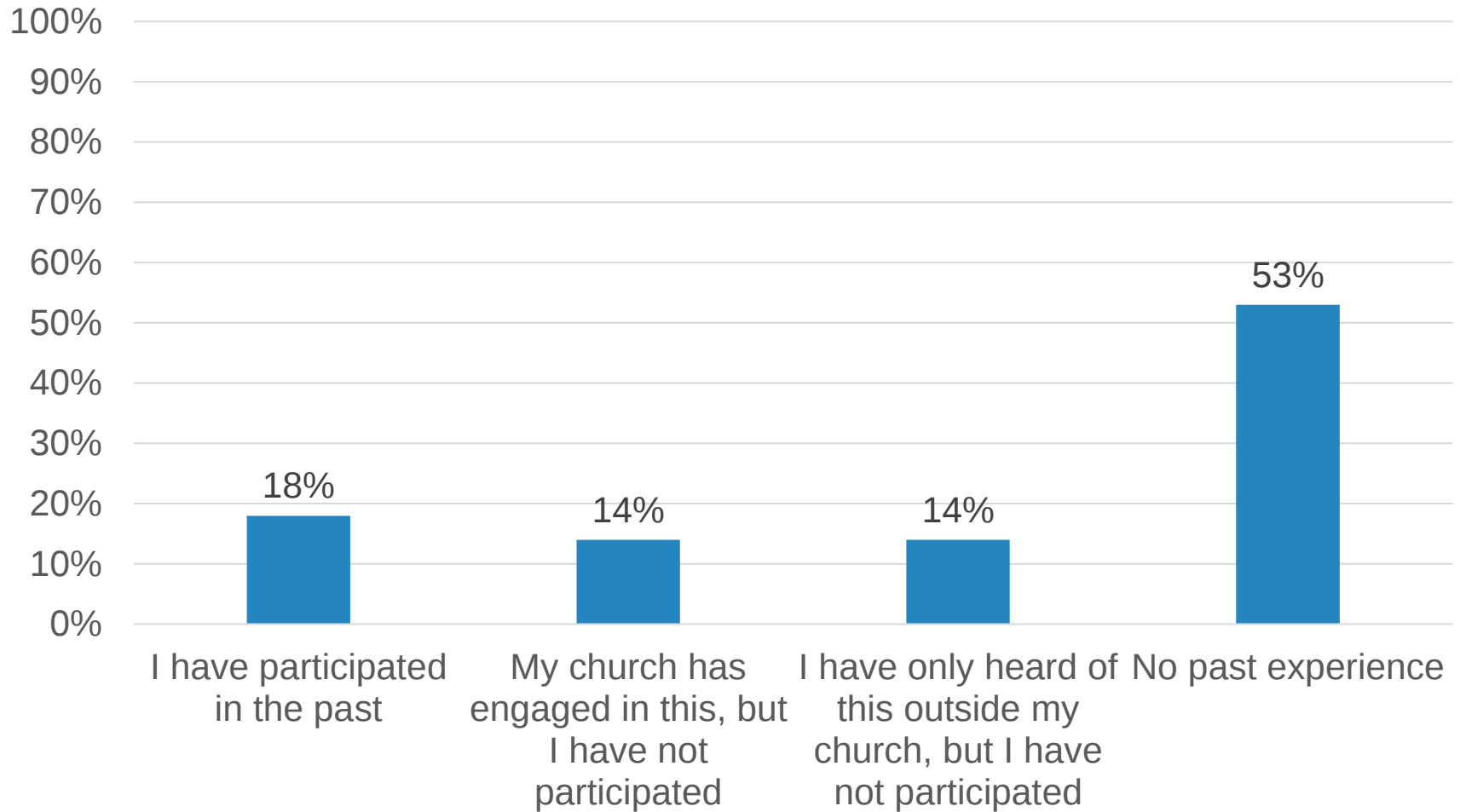
Among Protestant Churchgoers



Q10_1: "Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?
(Make one selection per type) **Writing letters or cards to prisoners**" n=1,006

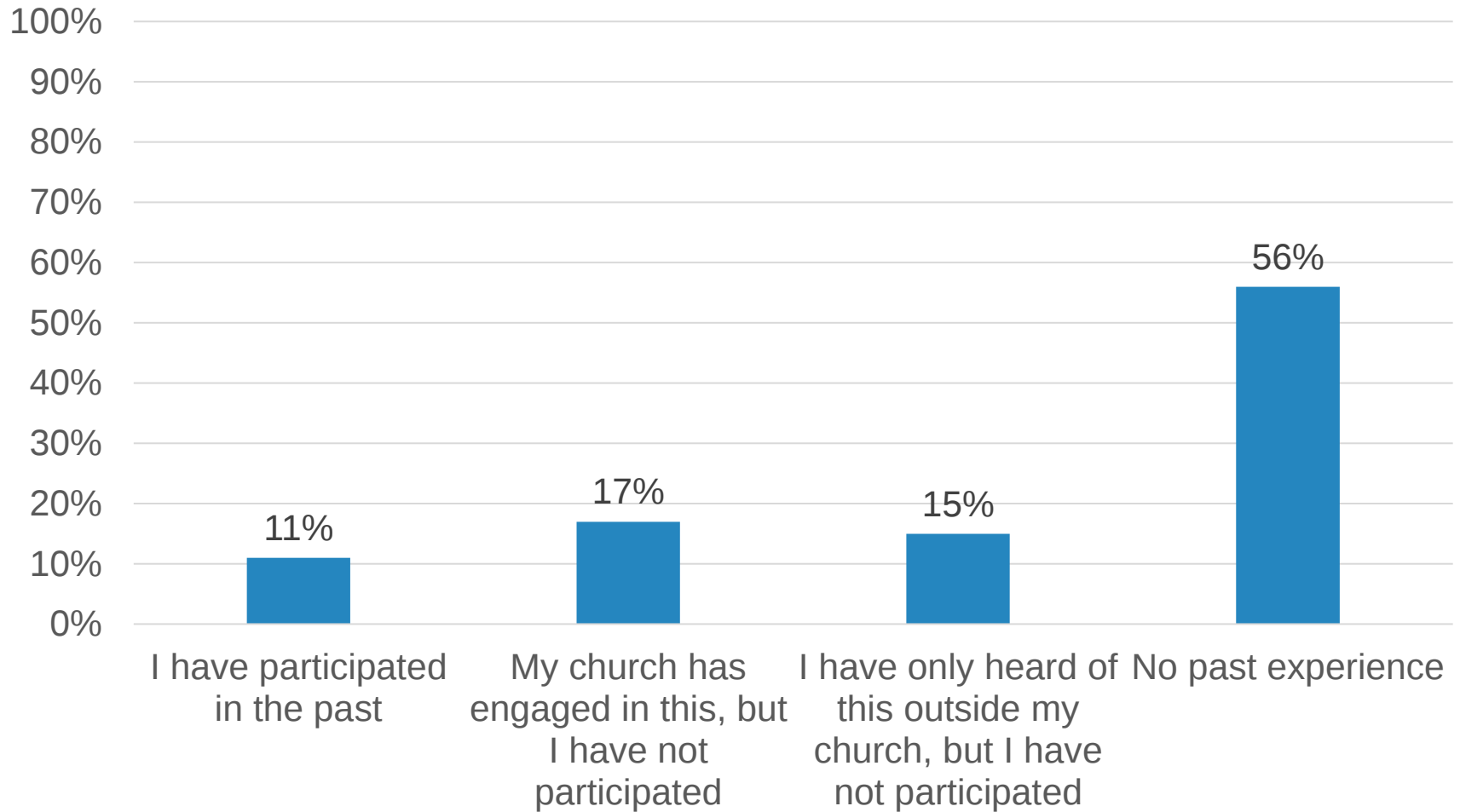
In-person visits to prisoners

Among Protestant Churchgoers



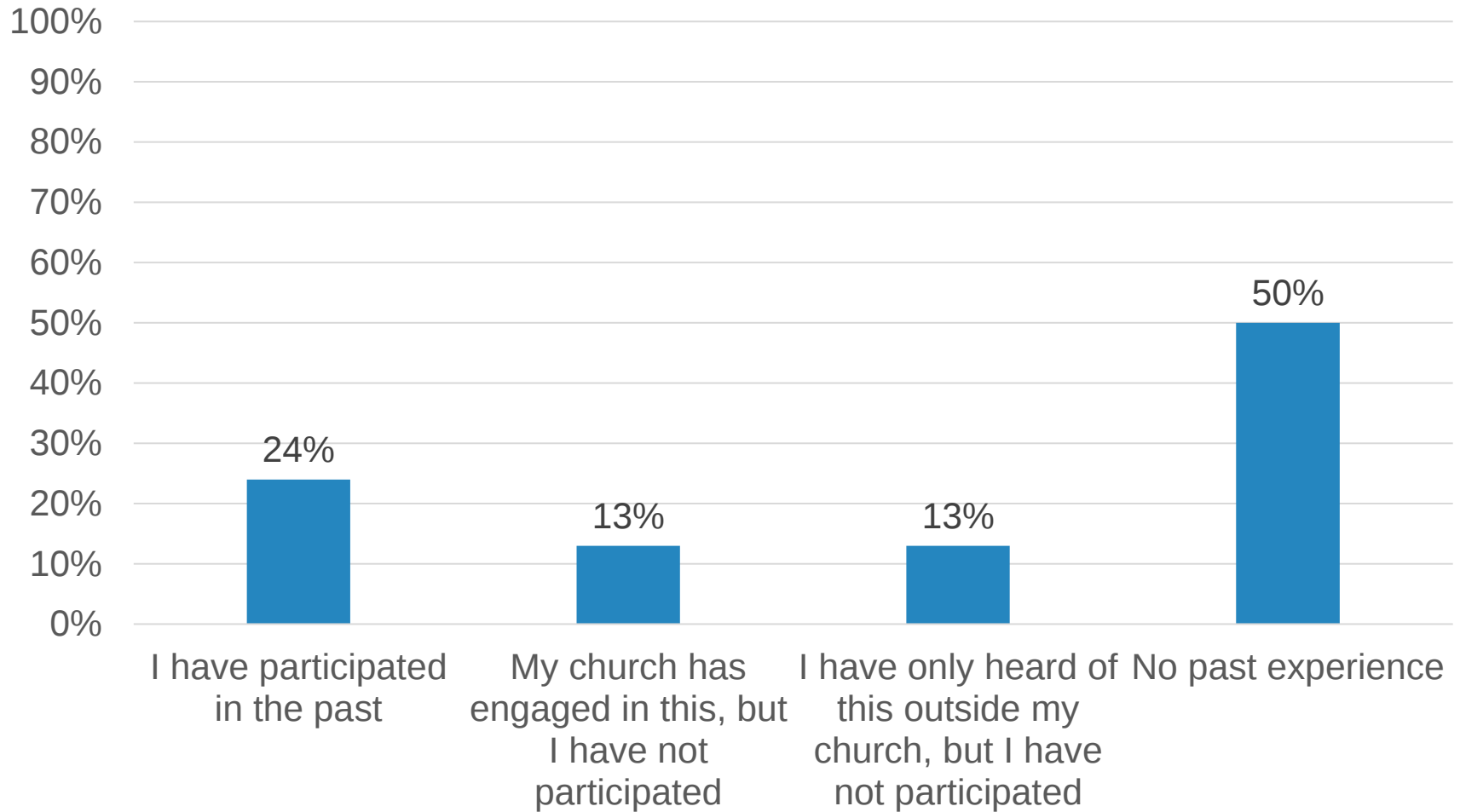
In-person ministry with prisoners

Among Protestant Churchgoers



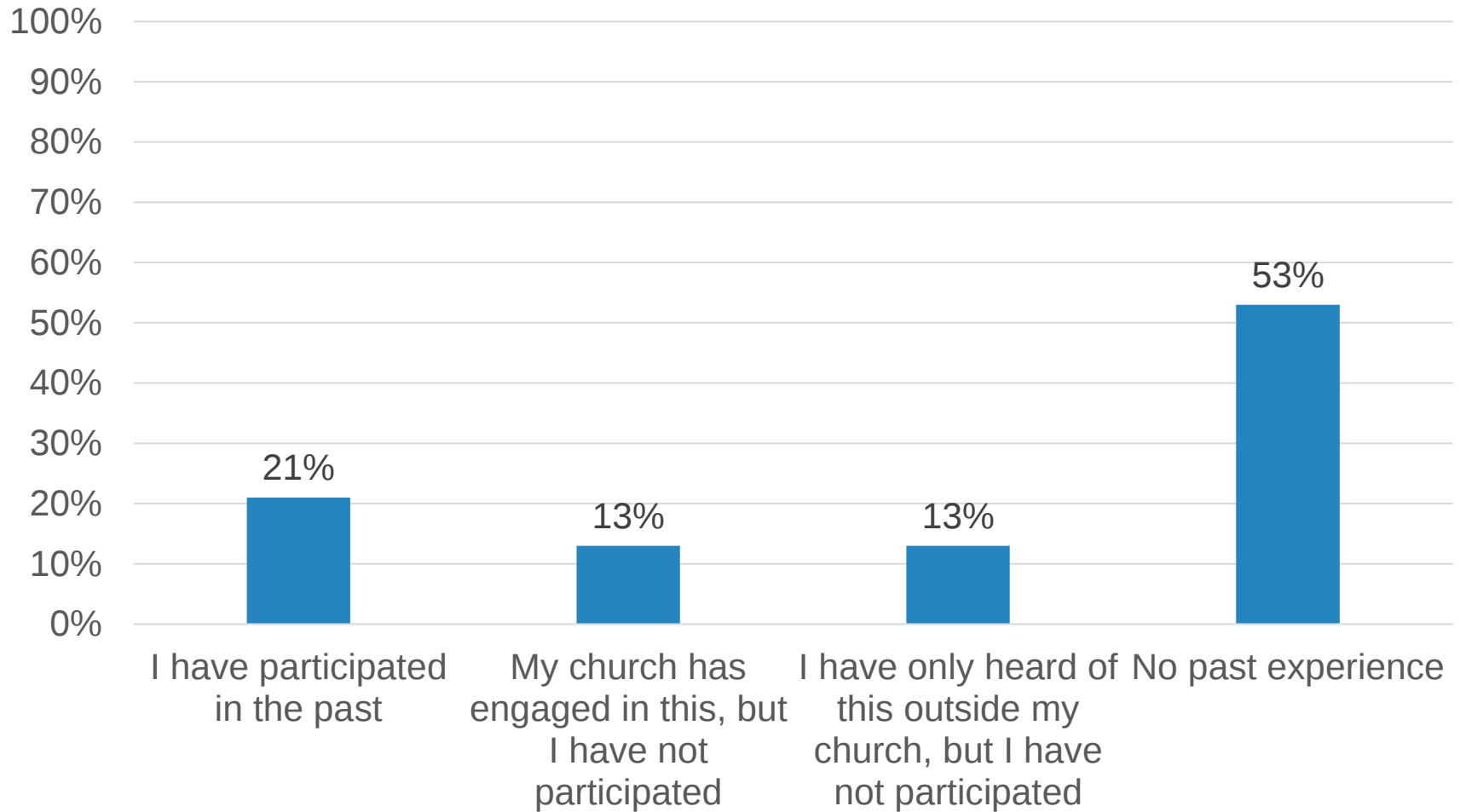
Assisting families with loved ones in prison

Among Protestant Churchgoers



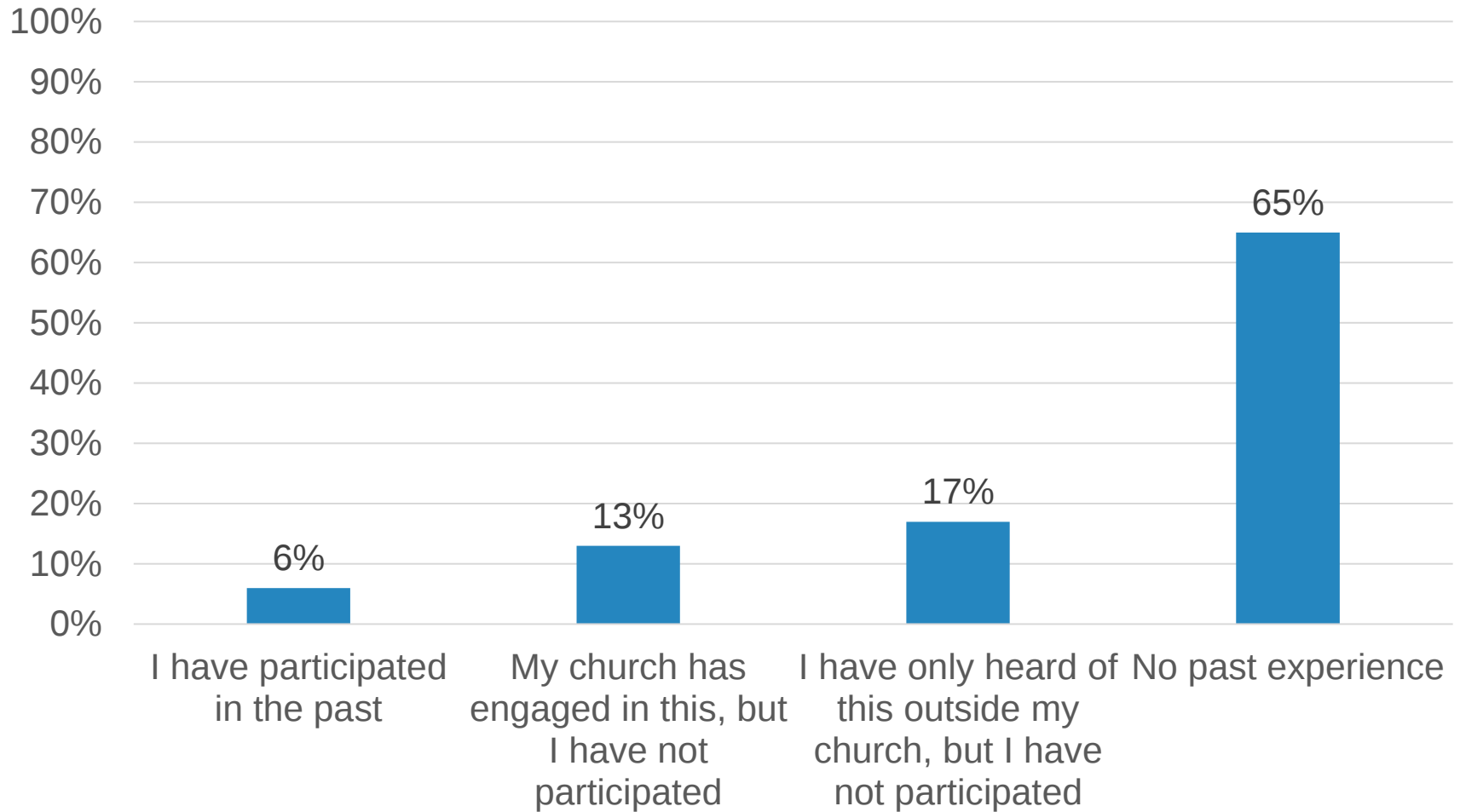
Assisting children with parents in prison

Among Protestant Churchgoers



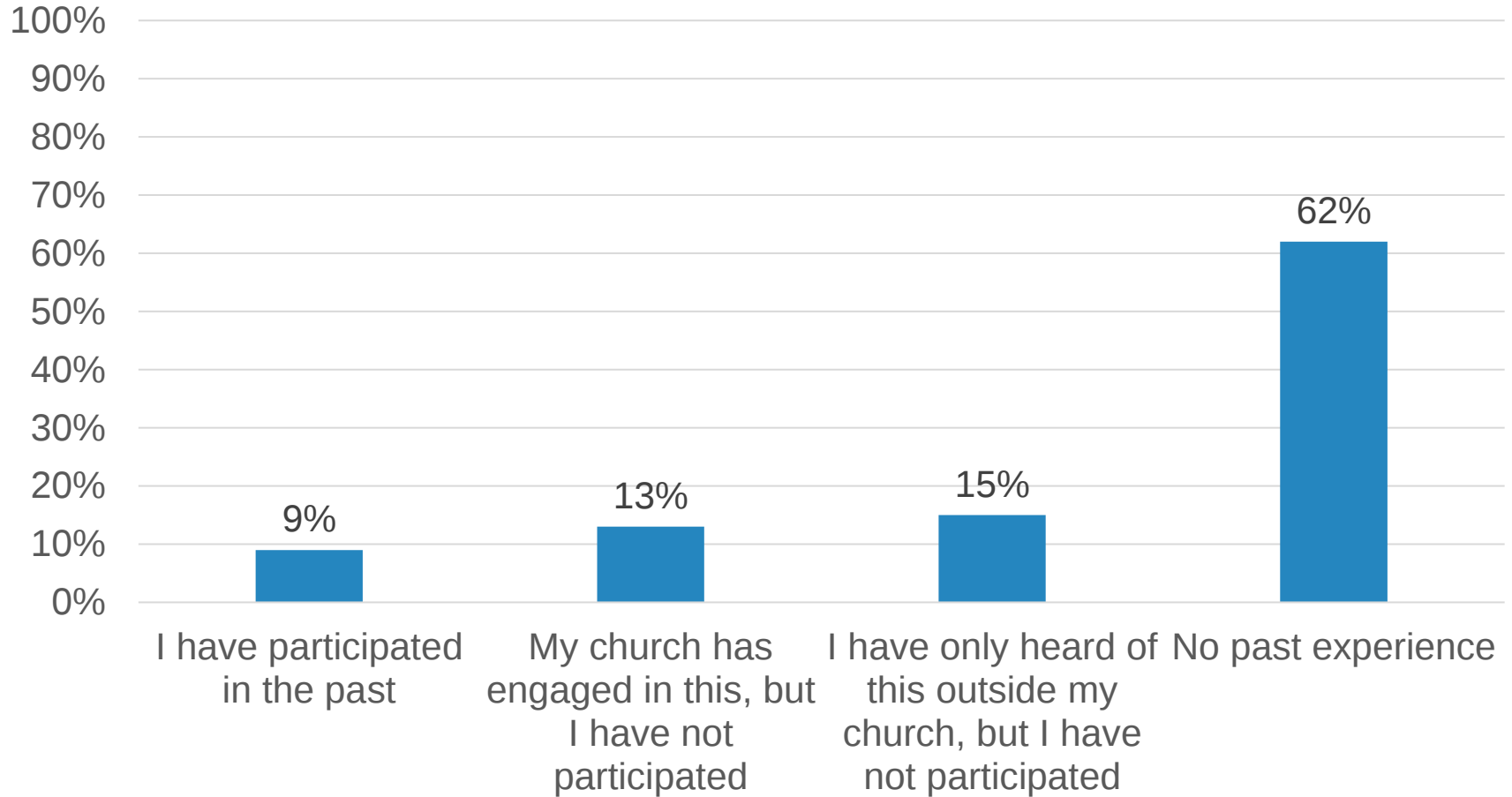
Foster parenting for children

Among Protestant Churchgoers



In-person aftercare ministry with former prisoners

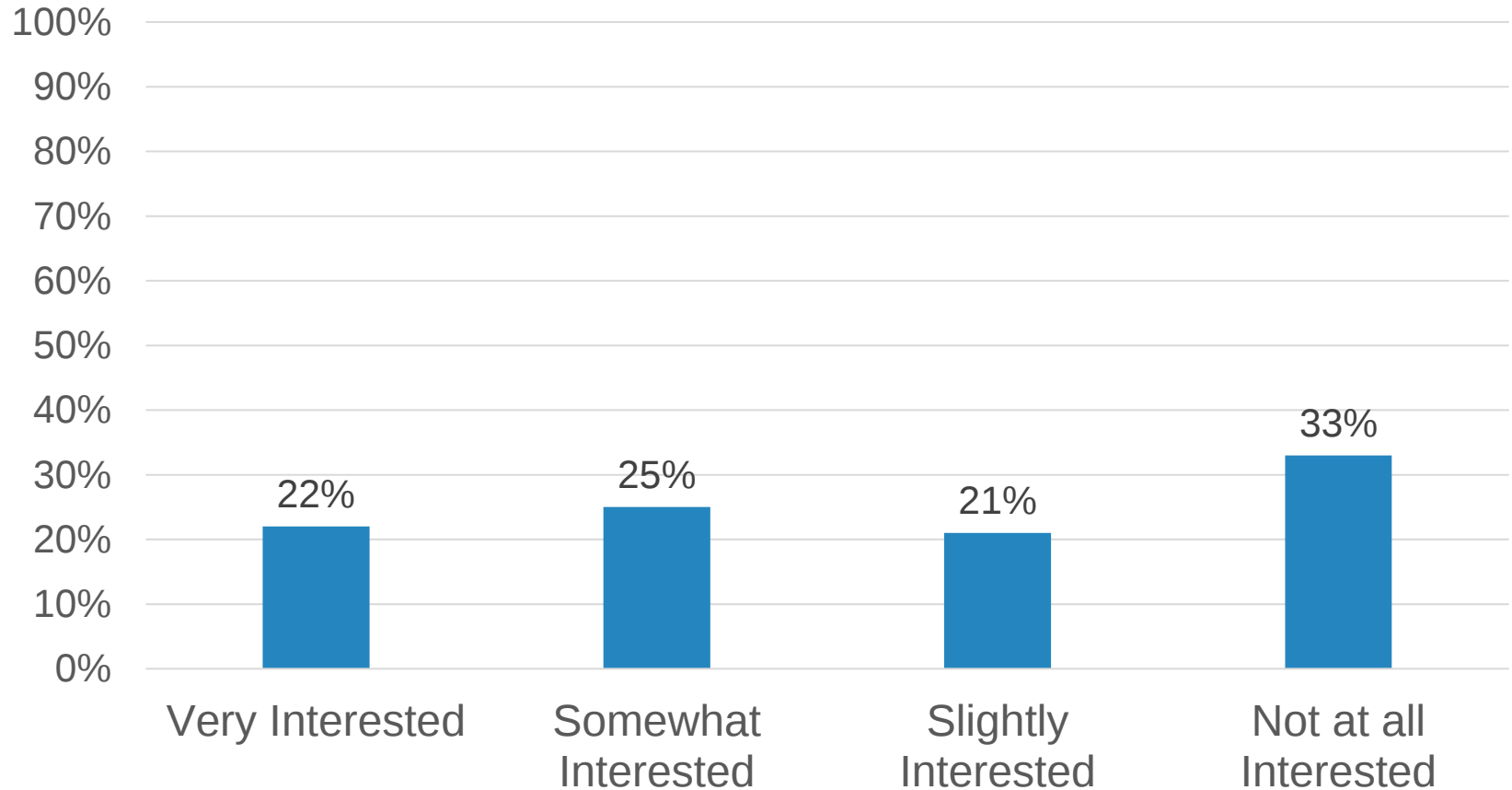
Among Protestant Churchgoers



Churchgoer Interest in Prison Ministry

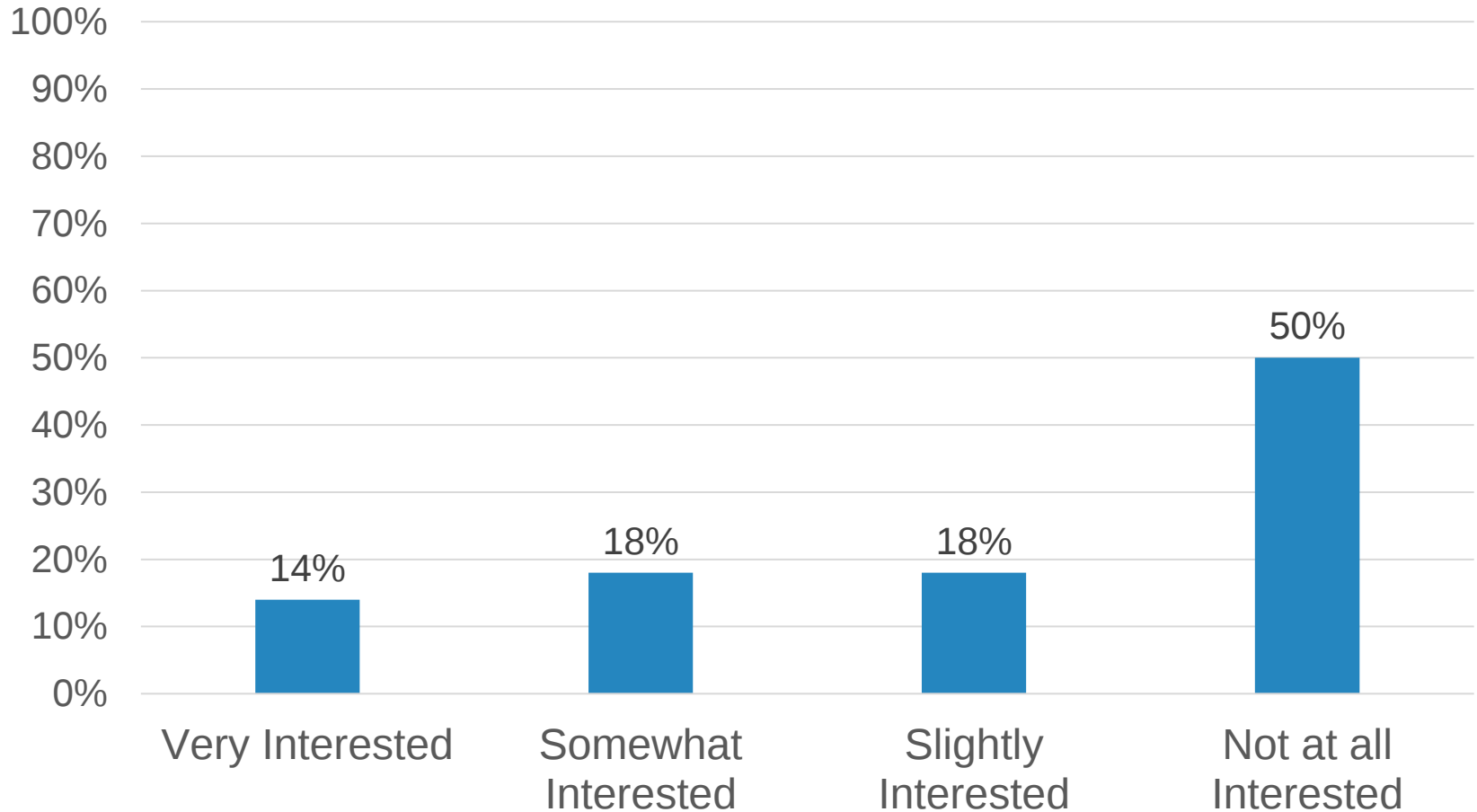
46% are at least somewhat interested in participating in writing letters or cards to prisoners

Among Protestant Churchgoers



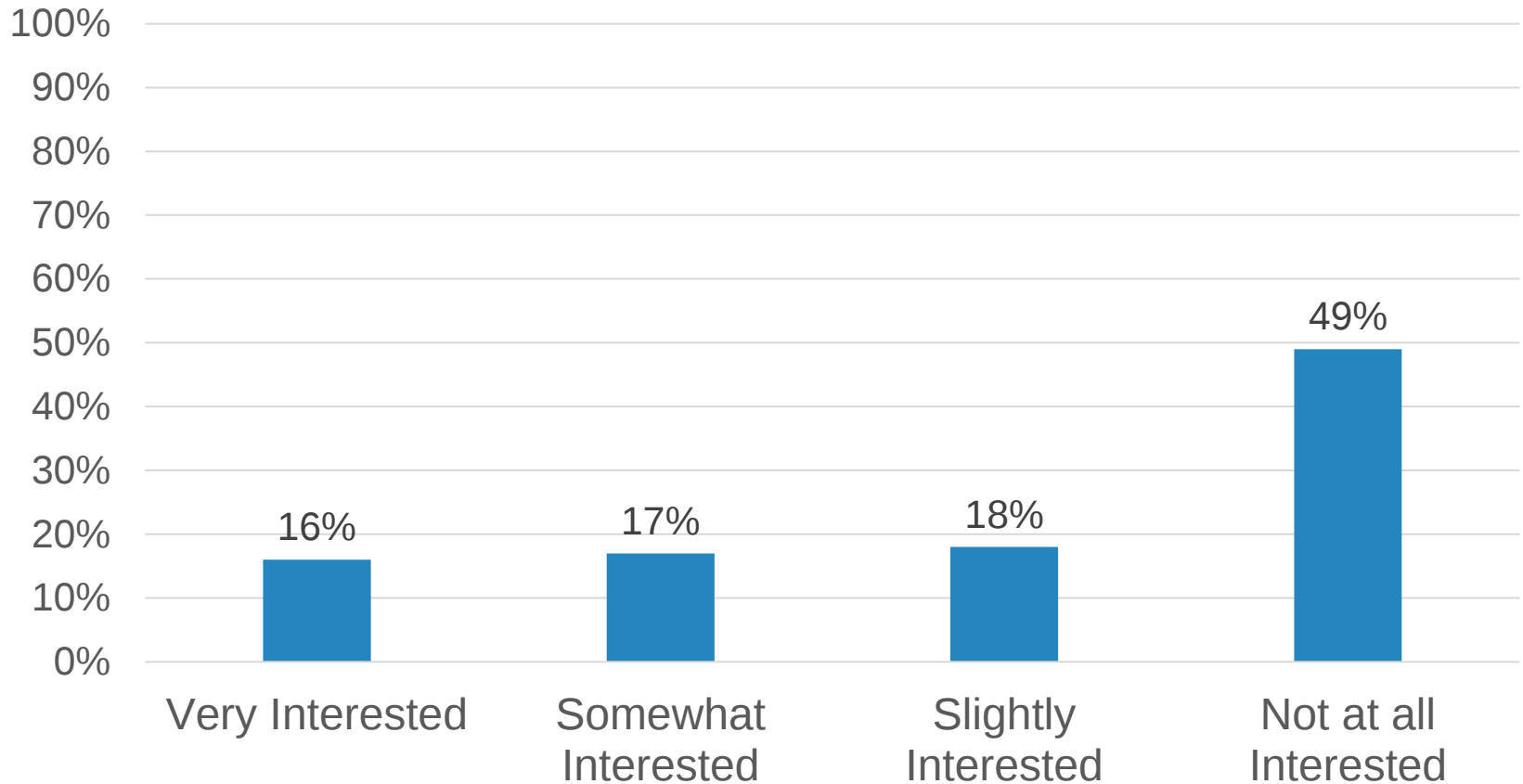
33% are at least somewhat interested in participating in in-person visits to prisoners

Among Protestant Churchgoers



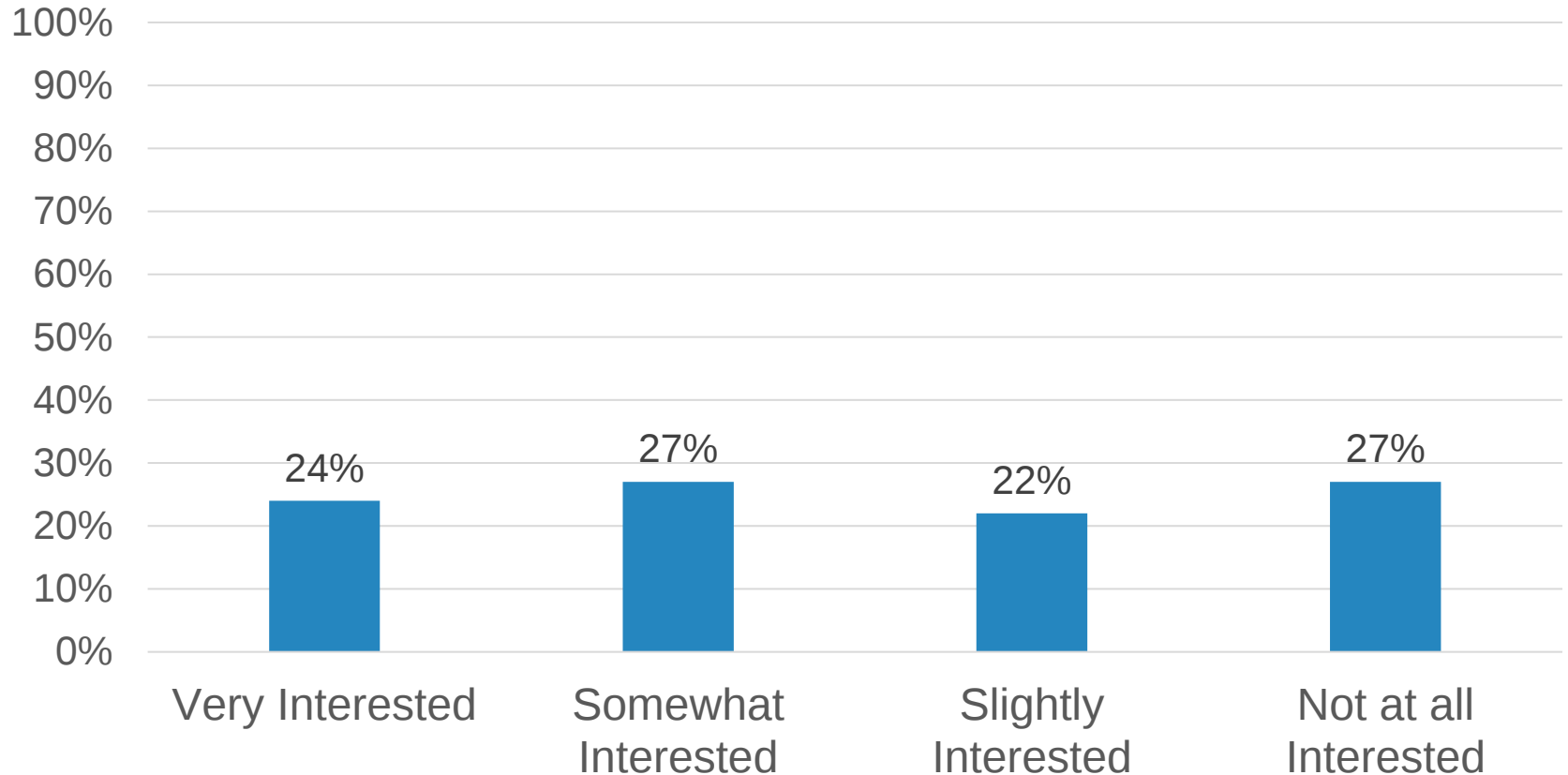
33% are at least somewhat interested in participating in in-person ministry with prisoners

Among Protestant Churchgoers



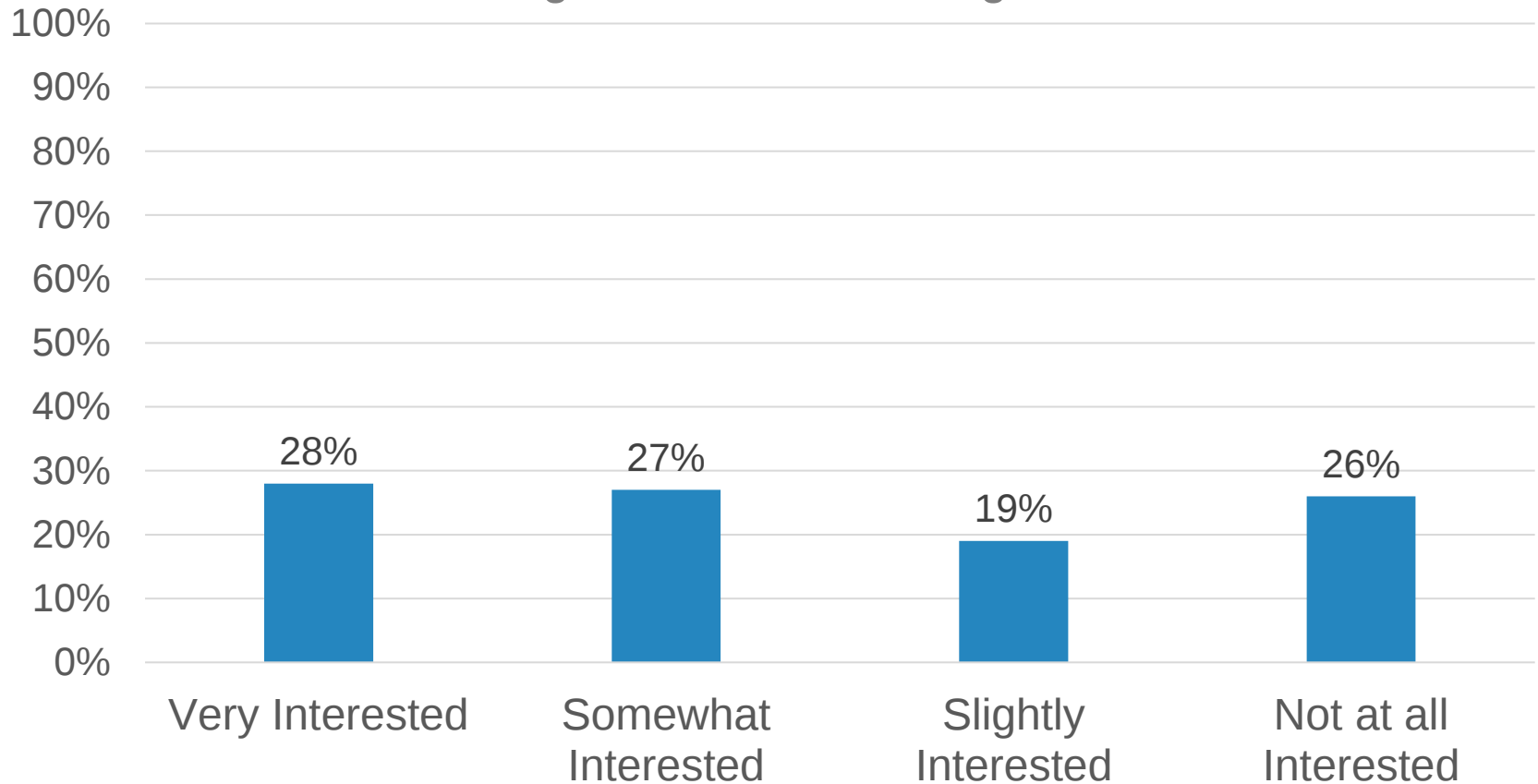
51% are at least somewhat interested in participating in assisting families with loved ones in prison

Among Protestant Churchgoers

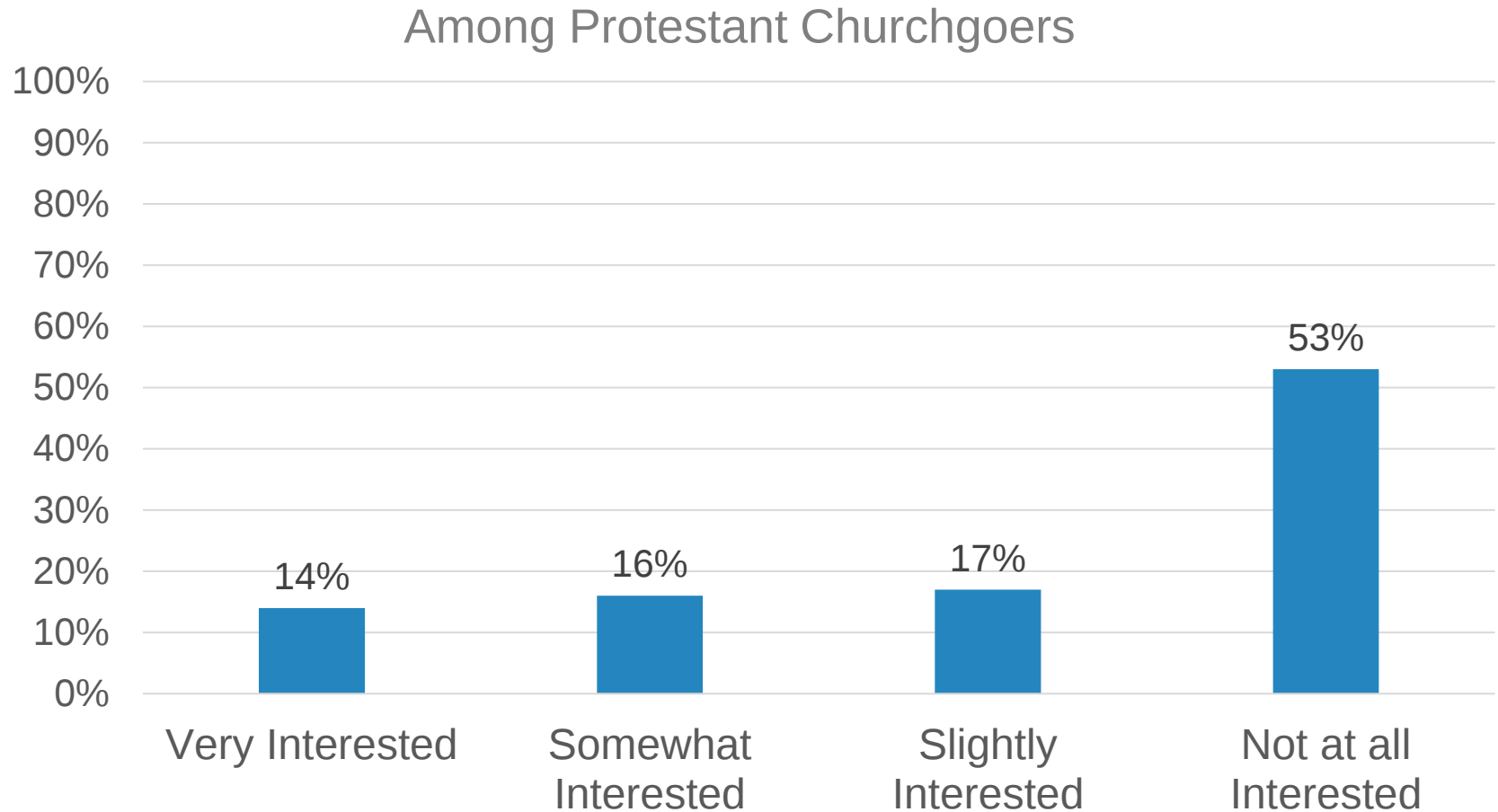


55% are at least somewhat interested in participating in assisting children with parents in prison

Among Protestant Churchgoers

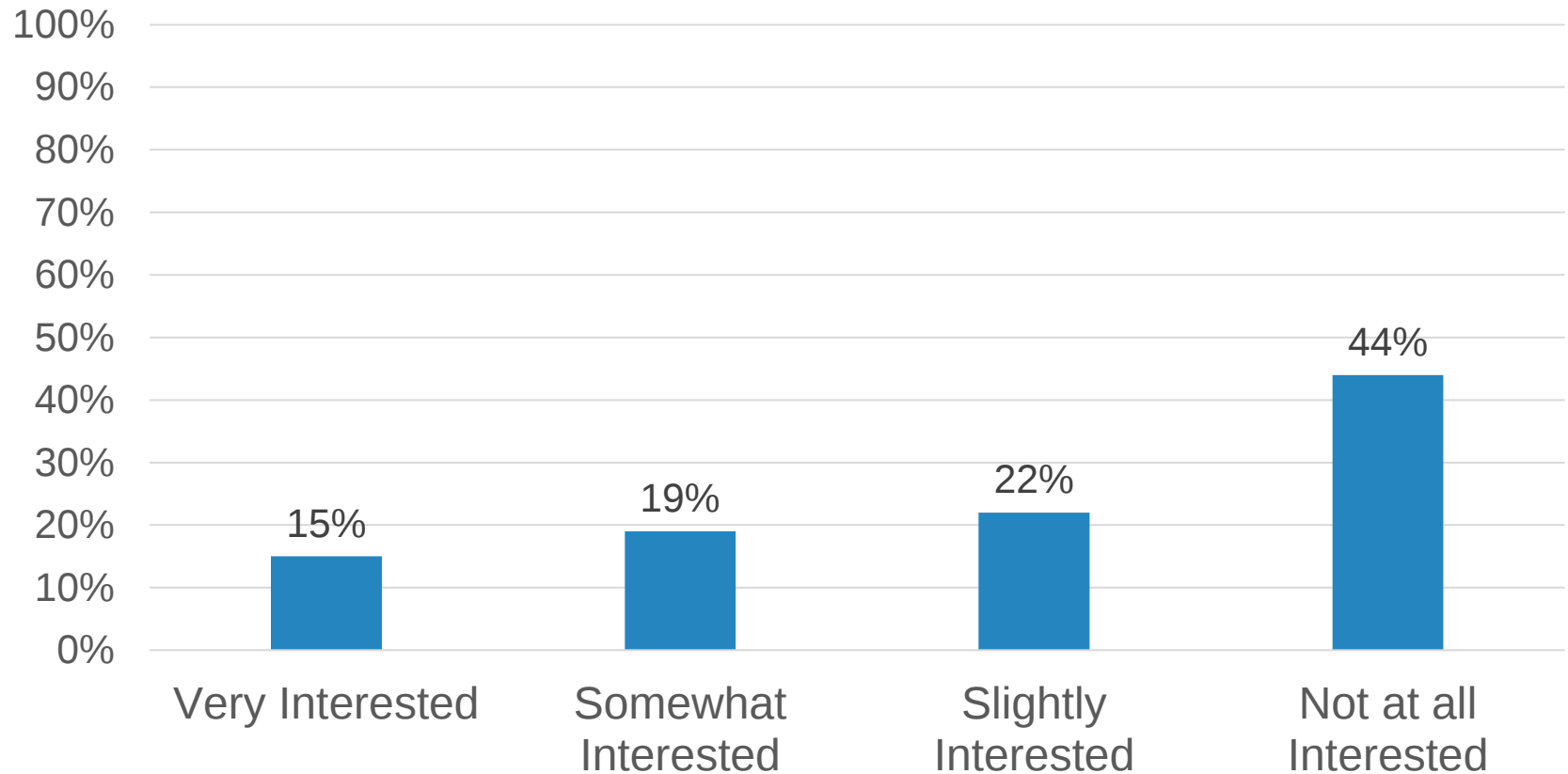


30% are at least somewhat interested in participating in foster parenting for children



34% are at least somewhat interested in participating in In-person aftercare ministry with former prisoners

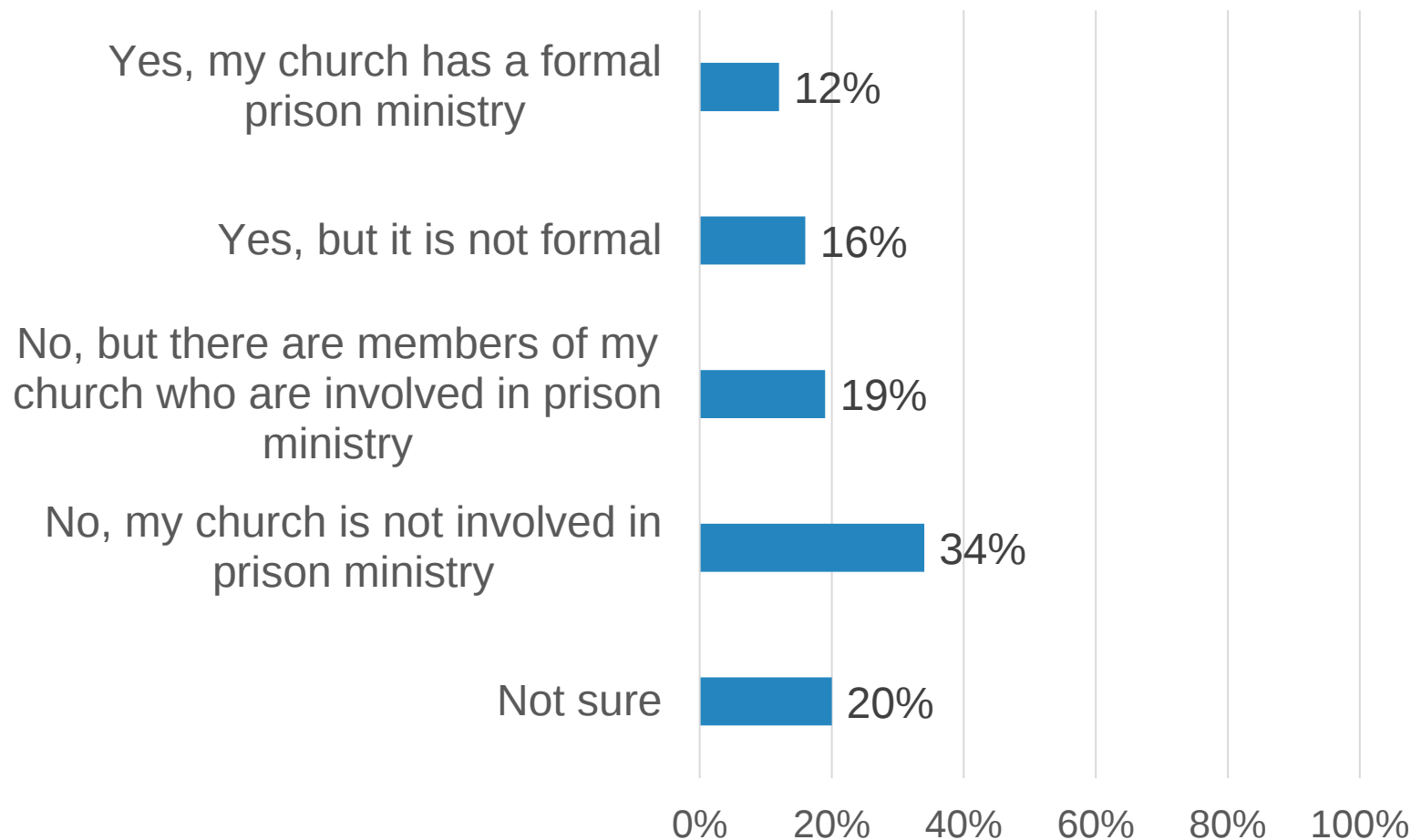
Among Protestant Churchgoers



Engagement of Churches in Prison Ministry

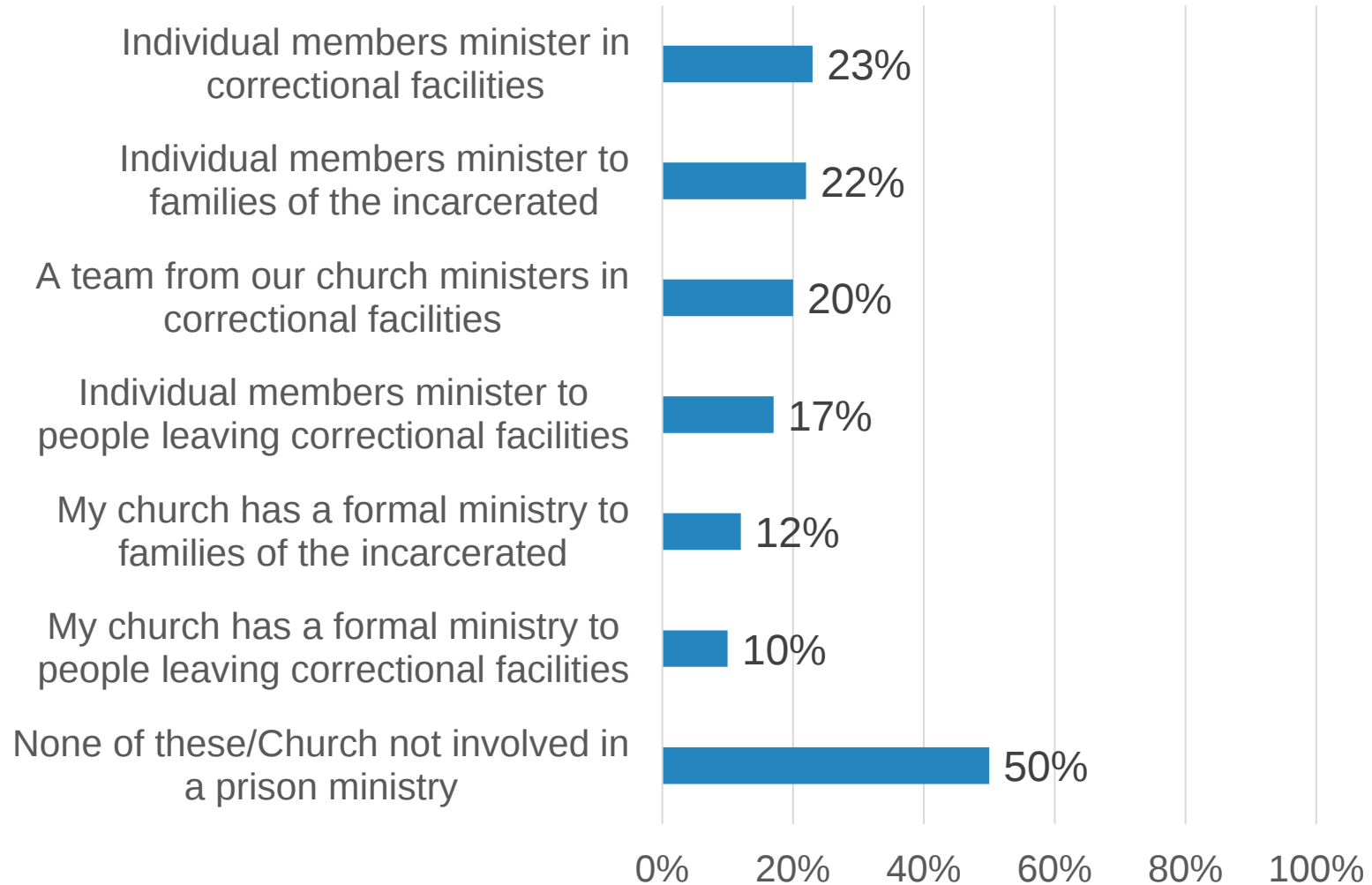
47% of Protestant churchgoers report individuals or a ministry at their church conducts prison ministry

Among Protestant Churchgoers



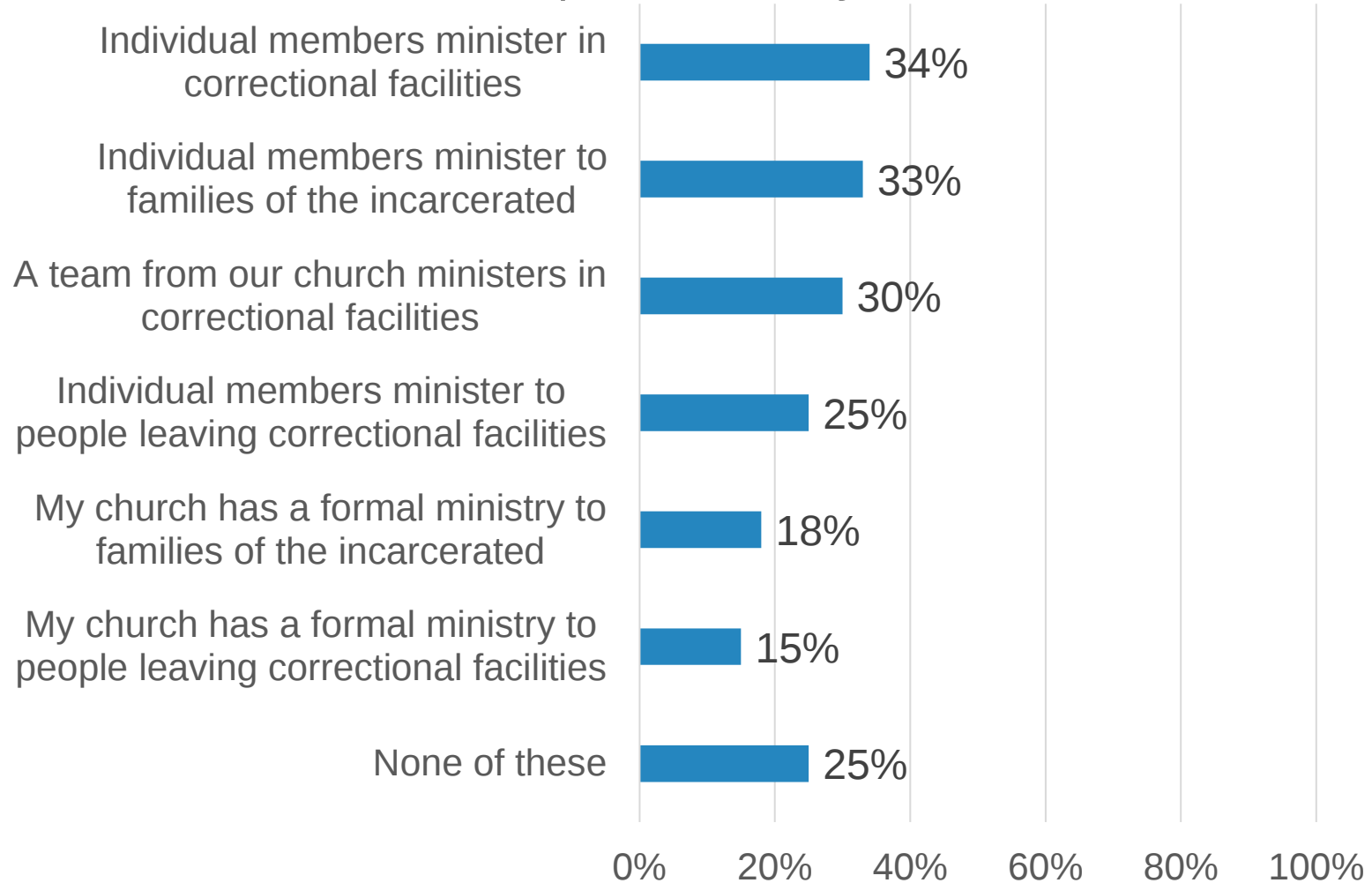
“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers



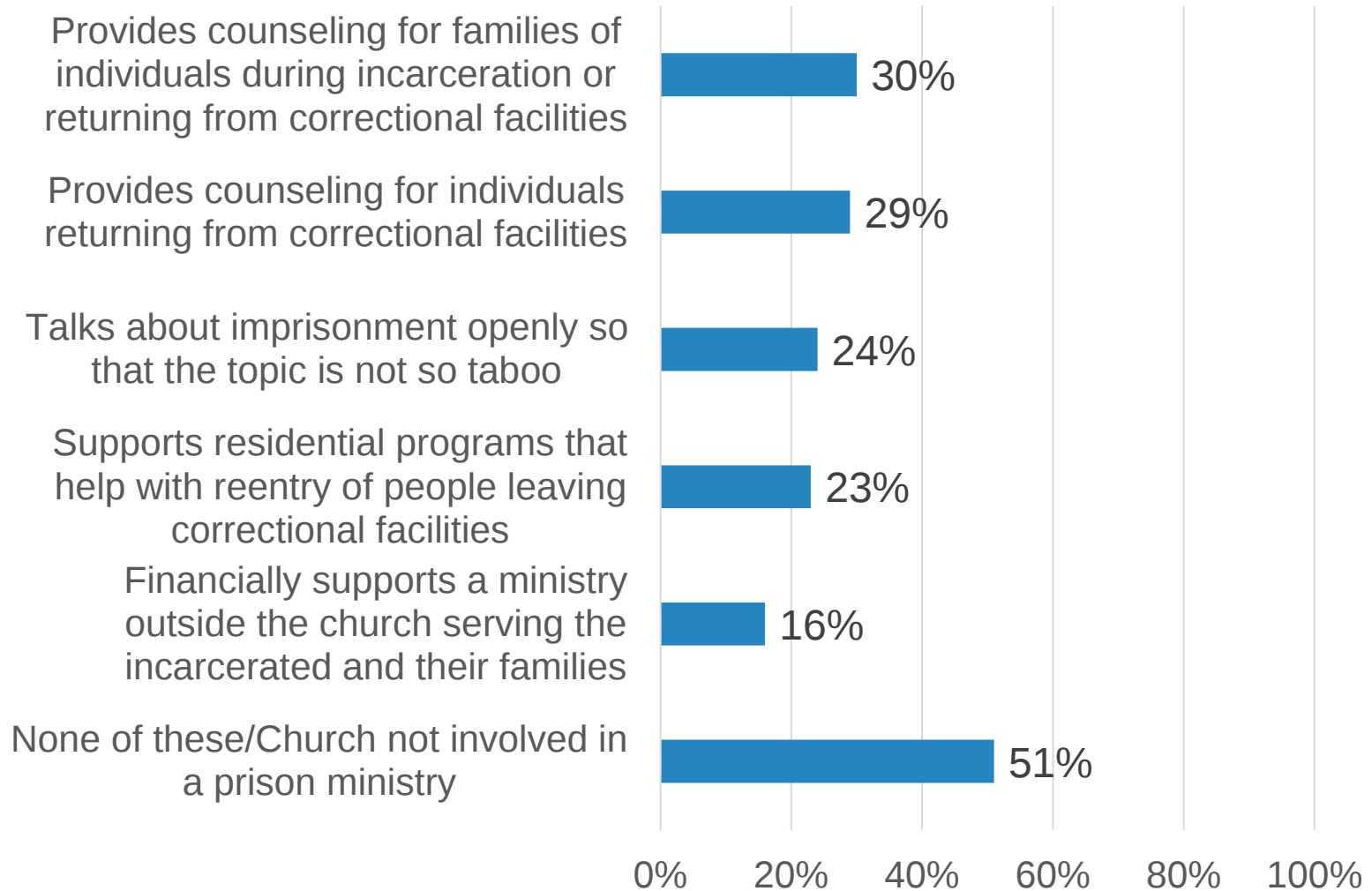
“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers in a church with someone doing prison ministry



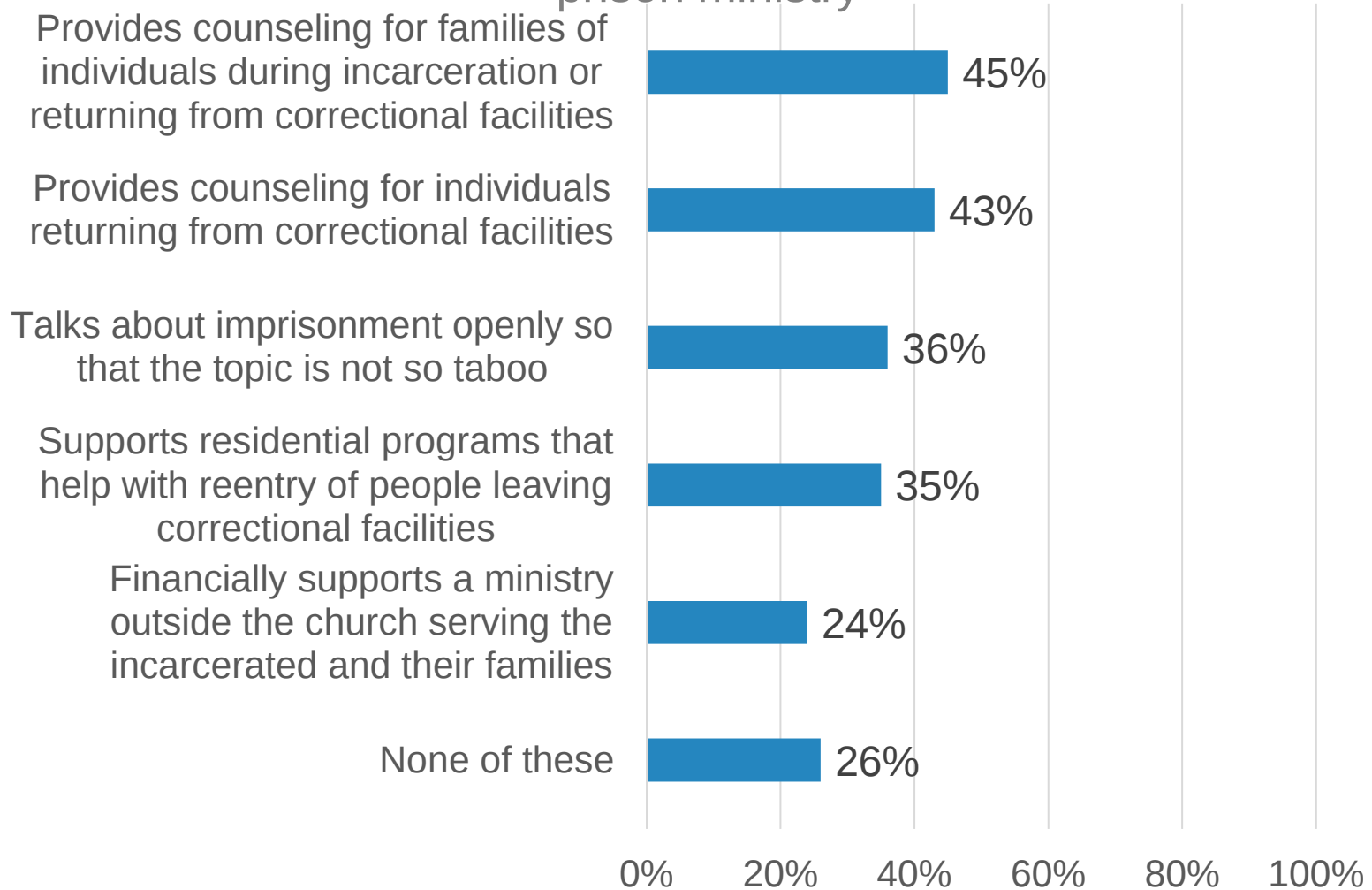
“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

Among Protestant churchgoers



“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

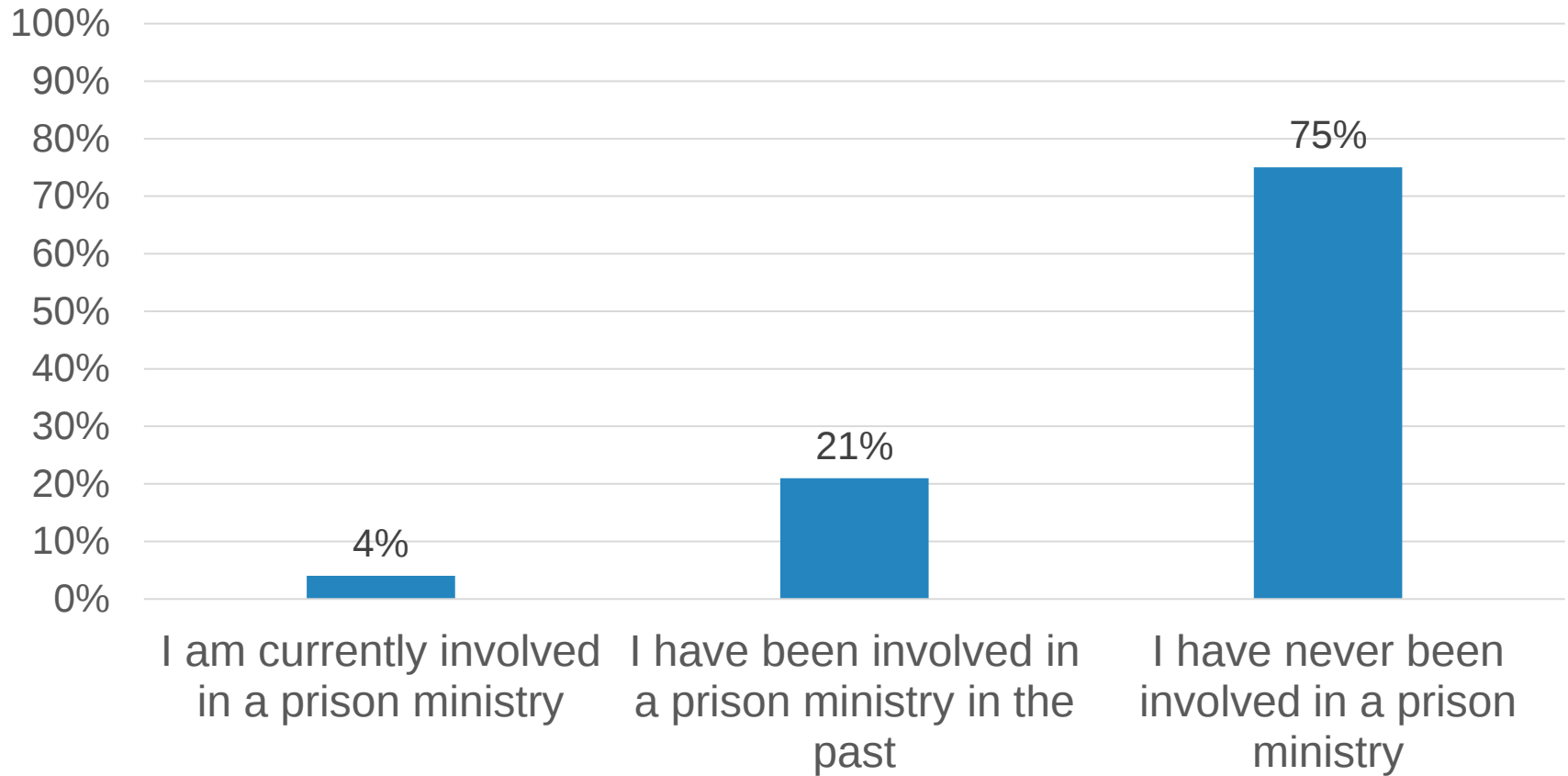
Among Protestant churchgoers in a church with someone doing prison ministry



Individual Participation in Prison Ministry

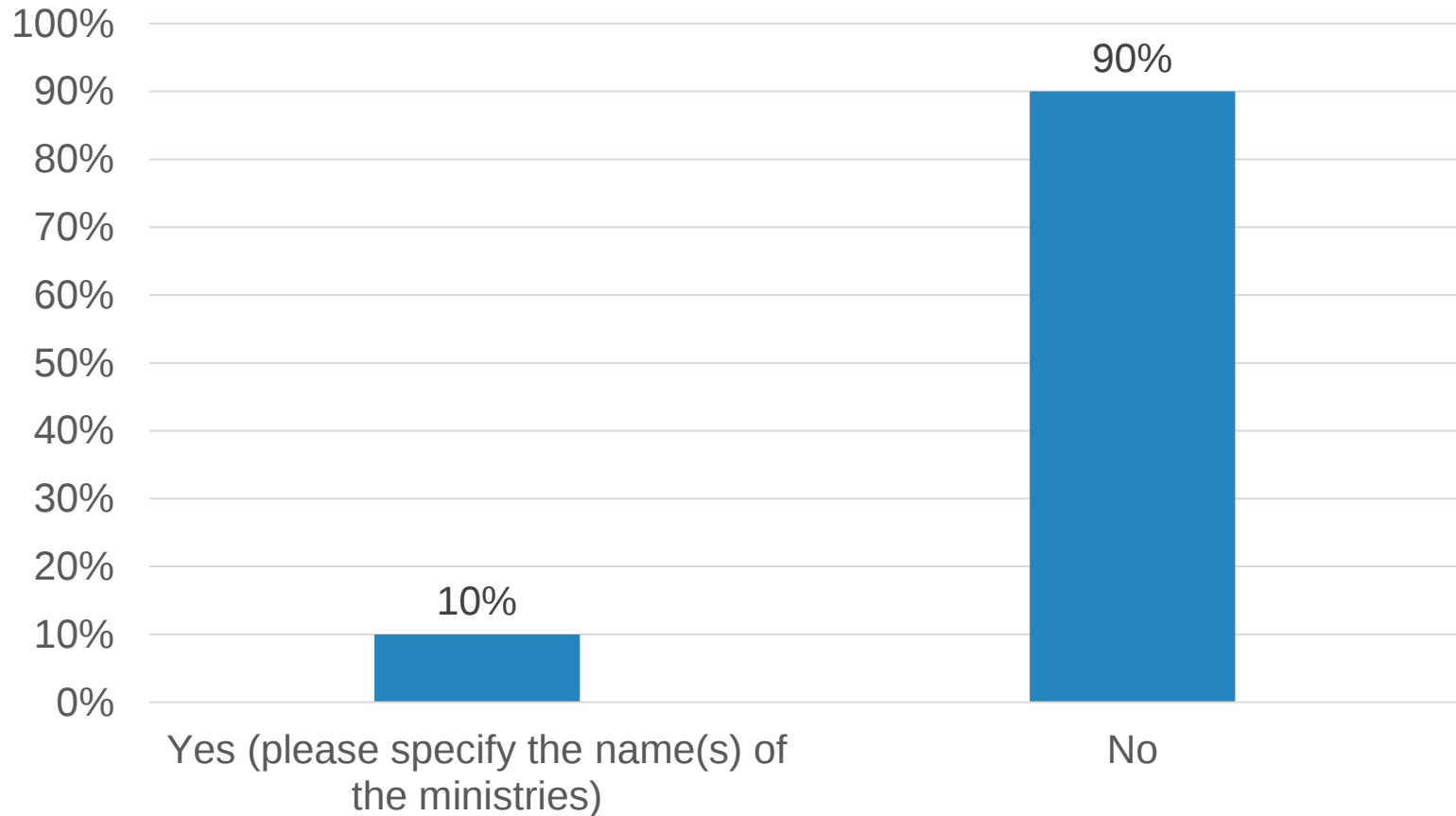
A quarter of Protestant churchgoers (25%) report having been involved in prison ministry in the past or present

Among Protestant Churchgoers



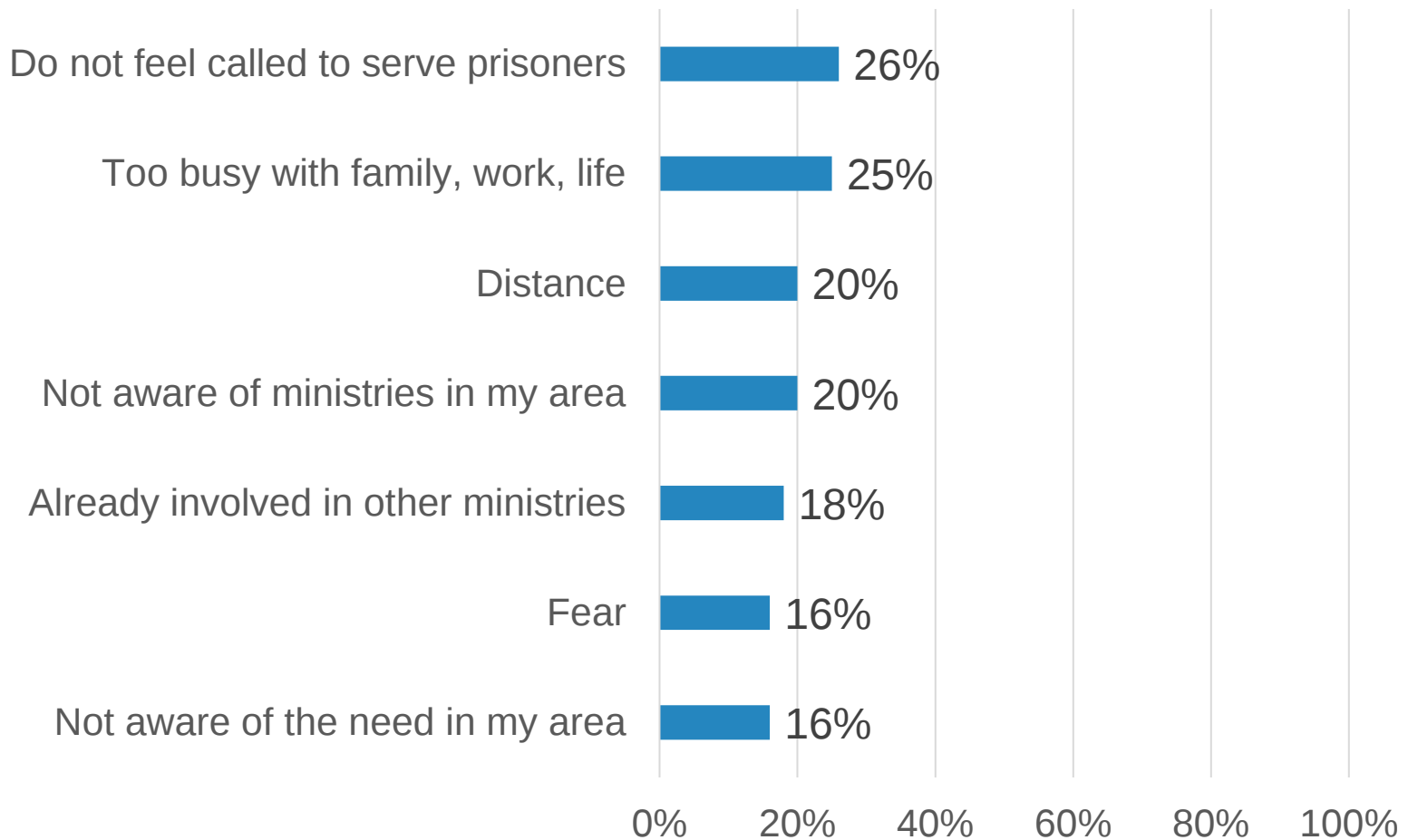
10% of Protestant churchgoers have been involved in prison ministry activities or training

Among Protestant Churchgoers



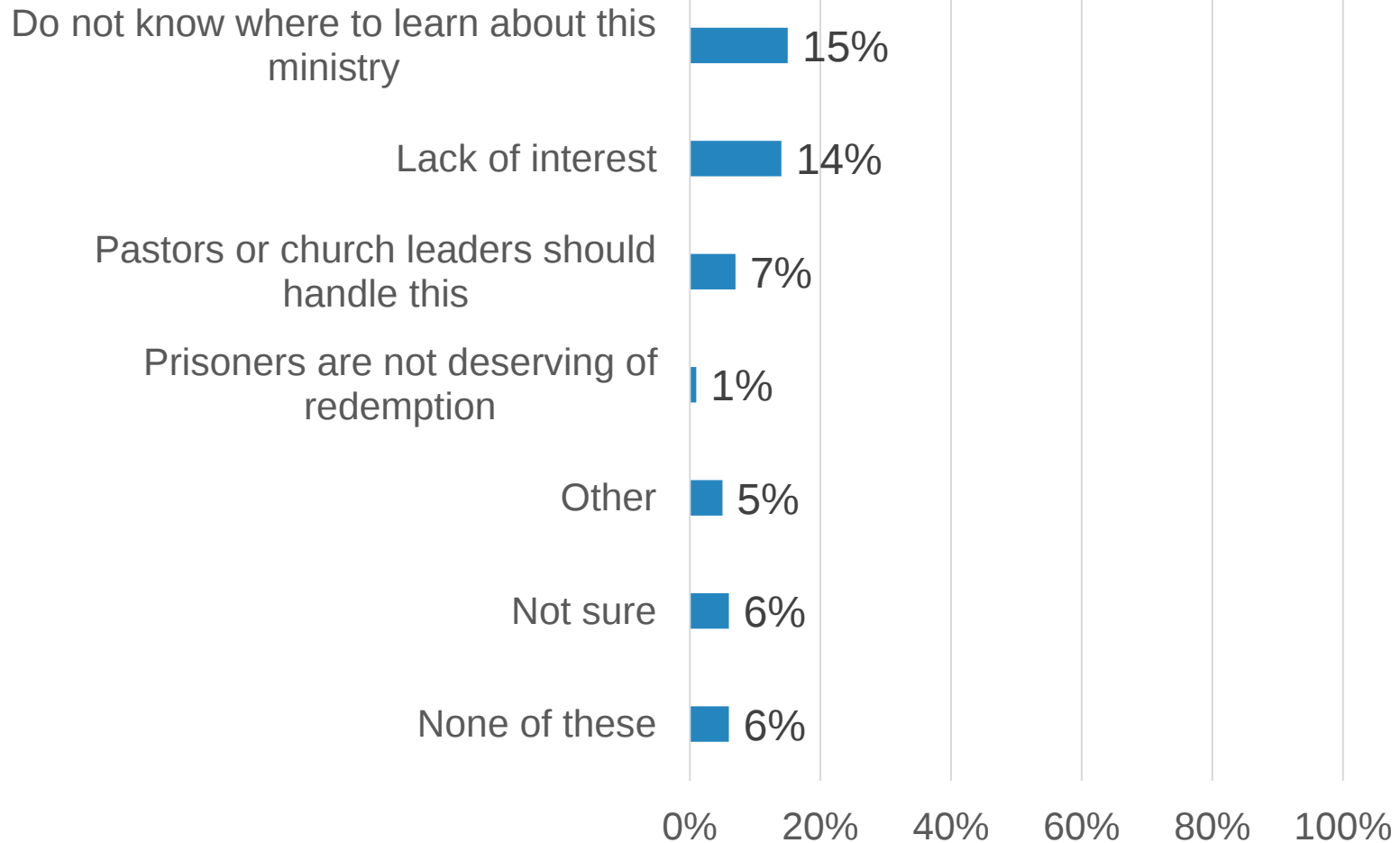
“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry



“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?” *continued*

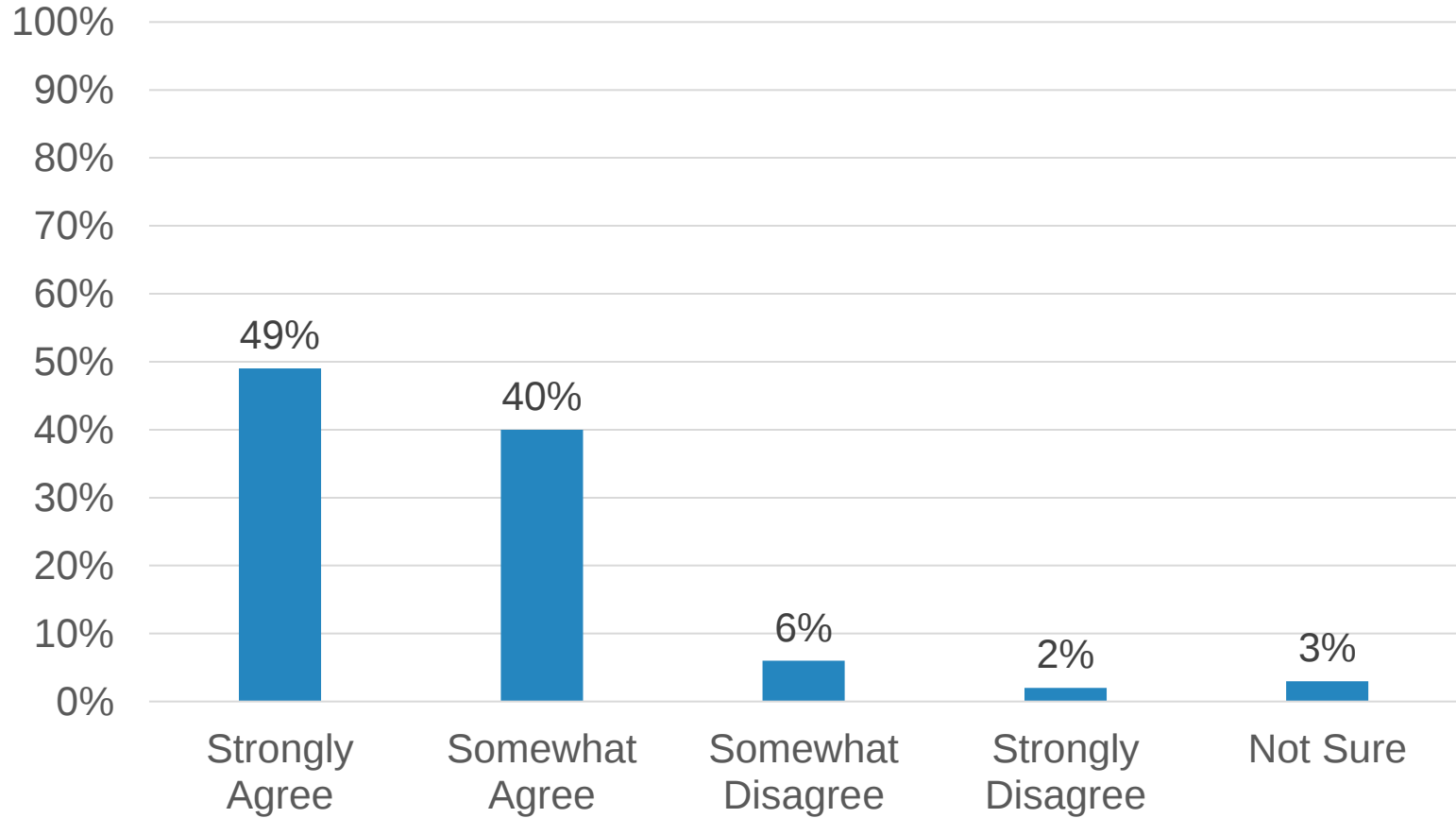
Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry



Beliefs of Churchgoers

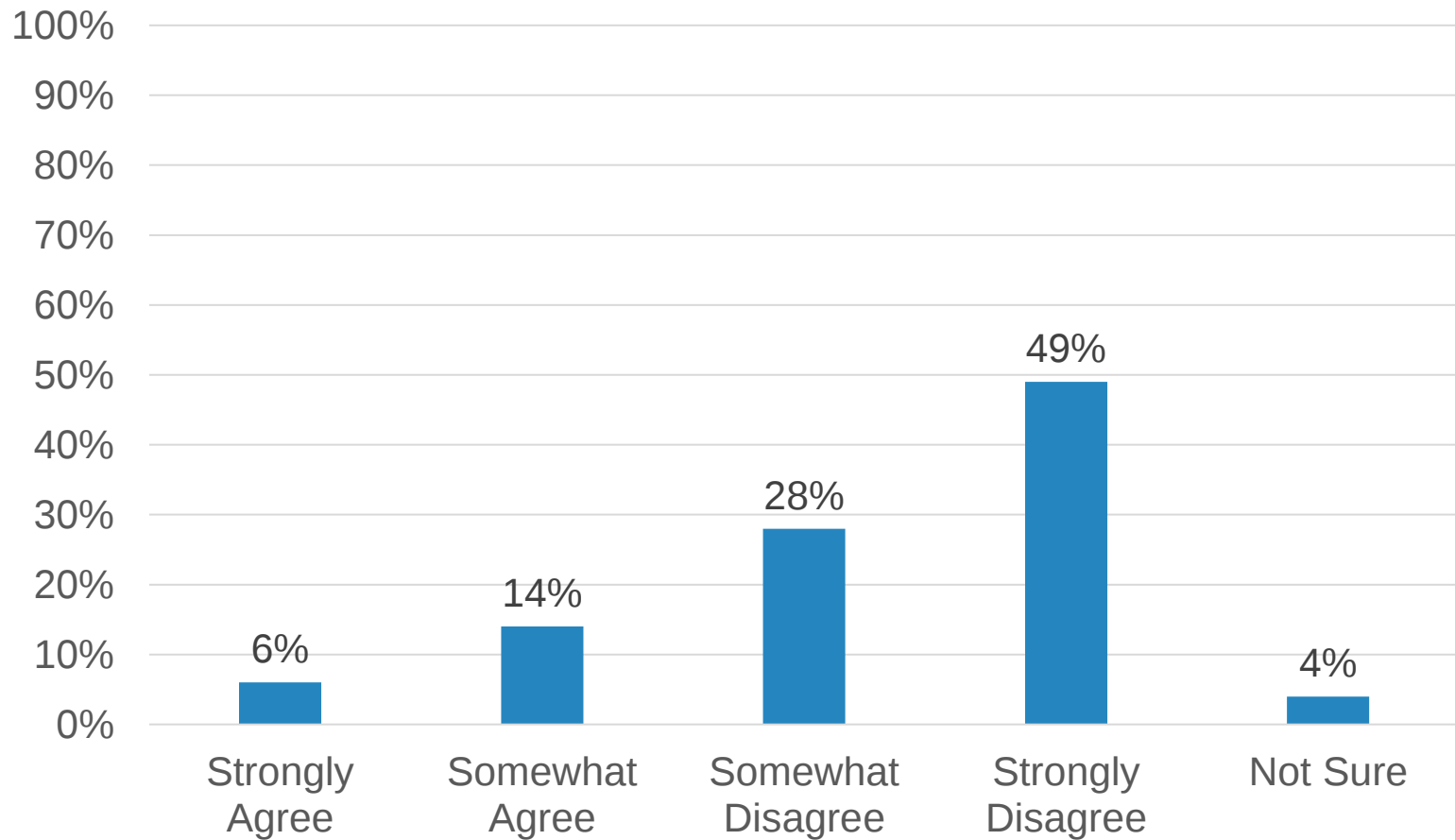
89% agree that most people with a felony can go on to lead productive lives with help and hard work

Among Protestant Churchgoers



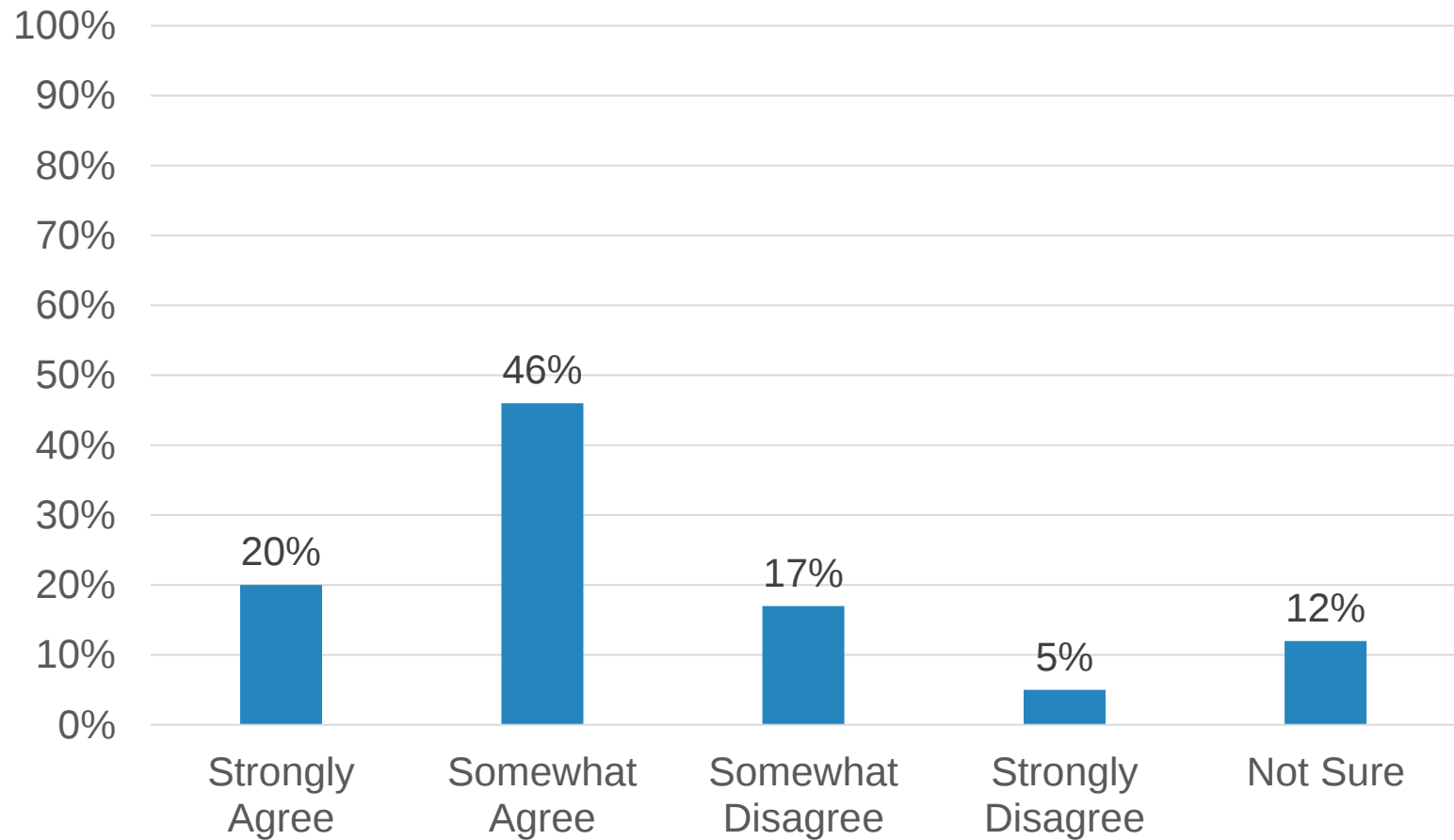
77% do not believe that most people who commit crimes have little hope of changing for the better

Among Protestant Churchgoers



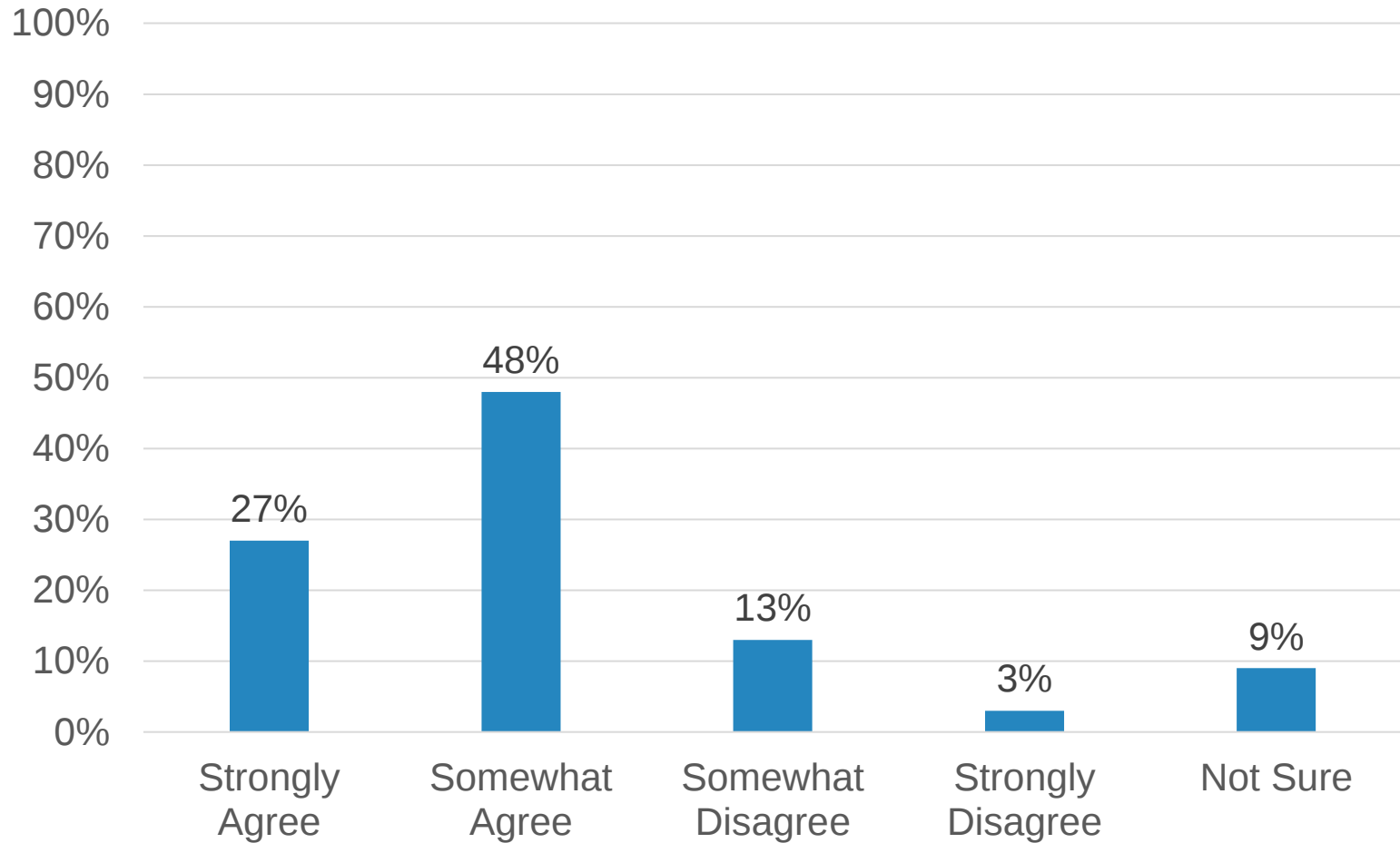
66% agree that local churches have a responsibility to care for the incarcerated in their community

Among Protestant Churchgoers



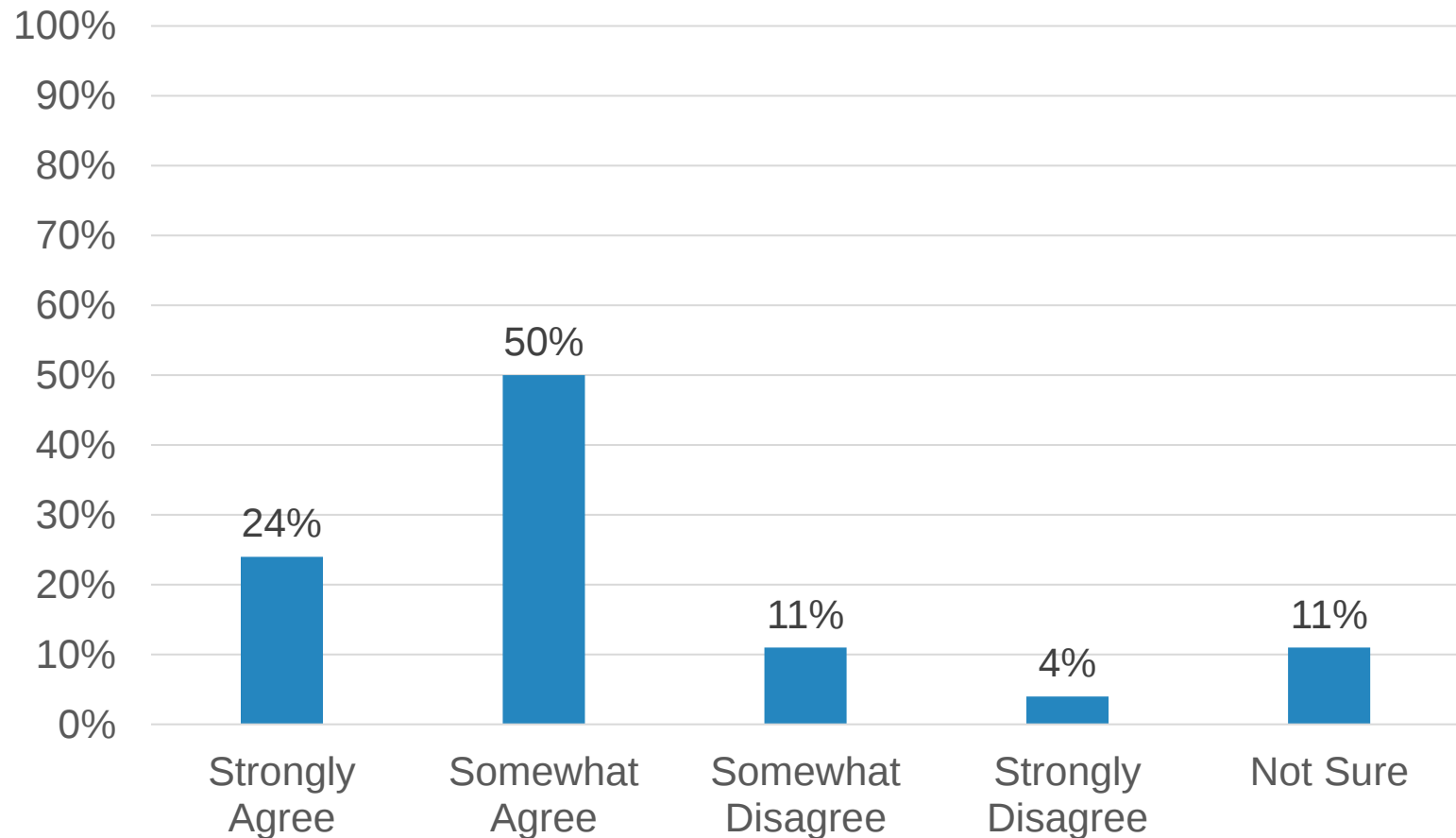
75% agree local churches have a responsibility to care for families and children of the incarcerated

Among Protestant Churchgoers



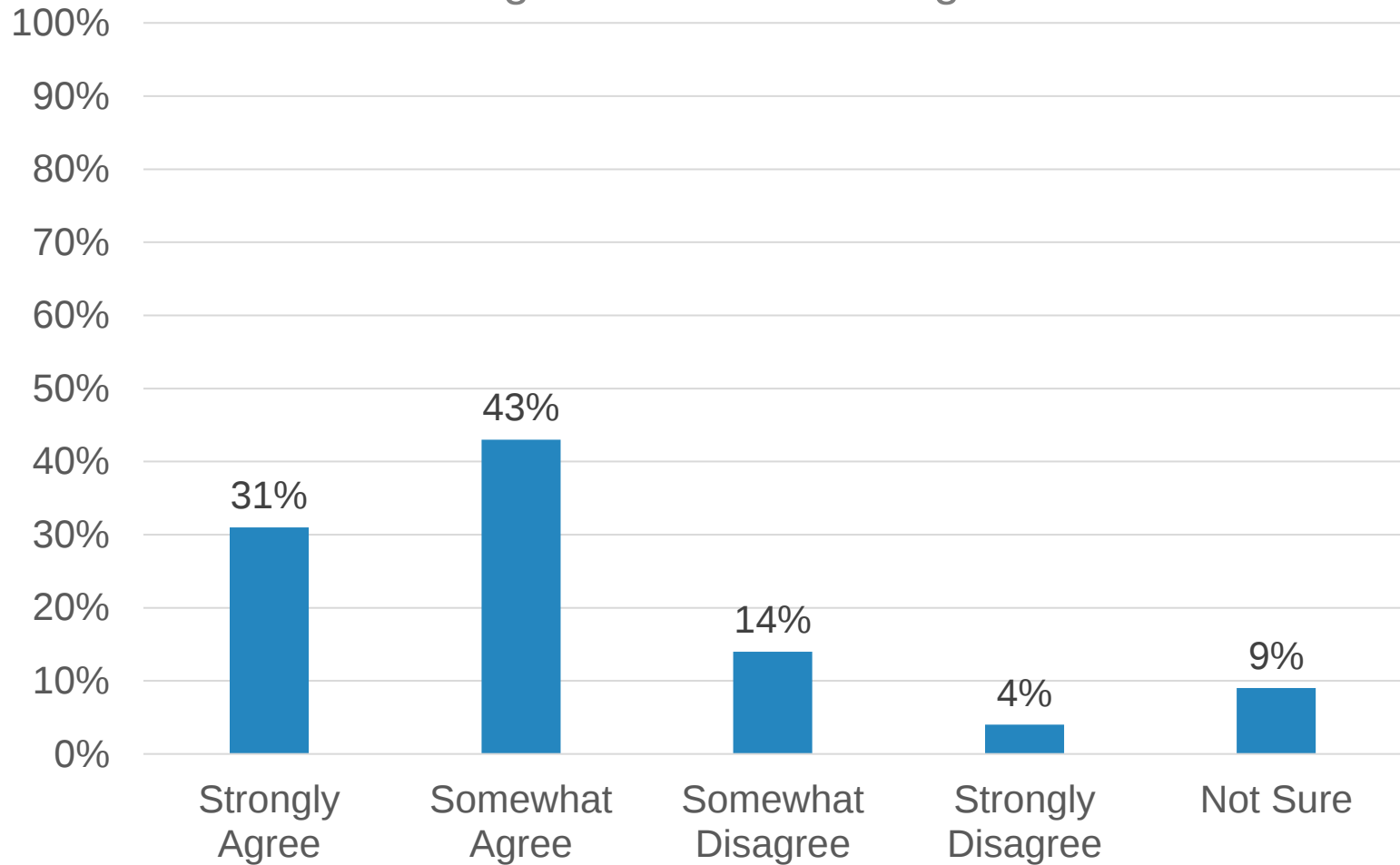
74% agree local churches have a responsibility to provide resources and support for youth and adults leaving correctional facilities

Among Protestant Churchgoers



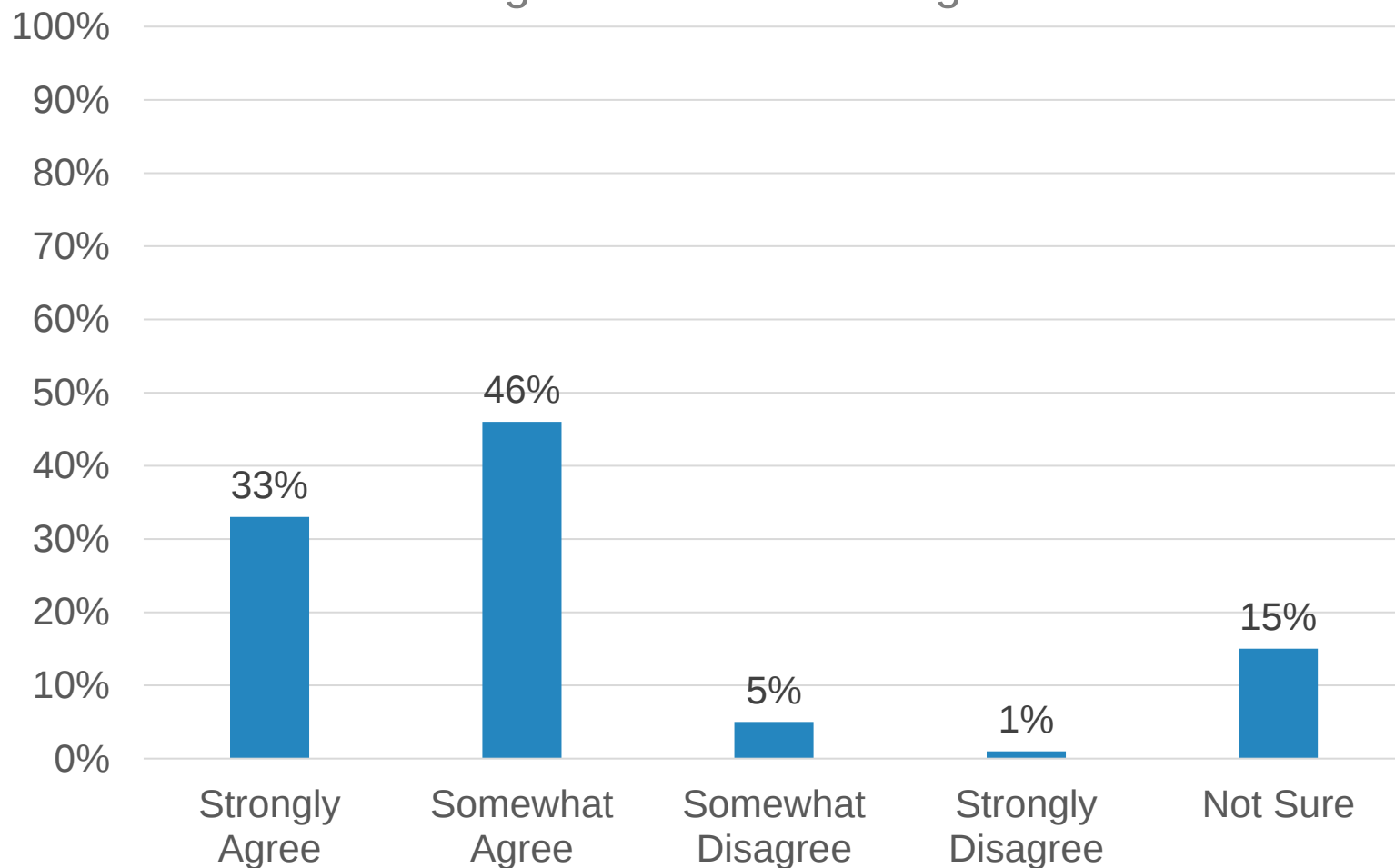
74% say that seeking justice requires prison or jail time for those guilty of crimes

Among Protestant Churchgoers



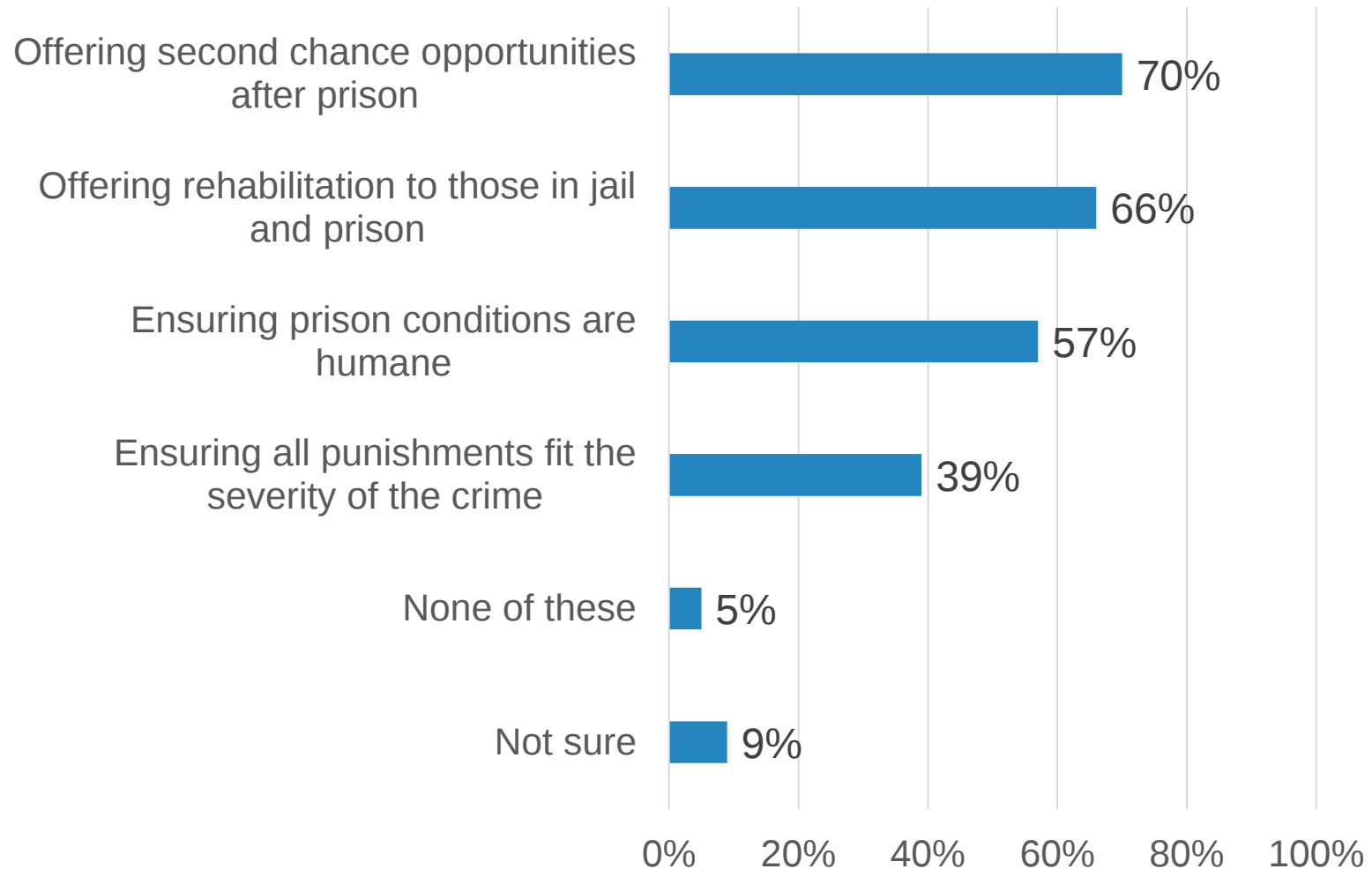
79% say that prisoners can bless community volunteers who serve in prison ministry

Among Protestant Churchgoers



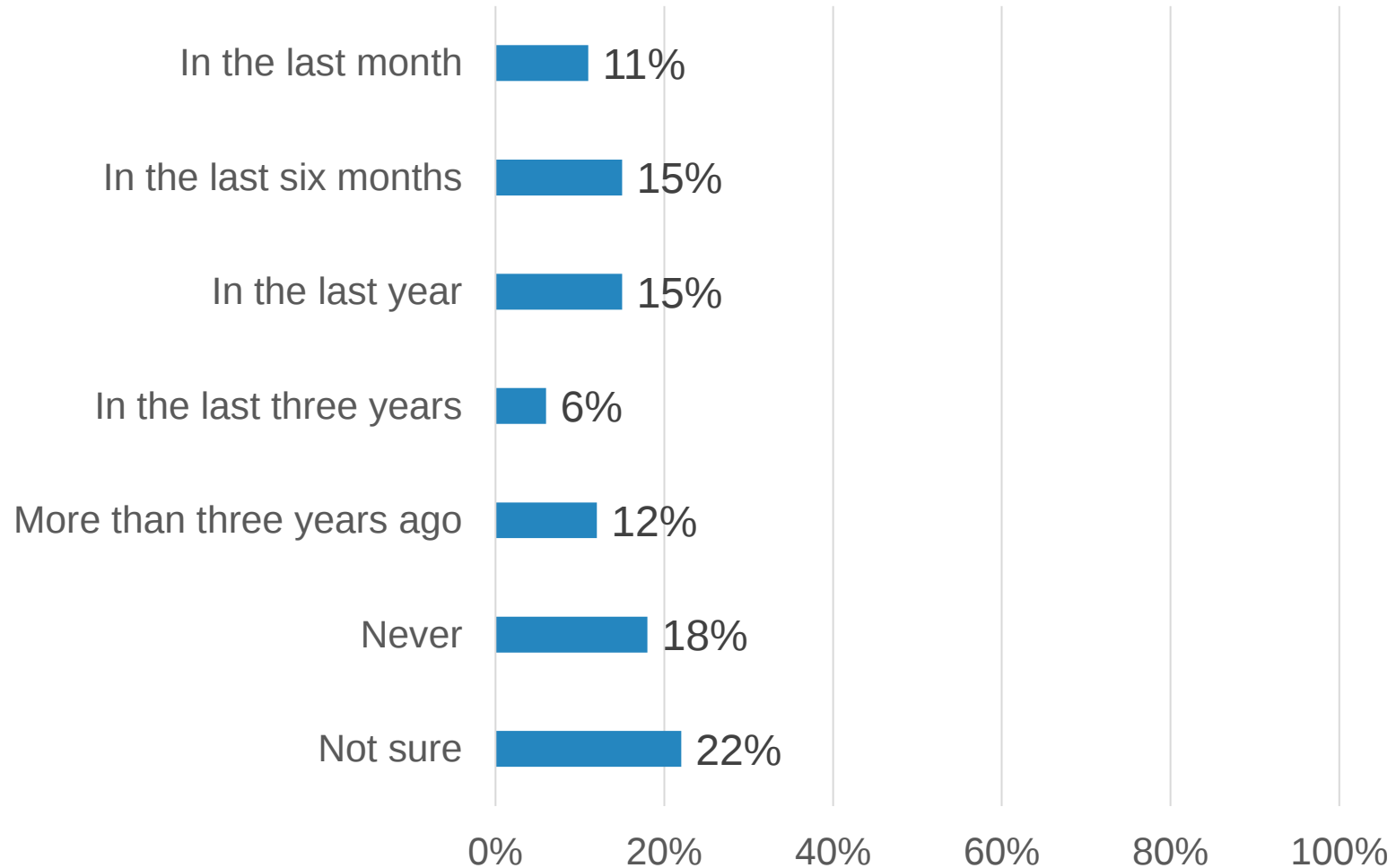
“Which, if any, of the following should churches advocate for in legislation and public policy?”

Among Protestant Churchgoers



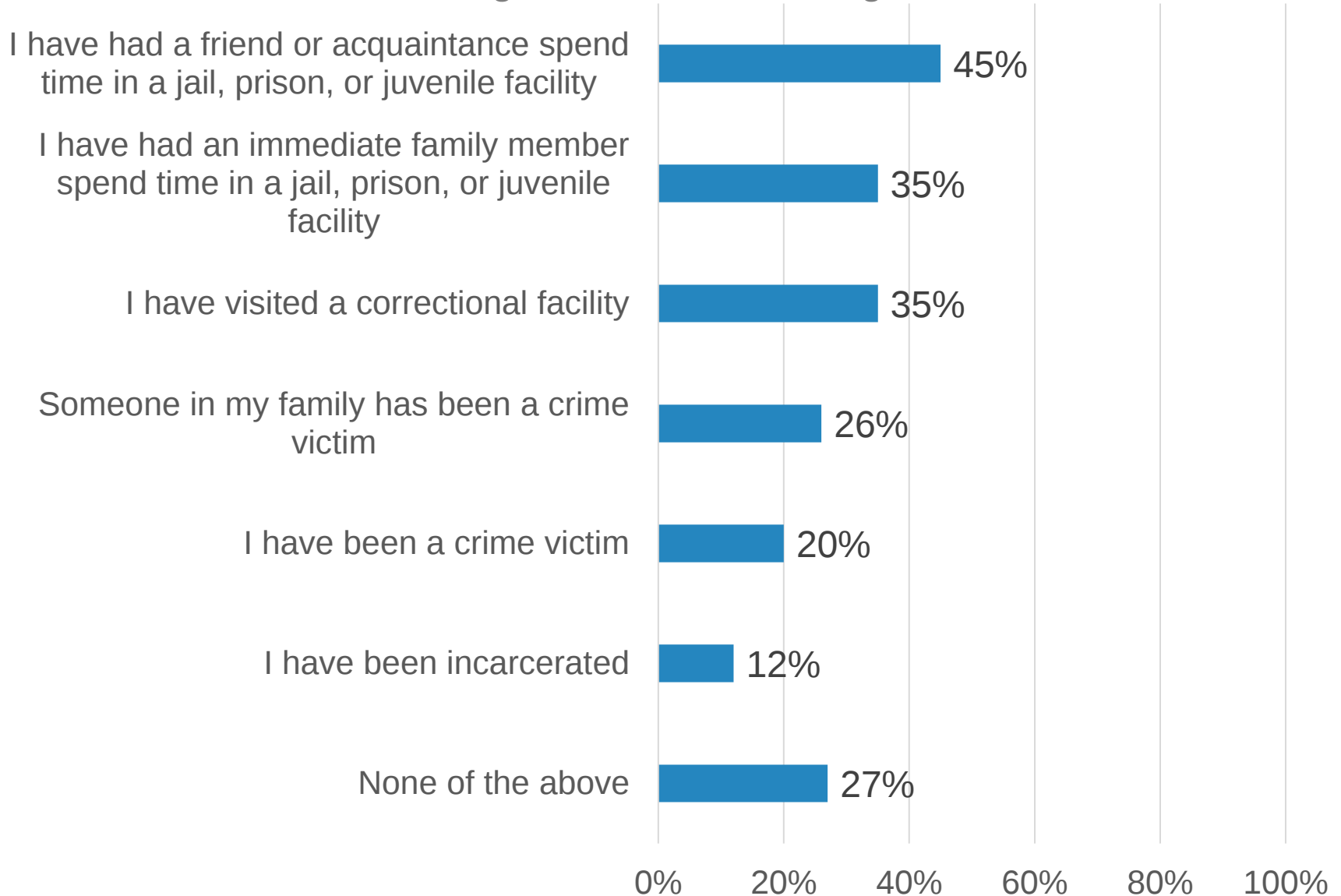
41% have heard a sermon that mentioned the incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, or their families at least once within the last year

Among Protestant Churchgoers



“Which of the following is true for you?”

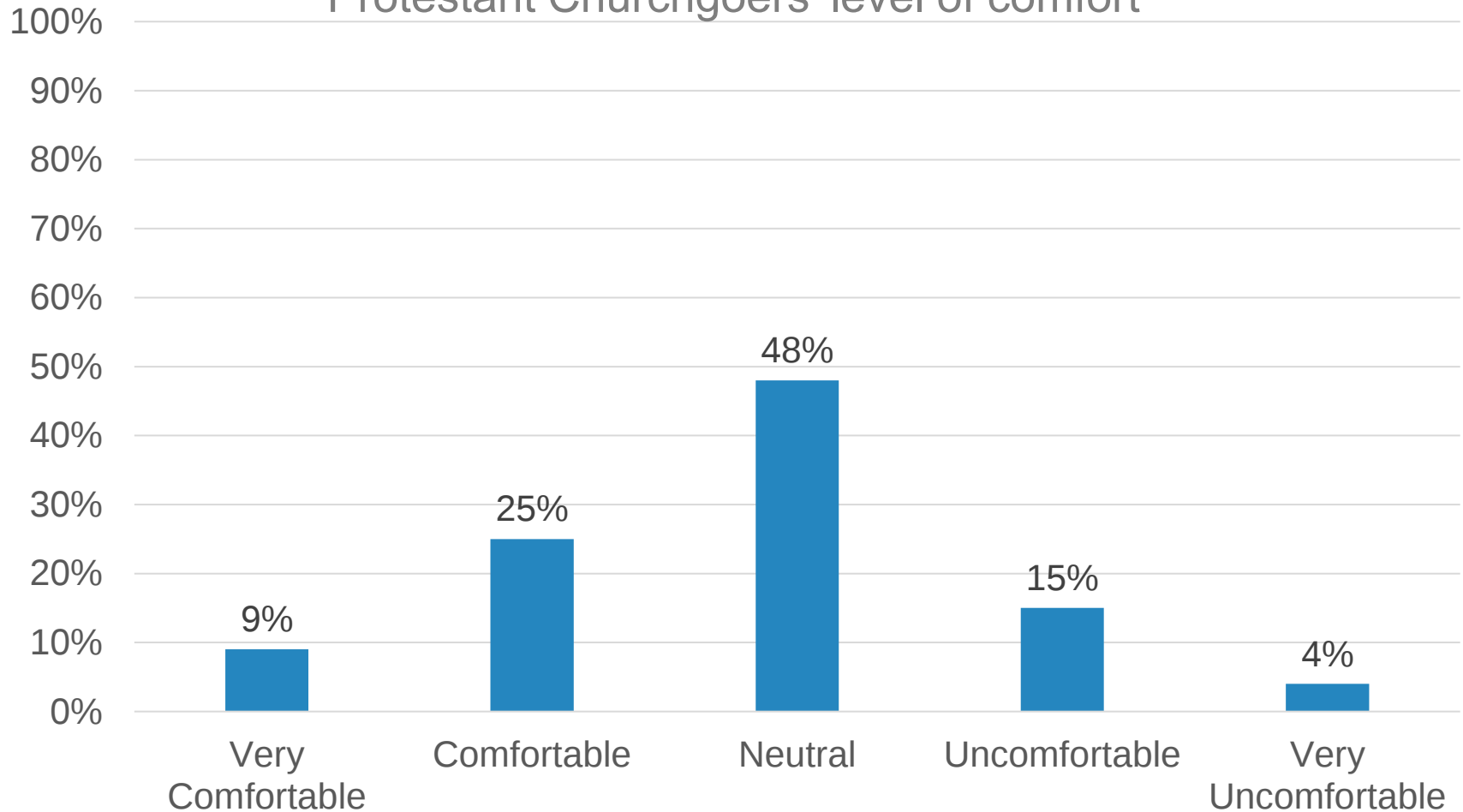
Among Protestant Churchgoers



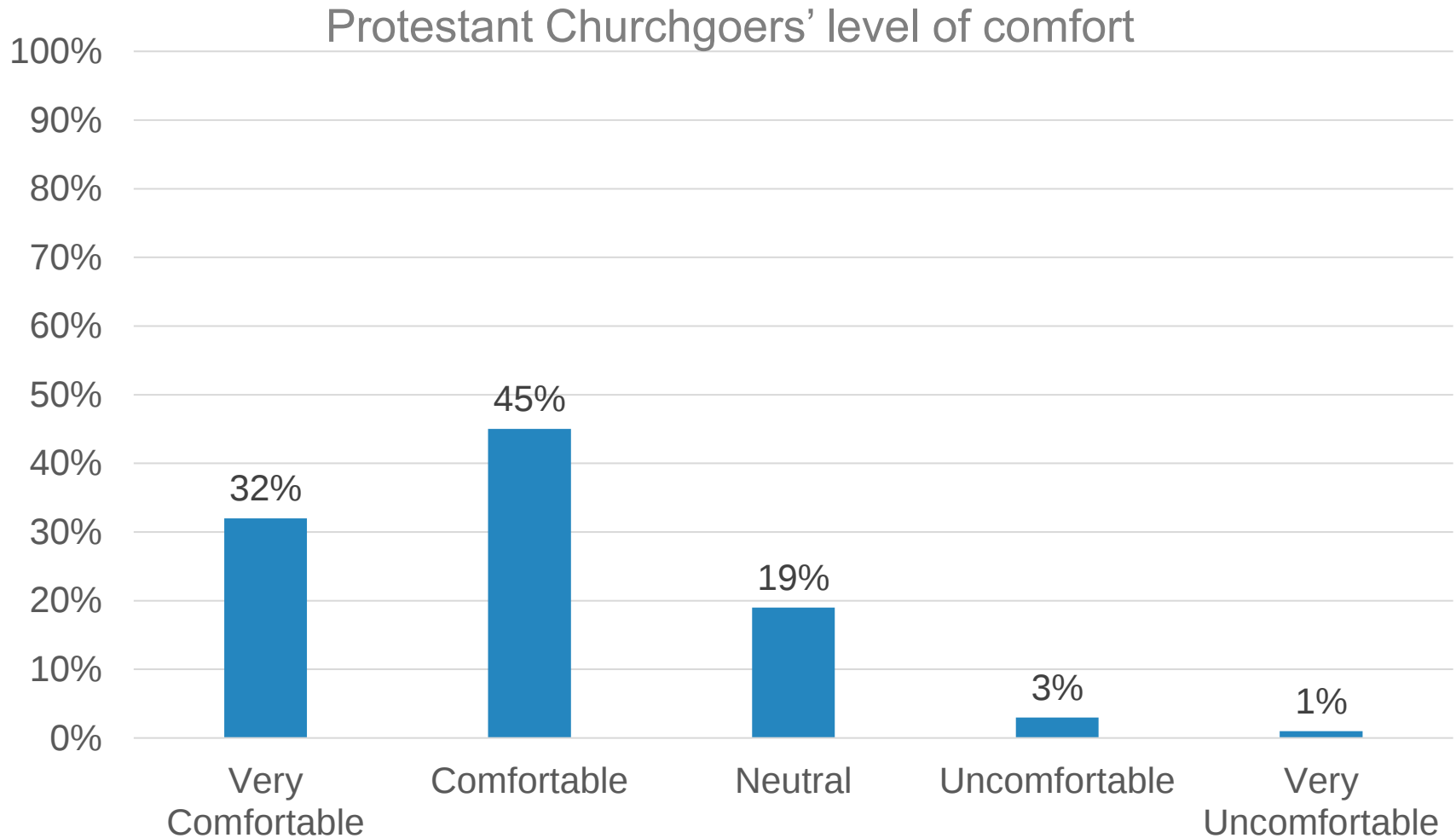
Q27: “Which of the following is true for you? (Select all that apply)” n=1,006

Having someone who has been incarcerated ... Move into my neighborhood

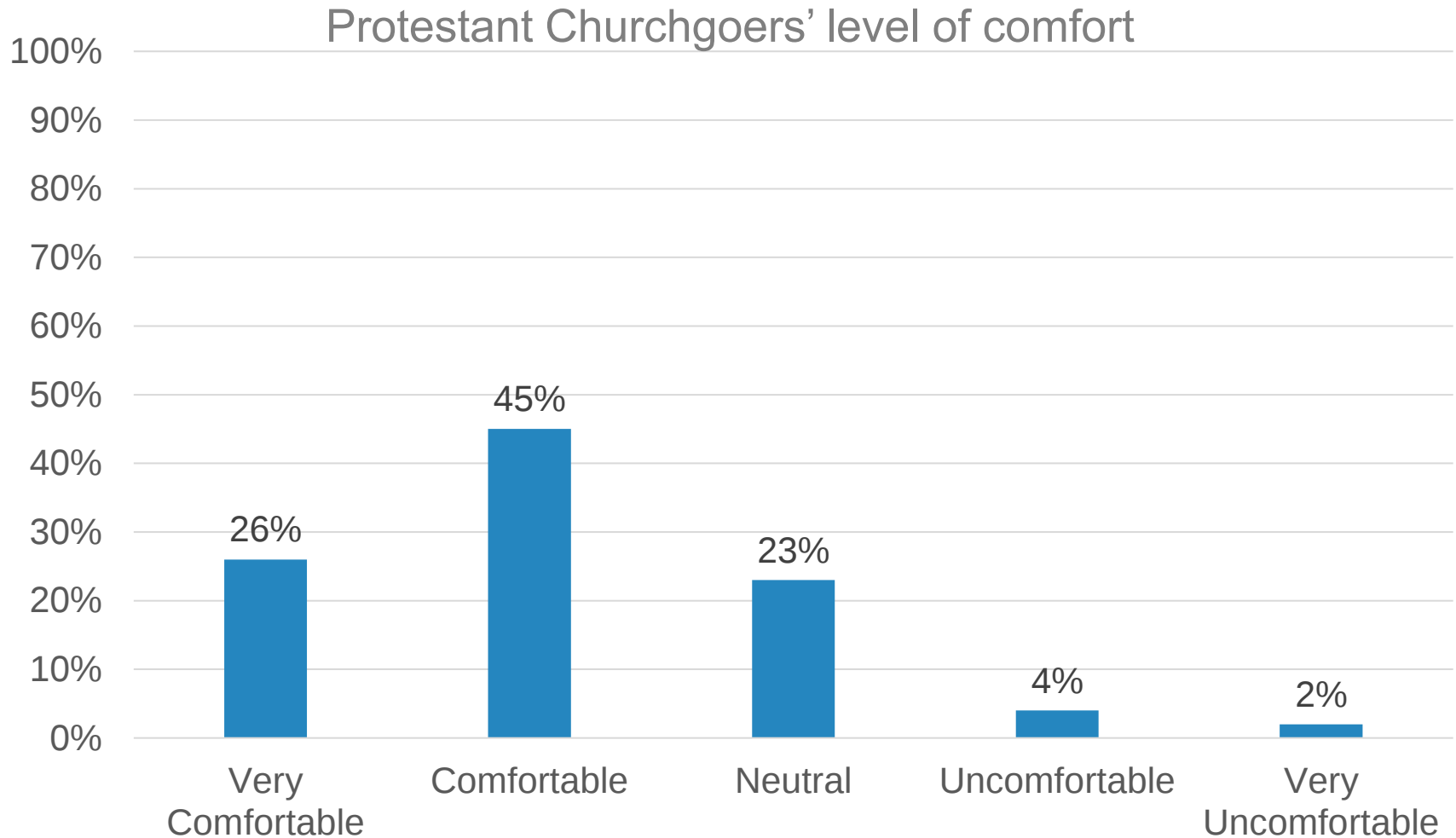
Protestant Churchgoers' level of comfort



Having someone who has been incarcerated ... Attend church with me

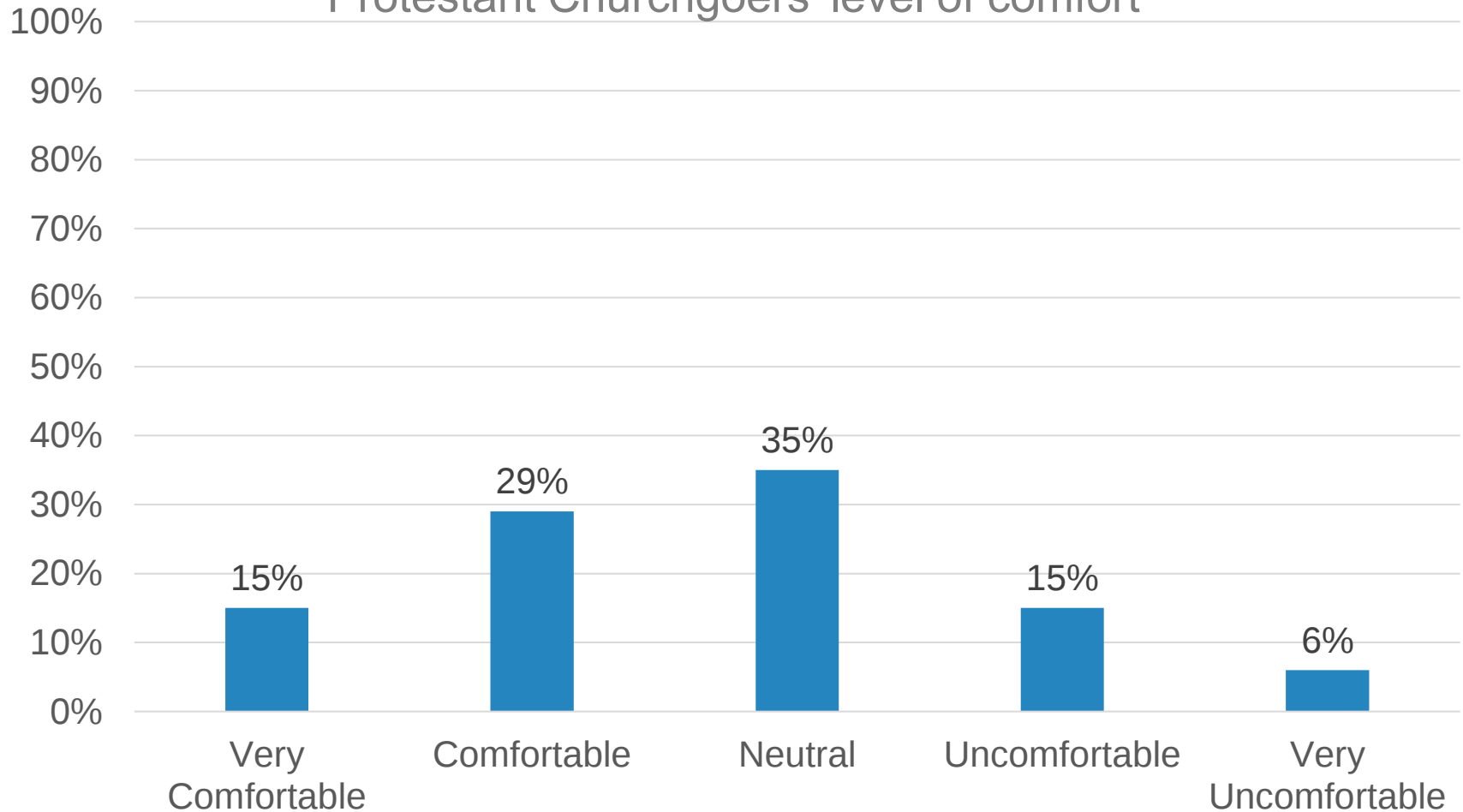


Having someone who has been incarcerated ... Attend a small group with me

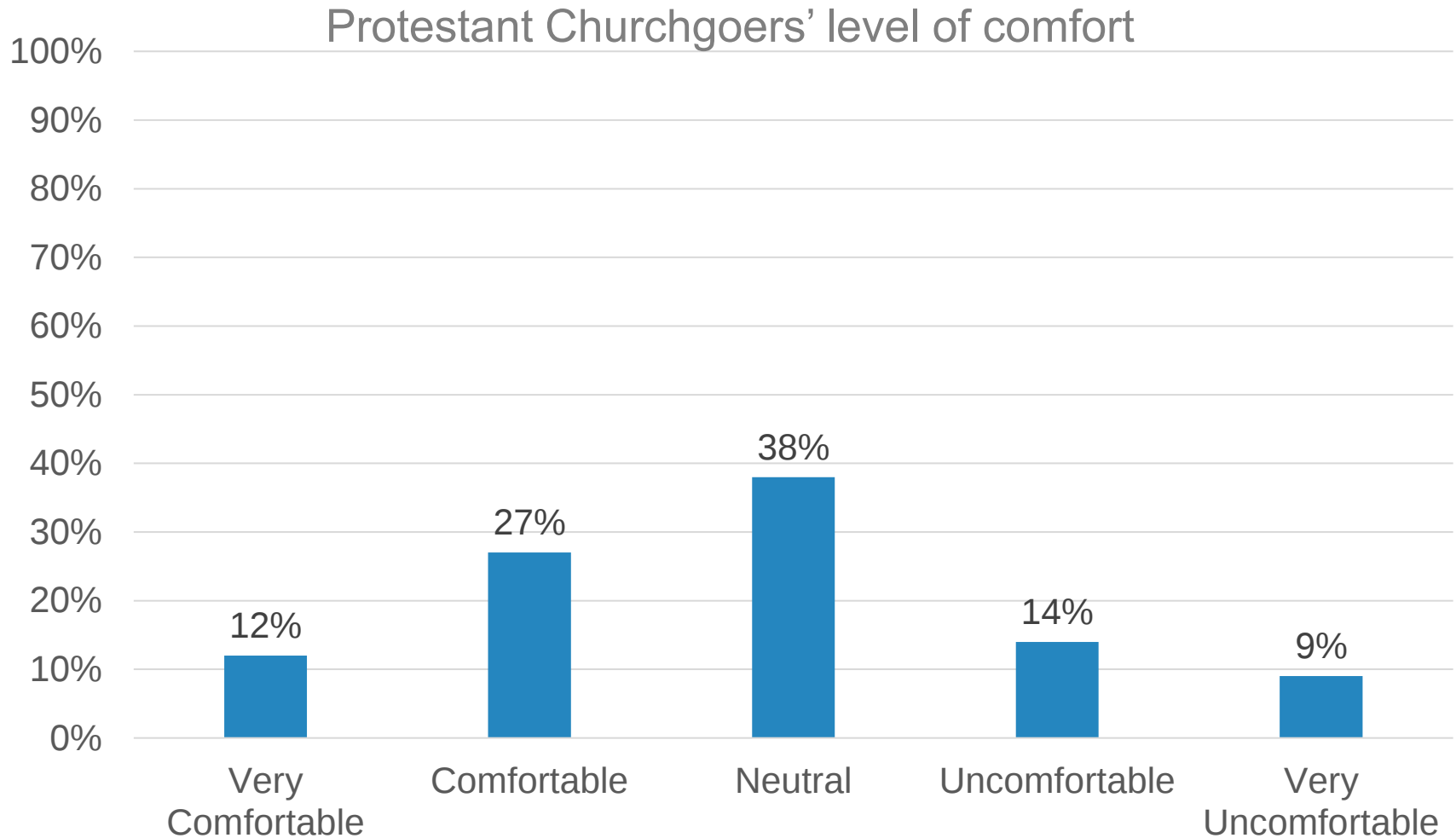


Having someone who has been incarcerated ... Come to my home for a meal

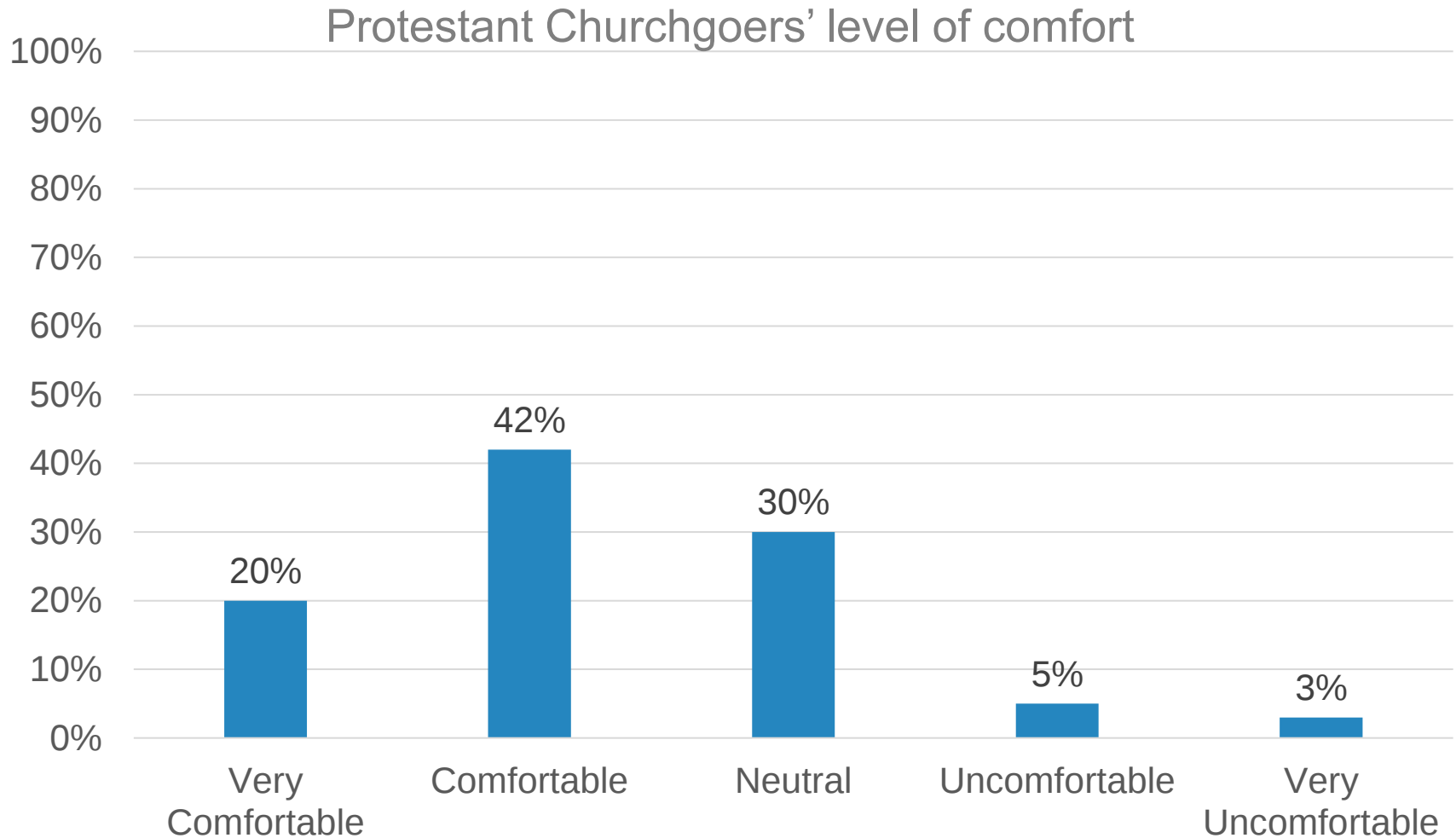
Protestant Churchgoers' level of comfort



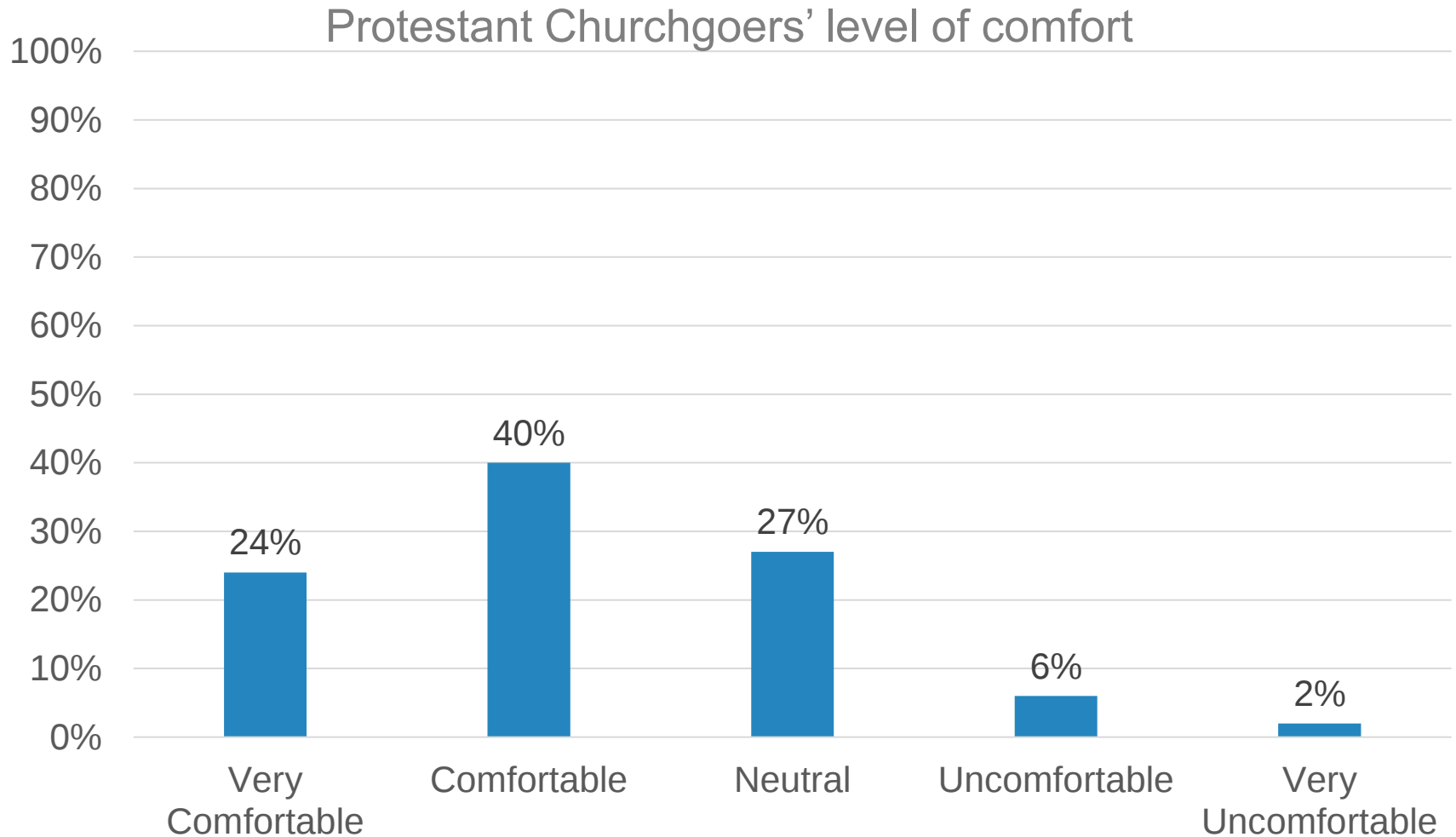
Having someone who has been incarcerated ... Serve as my pastor



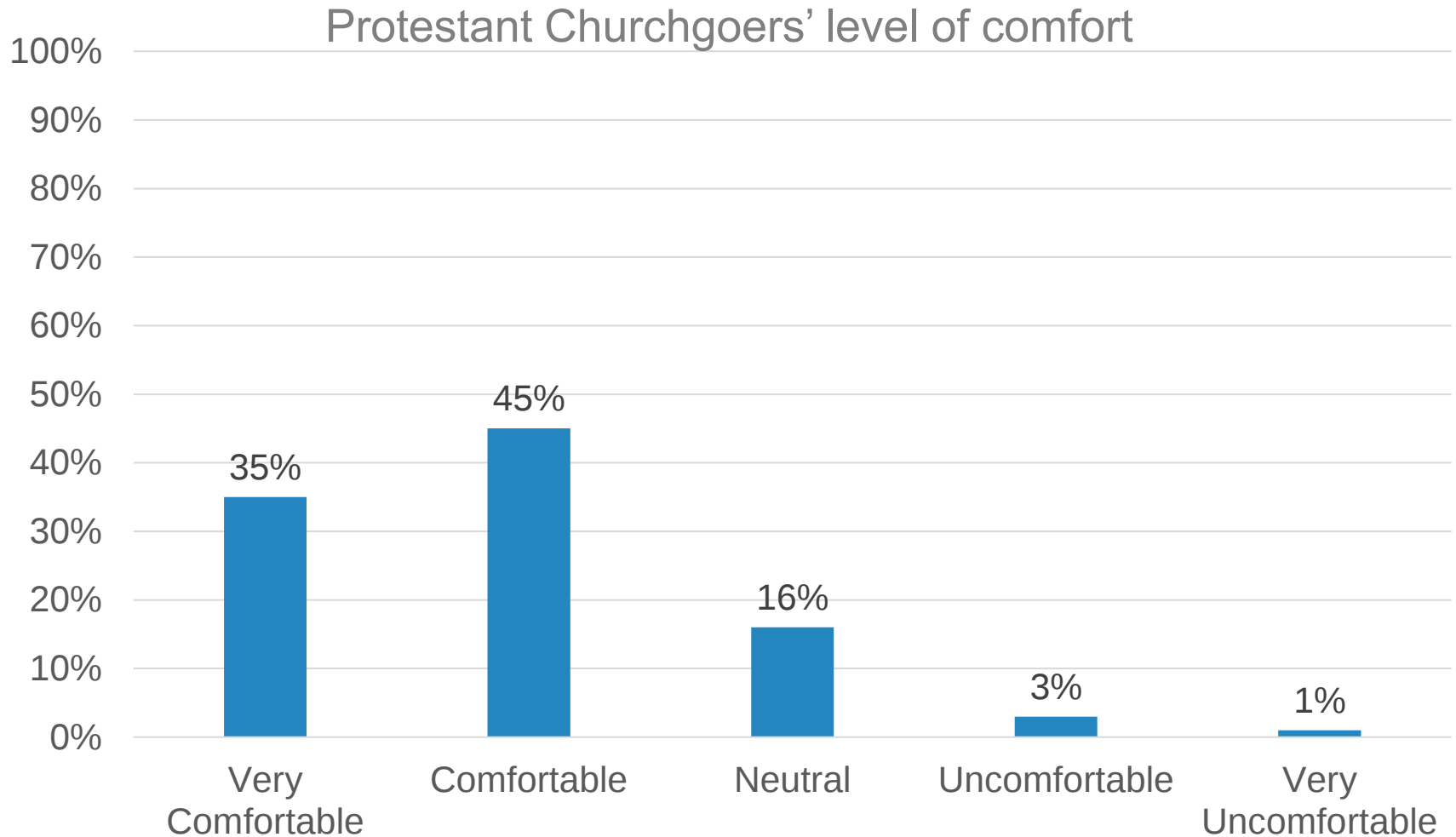
Having someone who has been incarcerated ... As a friend



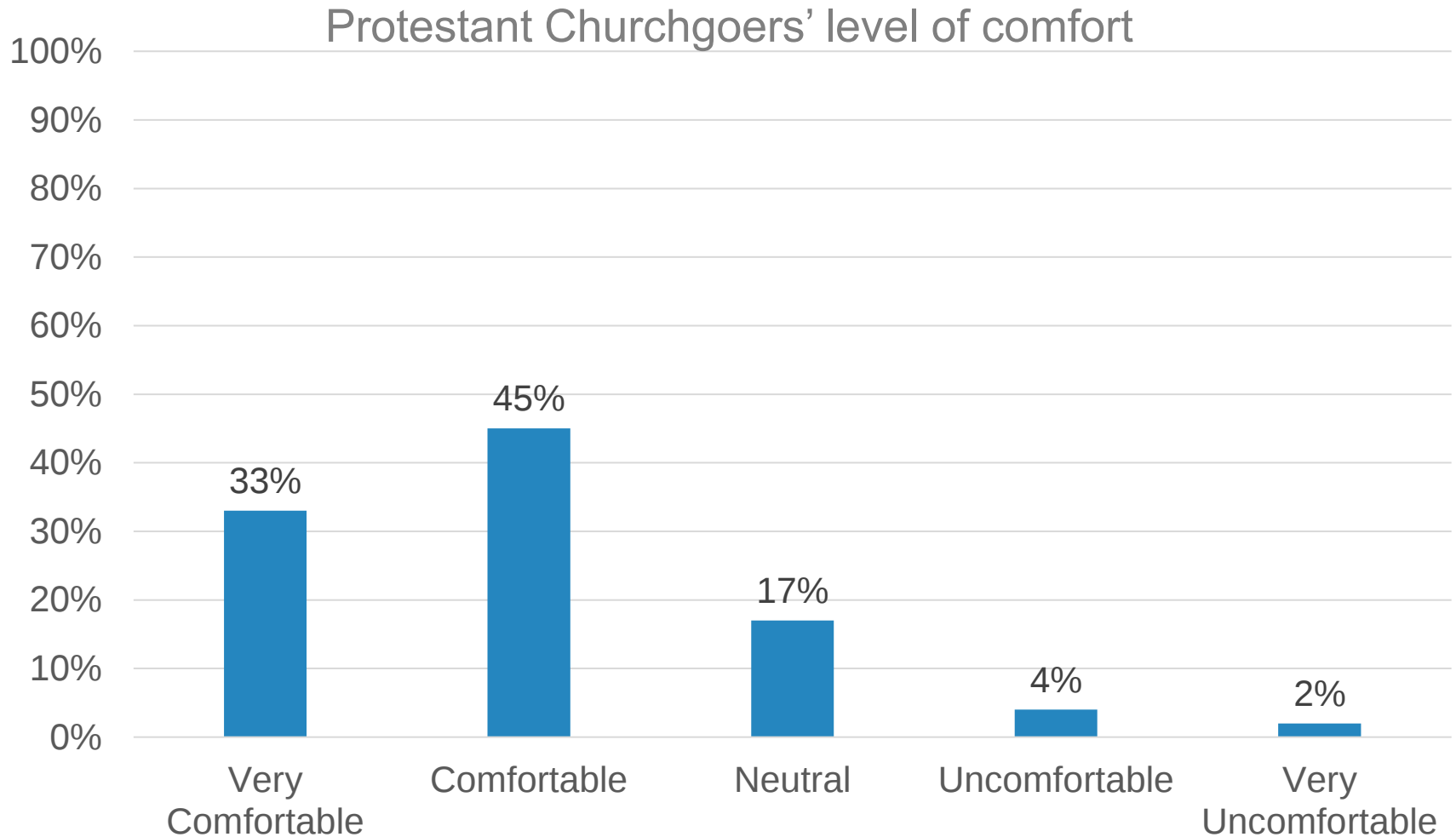
Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ... Move into my neighborhood



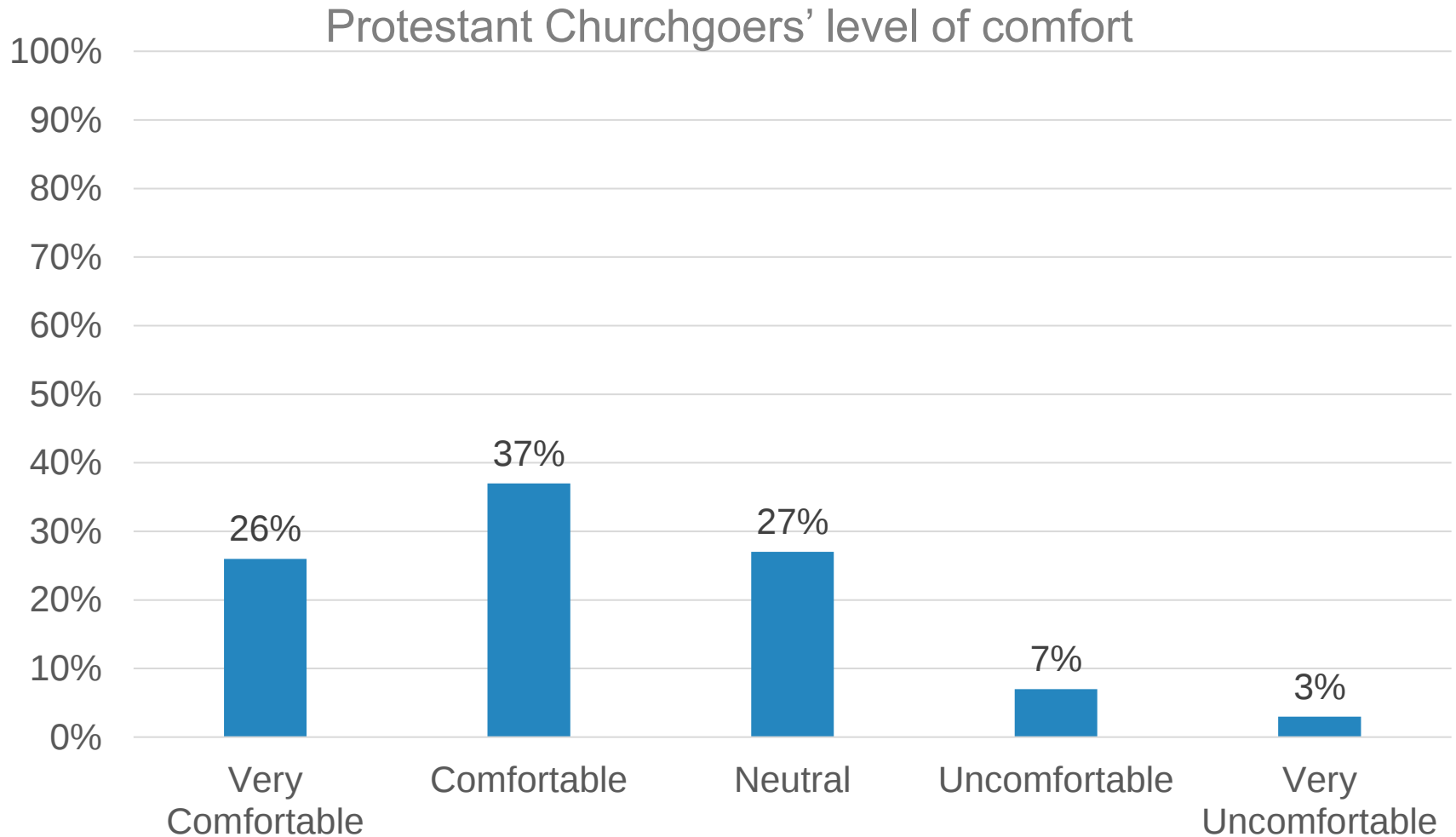
Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ... Attend church with me



Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ... Attend a small group with me

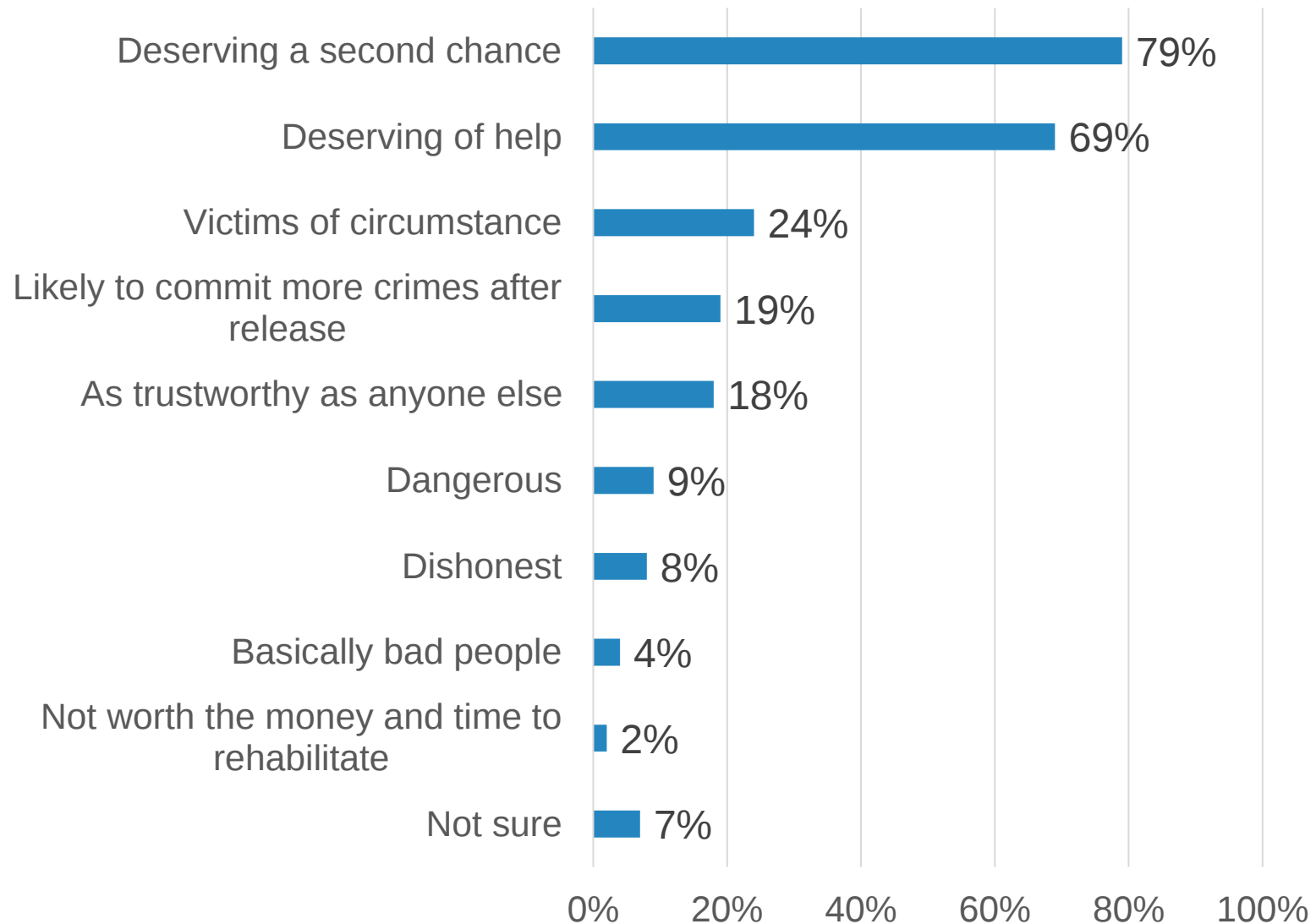


Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ... Come to my home for a meal



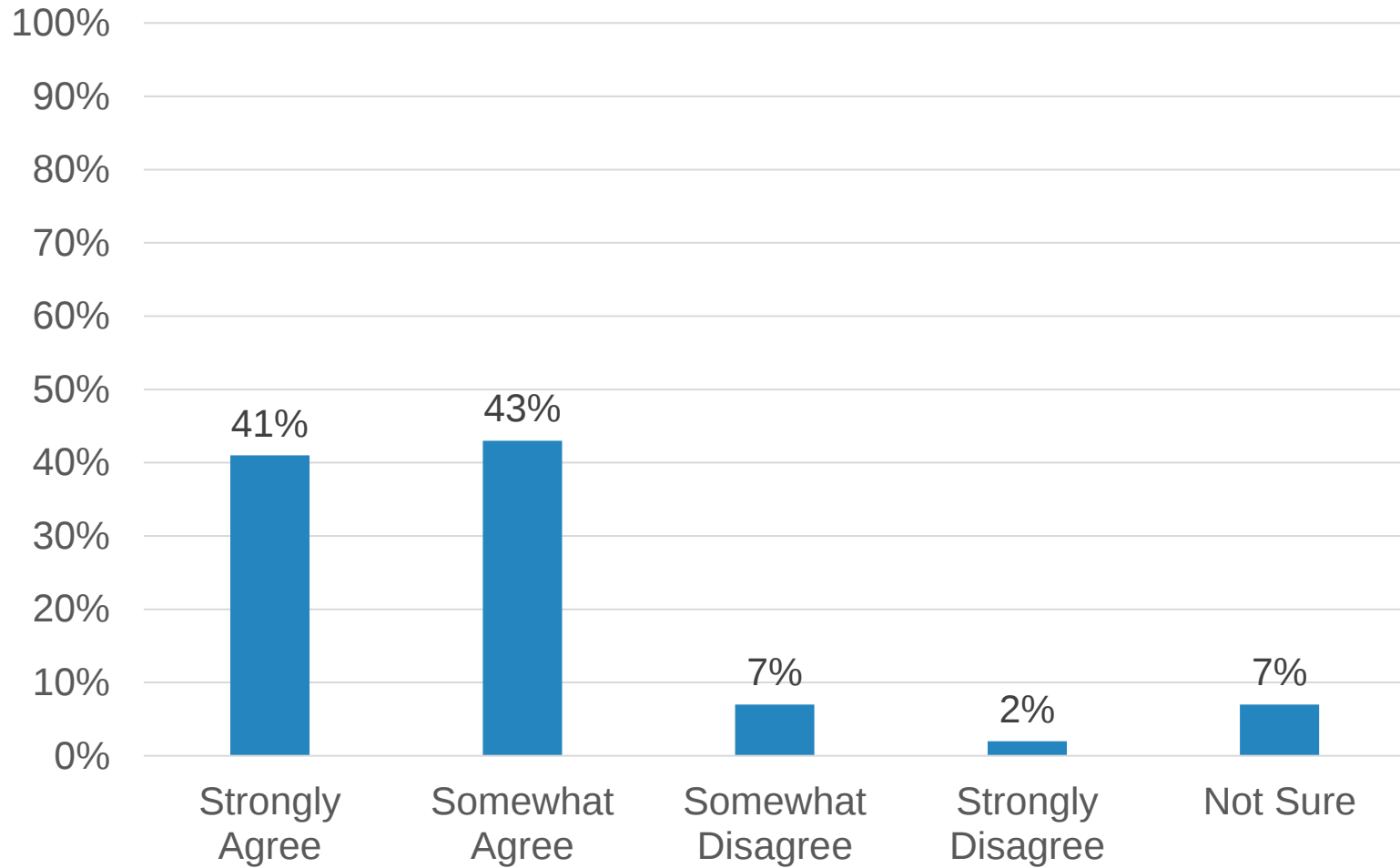
“Most people who have been incarcerated are...”

Among Protestant Churchgoers



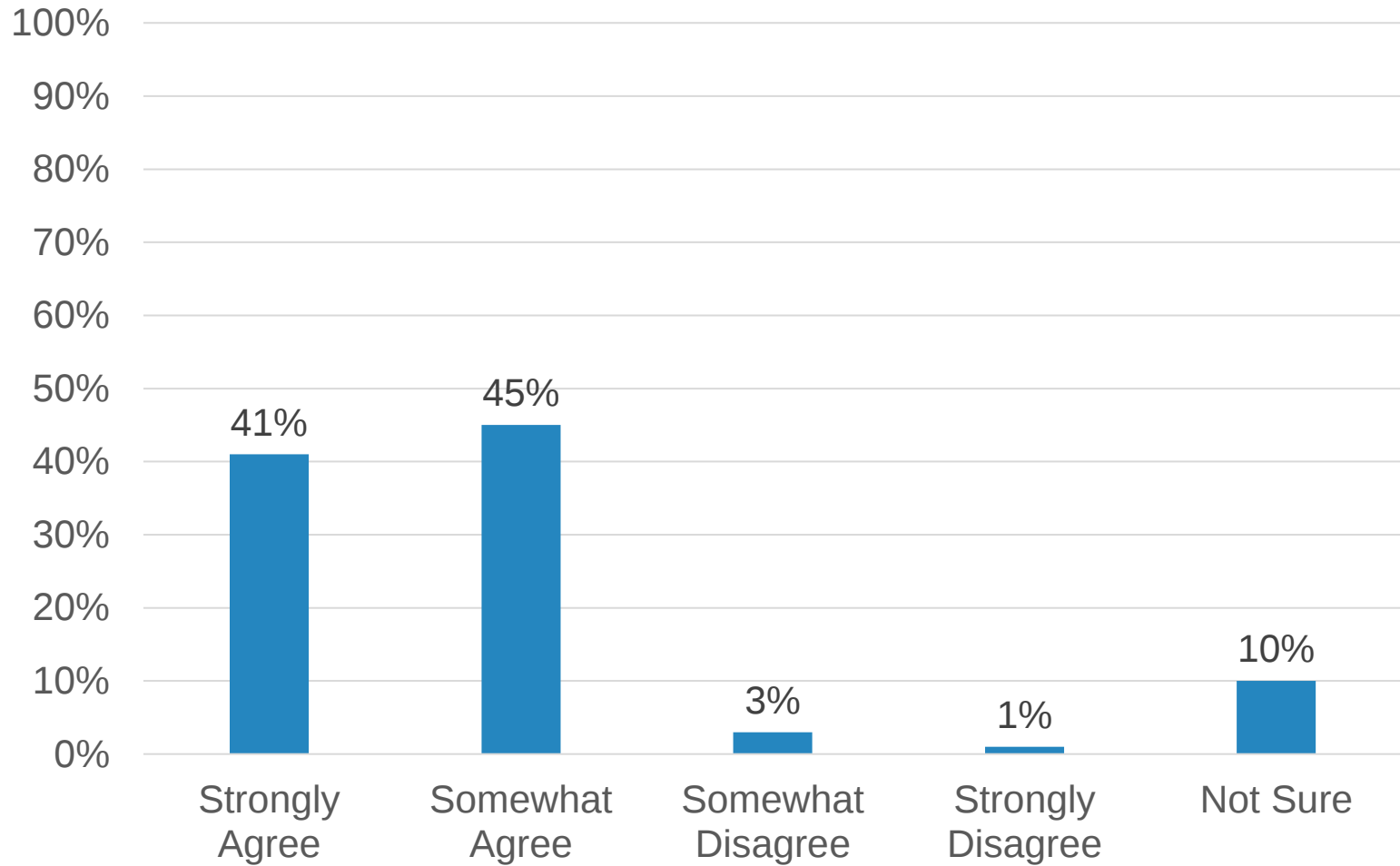
84% agree that Christians have a responsibility to minister to the incarcerated

Among Protestant Churchgoers



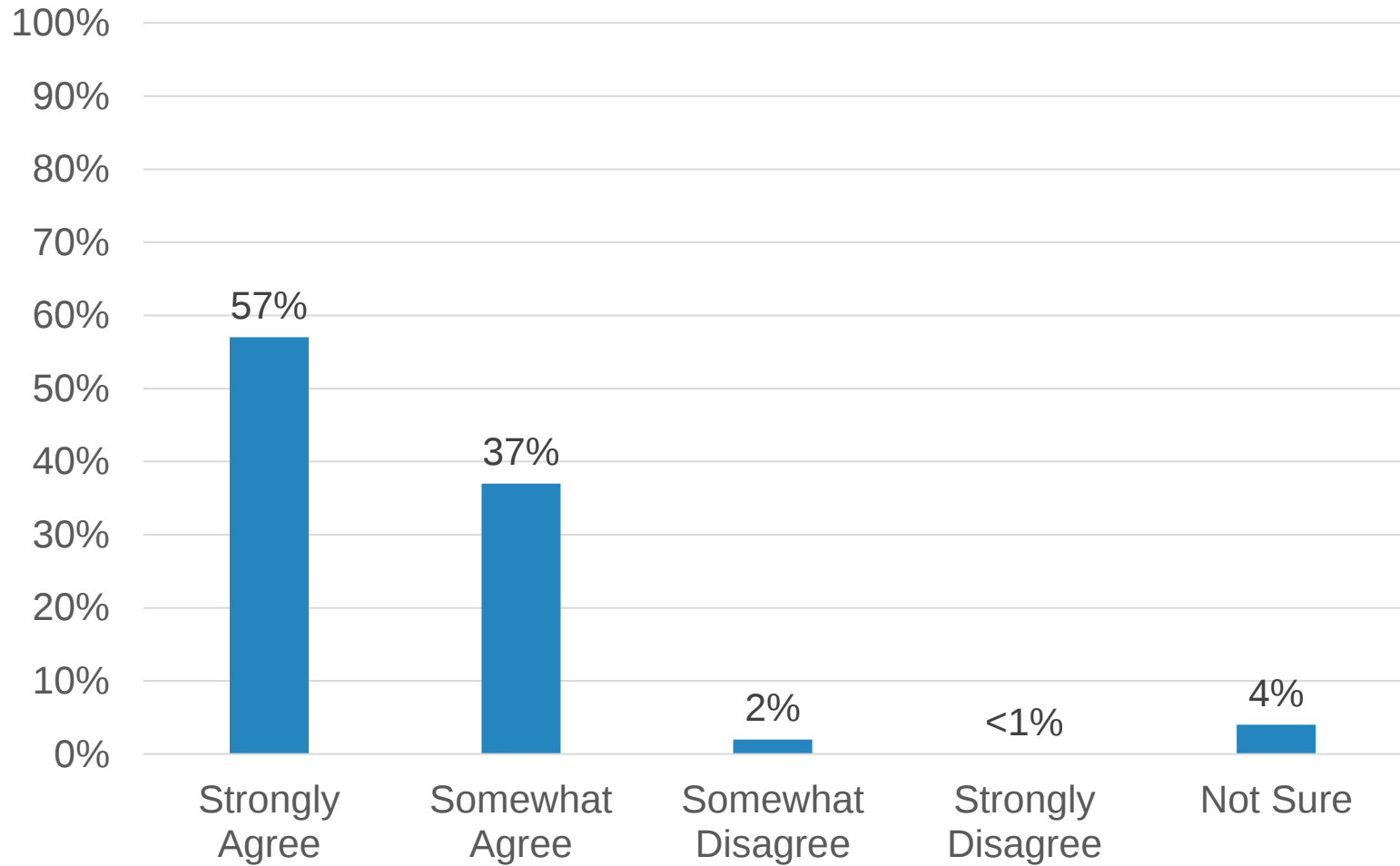
86% agree that prison ministry contributes positively to public safety

Among Protestant Churchgoers



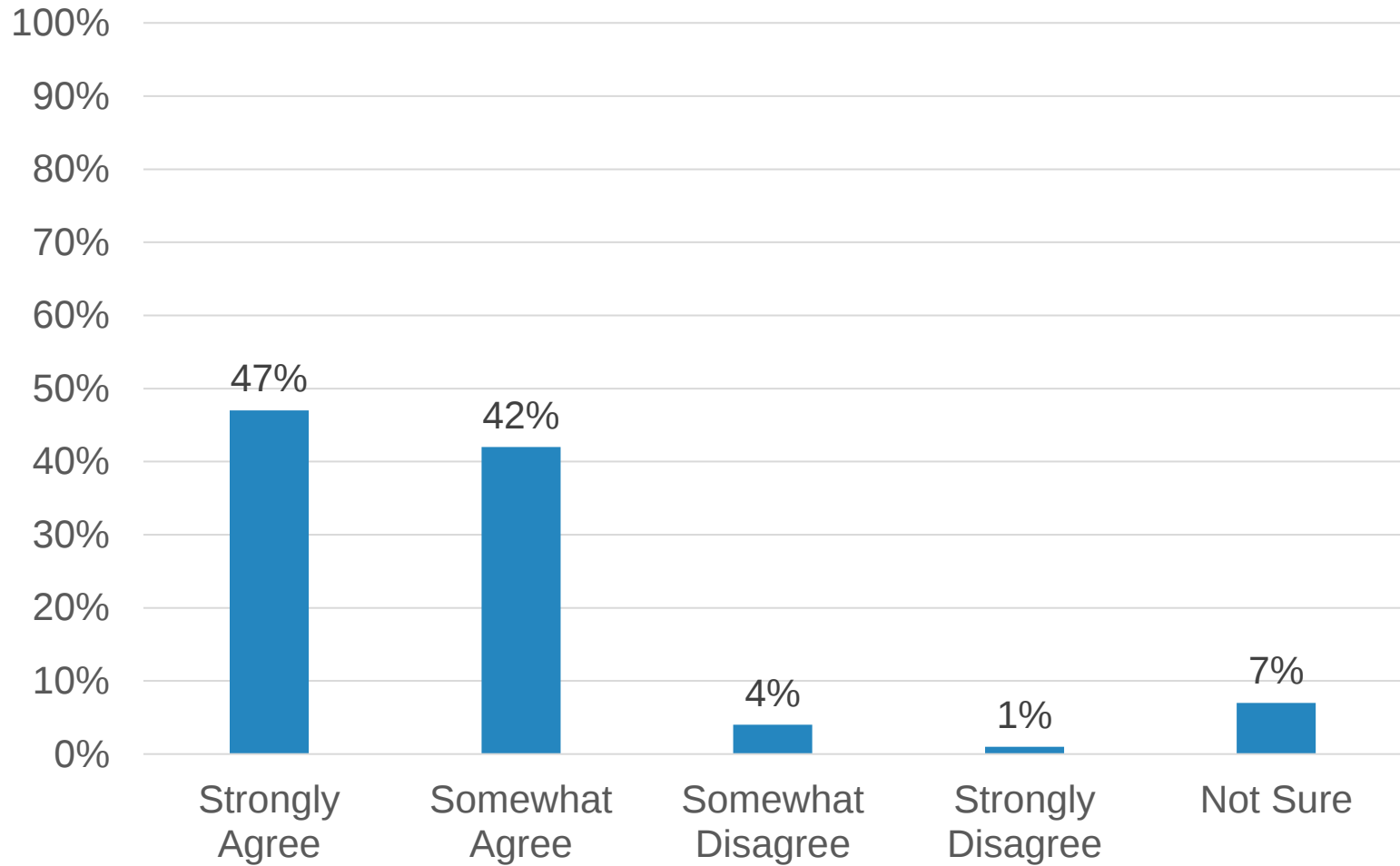
94% agree that formerly incarcerated people can contribute to understanding the Gospel message

Among Protestant Churchgoers



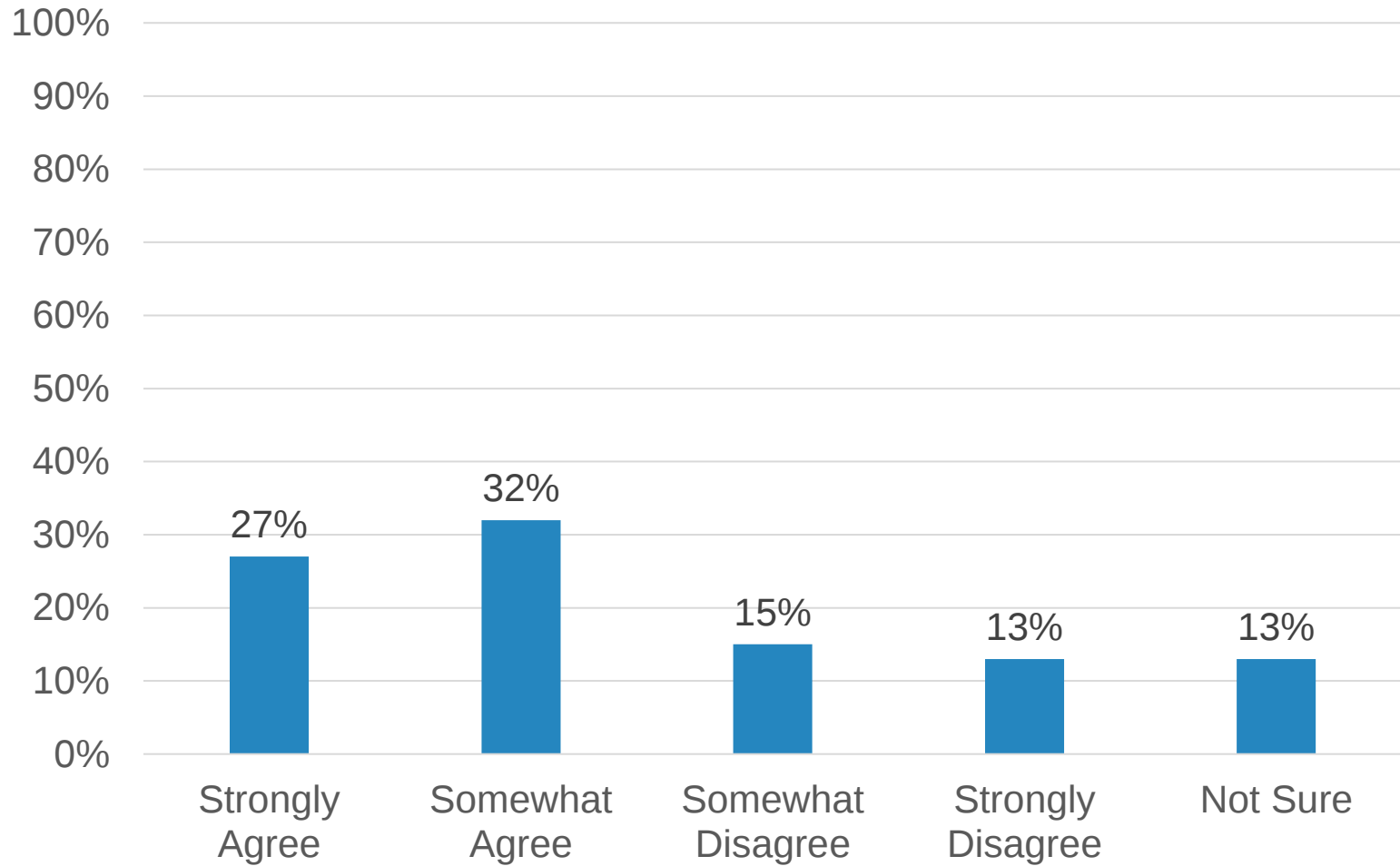
89% agree that formerly incarcerated people can be leaders in the broader Christian community

Among Protestant Churchgoers



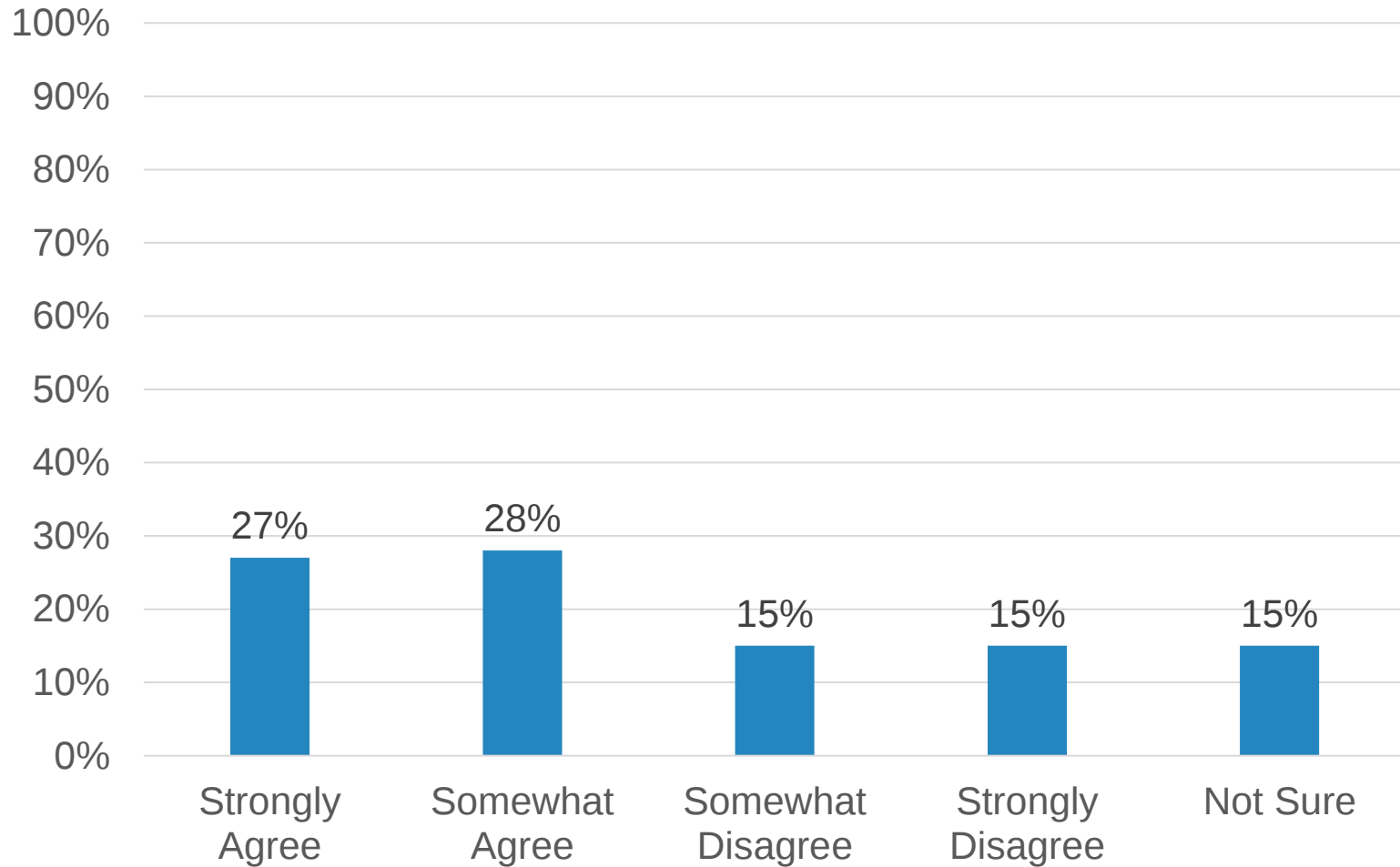
59% agree that racial bias contributes to an unfair incarceration rate by race

Among Protestant Churchgoers



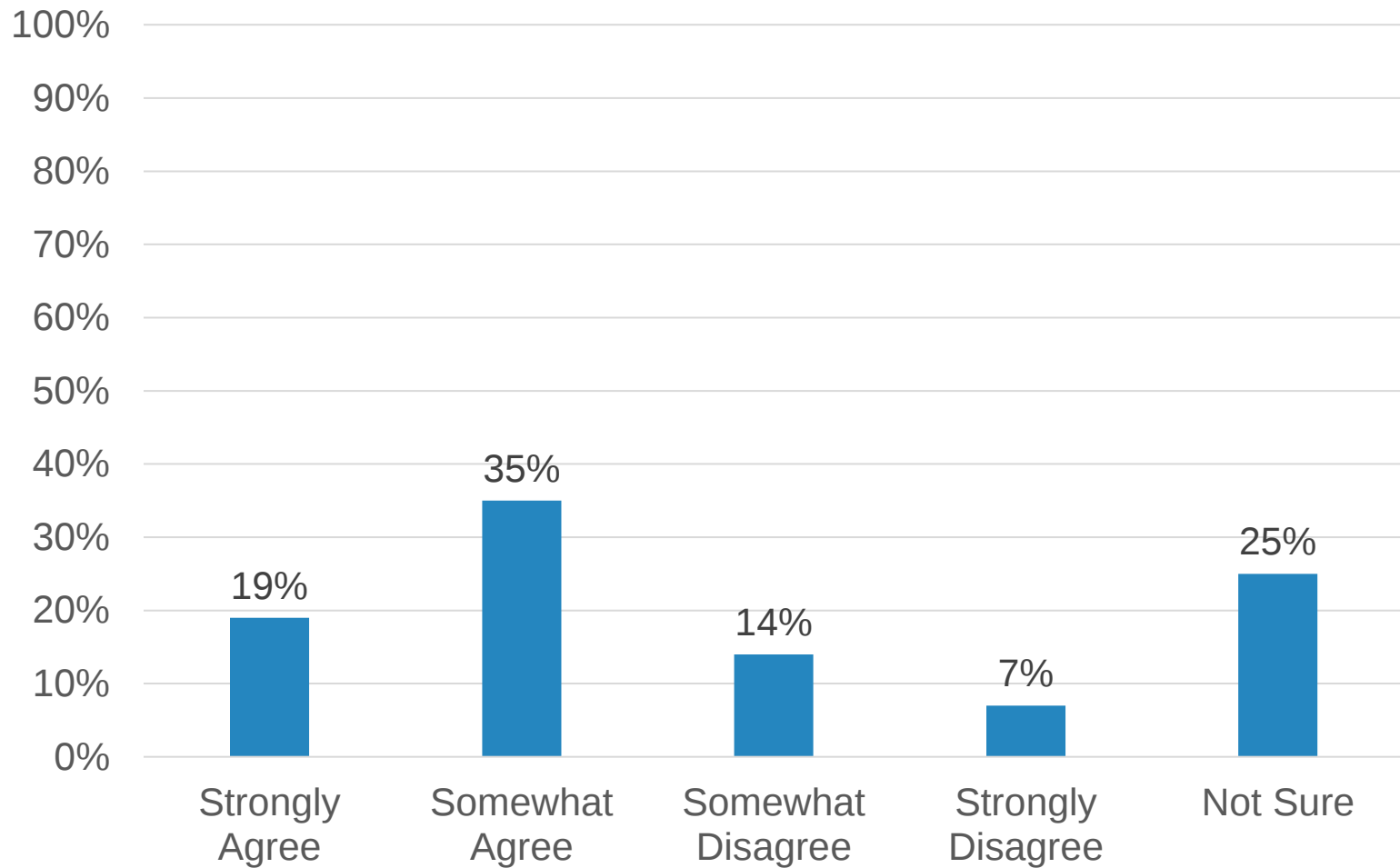
55% agree that the racial disparity within the prisoner population in America is unjust

Among Protestant Churchgoers



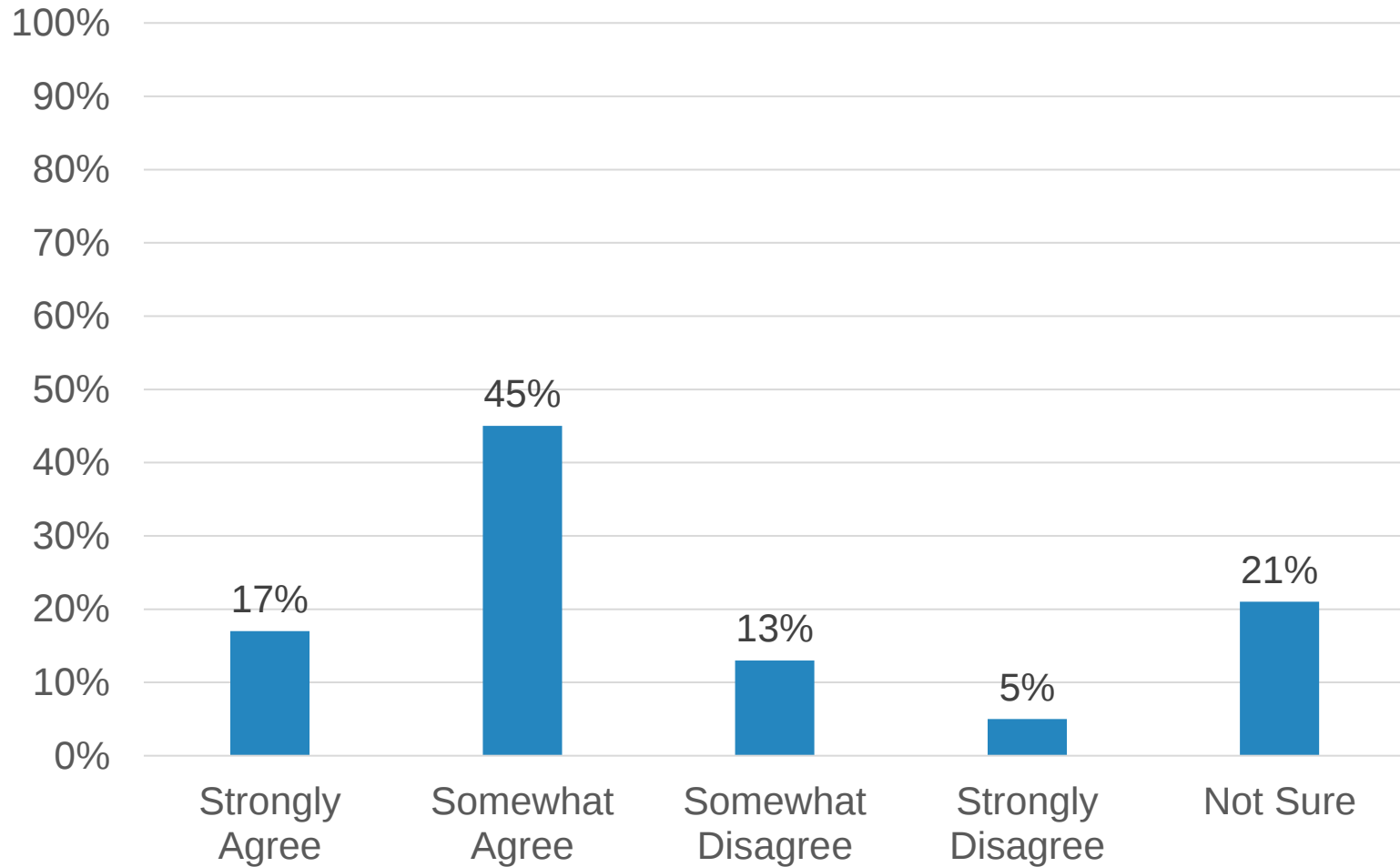
54% agree that difficulty re-entering society from jail and prison is an issue in their community

Among Protestant Churchgoers



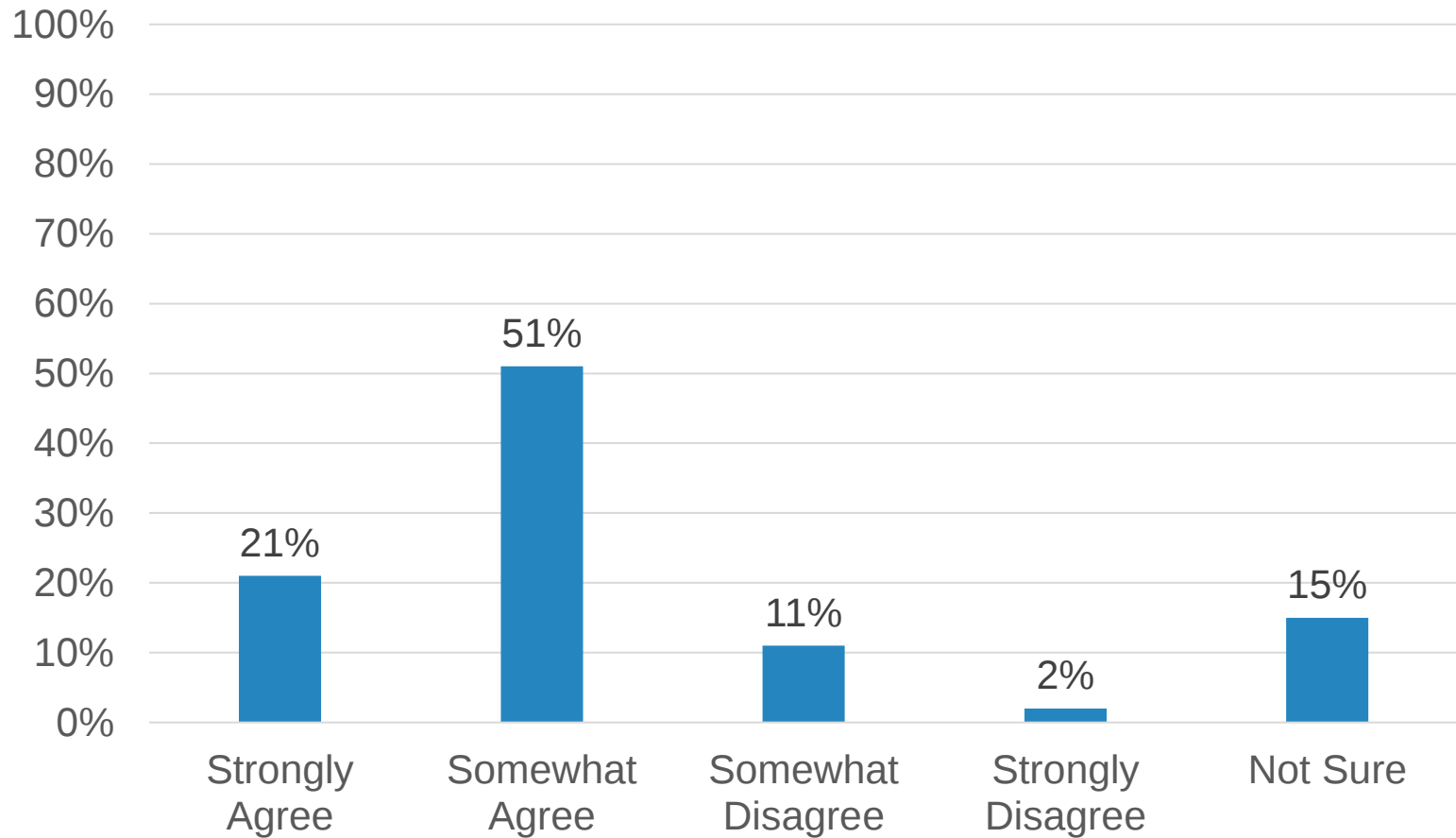
62% agree that many jails and prisons offer rehabilitation programs for those in custody

Among Protestant Churchgoers



72% agree that prisoners participating in rehabilitation programs in prison are less likely to commit another offense

Among Protestant Churchgoers



Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Region

Ethnicity

Education Level

Worship Service Attendance

Church Size

Evangelical Beliefs

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, region, ethnicity, and education.

GENDER	AGE	REGION	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION
Male	18-29	Northeast	White	High School graduate or less
Female	30-49	Midwest	African American	Some college
	50-64	South	Hispanic	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	West	Other Ethnicities	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among worship service attendance, church size, and evangelical beliefs.

WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE	CHURCH SIZE	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Once a month	Less than 50	Yes
Twice a month	50-99	No
Three time a month	100-249	
4 or more times a month	250-499	
	500+	

Definitions

- **Evangelical Beliefs** are defined using the NAE Lifeway Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
 - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
 - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
 - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
 - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

“Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?”

Writing letters or cards to prisoners

- Those age 18-29 (27%) and 30-49 (28%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those age 50-64 (14%) and 65+ (9%)
- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “No past experience” (71%)
- Those in the South (54%) and West (56%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those in the Northeast (43%)
- African Americans (26%) and Hispanics (27%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than Whites (14%)
- Those with some college are the least likely to select “No past experience” (45%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (63%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those who three times a month (45%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (23%) are more likely to select “I have only heard of this outside my church, but I have not participated” than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (14%) and 250-499 (10%)

“Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?”

In-person visits to prisoners

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “No past experience” (69%)
- Those age 18-29 (22%) and 30-49 (21%) are more likely to select “My church has engaged in this, but I have not participated” than those age 50-64 (12%) and 65+ (9%)
- Those in the Northeast (22%) and South (21%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those in the Midwest (12%)
- African Americans (27%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than Whites (15%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (59%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those with some college (47%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (67%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those who three times a month (44%) and 4 or more times a month (53%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (16%) and 250-599 (19%) are more likely to select “My church has engaged in this, but I have not participated” than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (8%)

“Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?”

In-person ministry with prisoners

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “No past experience” (72%)
- Whites (61%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than African Americans (46%) and Hispanics (44%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (64%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than with some college (51%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (52%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the most likely to select “No past experience” (72%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (63%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those at churches with attendance of less than 100-249 (52%)

“Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?”

Assisting families with loved ones in prison

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “No past experience” (72%)
- Those age 18-29 (34%) and 30-49 (32%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those age 50-64 (23%) and 65+ (12%)
- Those in the Northeast (30%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those in the Midwest (18%)
- Whites are the most likely to select “No past experience” (57%)
- African Americans (35%), Hispanics (37%), and Other Ethnicities (31%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than Whites (17%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to select “No past experience” (59%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (28%) or 4 or more times a month (25%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those who once a month (11%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (29%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (18%) and 500+ (17%)

“Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?”

Assisting children with parents in prison

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “No past experience” (73%)
- Those age 18-29 (34%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those age 50-64 (20%) and 65+ (10%)
- African Americans (30%) and Hispanics (35%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than Whites (15%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to select “No past experience” (60%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (21%) or 4 or more times a month (22%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than those who once a month (11%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (62%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (51%), 100-249 (49%) and 500+ (50%)

“Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?”

Foster parenting for children

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “No past experience” (82%)
- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select “My church has engaged in this, but I have not participated” (26%)
- Whites (68%) and African Americans (64%) are more likely to select than Hispanics (49%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to select “No past experience” (71%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (76%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those who twice a month (63%) or three times a month (56%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (73%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (62%)

“Indicate the response that best describes your experience with each of the following types of prison ministry?”

In-person aftercare ministry with former prisoners

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “No past experience” (81%)
- Those age 18-29 (23%) and 30-49 (21%) are more likely to select “My church has engaged in this, but I have not participated” than those age 50-64 (13%) and 65+ (4%)
- Whites (66%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than African Americans (56%) and Hispanics (47%)
- Hispanics (20%) are more likely to select “I have participated in the past” than Whites (7%) and Other Ethnicities (7%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (72%) are more likely to select “No past experience” than those who three times a month (55%)

“Would you be interested in participating in the following types of prison ministry?”

Writing letters or cards to prisoners

- Those age 18-29 (37%) and 30-49 (37%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those 50-64 (14%) and 65+ (11%)
- Those in the West (40%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those in the Northeast (27%) and South (31%)
- African Americans (30%) and Hispanics (29%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than Whites (18%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (39%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those with some college (29%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (29%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (26%) or 4 or more times a month (23%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those who once a month (14%) or twice a month (16%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (27%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (18%) and 250-499 (17%)

“Would you be interested in participating in the following types of prison ministry?”

In-person visits to prisoners

- Females are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than males (56% v. 42%)
- Those age 65+ are more likely to select “Not at all interested” (73%)
- Those age 18-29 (21%) and 30-49 (27%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those 50-64 (12%) and 65+ (4%)
- Whites (55%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than African Americans (39%) and Hispanics (41%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (56%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than with some college (46%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (42%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (60%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those who twice a month (42%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (20%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (10%), 250-499 (11%), and 500+ (9%)

“Would you be interested in participating in the following types of prison ministry?”

In-person ministry with prisoners

- Females are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than males (53% v. 43%)
- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (71%)
- Those age 18-29 (25%) and 30-49 (28%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those 50-64 (12%) and 65+ (6%)
- Those in the West (55%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those in the South (45%)
- African Americans (23%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than Whites (13%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (54%) or with a Graduate Degree (57%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than with some college (43%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (42%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (67%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 250-499 (57%) and 500+ (55%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those at churches with attendance of 100-249 (43%)

“Would you be interested in participating in the following types of prison ministry?”

Assisting families with loved ones in prison

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (49%)
- Those age 18-29 (38%) and 30-49 (37%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those 50-64 (20%) and 65+ (9%)
- Those in the Northeast (32%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those in the Midwest (22%) and South (23%)
- African Americans (35%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than Whites (19%) and Other Ethnicities (21%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (34%) or with a Graduate Degree (30%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than with some college (20%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (21%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the least likely to select “Very interested” (12%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (29%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (17%)

“Would you be interested in participating in the following types of prison ministry?”

Assisting children with parents in prison

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (48%)
- Those age 18-29 (41%) and 30-49 (40%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those 50-64 (26%) and 65+ (13%)
- Those in the Midwest (32%) and West (31%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those in the South (22%)
- African Americans (39%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than Whites (24%) and Other Ethnicities (20%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (34%) or with a Graduate Degree (30%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than with some college (20%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (21%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (32%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those who attend twice a month (21%) or three times a month (20%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (35%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (24%), 250-499 (19%), and 500+ (24%)

“Would you be interested in participating in the following types of prison ministry?”

Foster parenting for children

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (81%)
- Those age 18-29 (31%) and 30-49 (21%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those 50-64 (10%) and 65+ (3%)
- Whites are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (59%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (64%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than with some college (48%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (51%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (67%) or 4 more times a month (55%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those who attend twice a month (45%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 are the most likely to select “Very interested” (22%)

“Would you be interested in participating in the following types of prison ministry?”

In-person aftercare ministry with former prisoners

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (67%)
- Those age 18-29 (25%) and 30-49 (28%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than those 50-64 (11%) and 65+ (5%)
- African Americans (23%) are more likely to select “Very interested” than Whites (12%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (51%) or with a Graduate Degree (52%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than with some college (34%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (40%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the most likely to select “Not at all interested” (66%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 250-499 (49%) and 500+ (50%) are more likely to select “Not at all interested” than those at churches with attendance of 100-249 (38%)

“Does your church have a prison ministry?”

- Those age 50-64 (37%) and 65+ (47%) are more likely to select “No, my church is not involved in prison ministry” than those age 18-29 (18%) and 30-49 (23%)
- African Americans (20%) and Hispanics (20%) are more likely to select “Yes, my church has a formal prison ministry” than Whites (9%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (45%) are more likely to select “No, my church is not involved in prison ministry” than with some college (26%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (33%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (37%) are more likely to select “No, my church is not involved in prison ministry” than those attend who three times a month (27%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 500+ are the most likely to select “Yes, my church has a formal prison ministry” (31%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the most likely to select “No, my church is not involved in prison ministry” (55%)

“Are you currently or have you been in the past involved in any type of prison ministry among the incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, or their families?”

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “I have never been involved in a prison ministry” (85%)
- Whites are the most likely to select “I have never been involved in a prison ministry” (80%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (24%) are more likely to select “I have been involved in a prison ministry in the past” than those who once a month (13%)

“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Individual members minister in correctional facilities

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (15%)
- Those in the South (24%) and West (29%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (17%)
- Hispanics (34%) are more likely to select than Whites (21%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (27%) or 4 or more times a month (24%) are more likely to select than those who once a month (13%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the least likely to select (13%)

“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

A team from our church ministers in correctional facilities

- Those age 18-29 (31%) and 30-49 (28%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (16%) and 65+ (11%)
- African Americans (29%) and Hispanics (26%) are more likely to select than Whites (15%)
- Those with some college (26%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (21%) are more likely to select than who are High School Graduates or less (14%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 500+ are the most likely to select (33%)

“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Individual members minister to families of the incarcerated

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (12%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (27%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (15%)

“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

My church has a formal ministry to families of the incarcerated

- Those age 18-29 (22%) and 30-49 (19%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (10%) and 65+ (4%)
- African Americans (21%) and Hispanics (22%) are more likely to select than Whites (8%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the least likely to select (3%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 500+ are the most likely to select (20%)

“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Individual members minister to people leaving correctional facilities

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (10%)
- Hispanics (25%) and African Americans (21%) are more likely to select than Whites (14%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (23%) or 4 or more times a month (17%) are more likely to select than those who attend once a month (7%)

“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

My church has a formal ministry to people leaving correctional facilities

- Those age 18-29 (18%) and 30-49 (15%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (8%) and 65+ (3%)
- African Americans (17%) and Hispanics (16%) are more likely to select than Whites (7%) and Other Ethnicities (3%)

“How does your church engage in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

None of these

- Those age 50-64 (52%) and 65+ (68%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (35%) and 30-49 (34%)
- Whites (55%) are more likely to select than African Americans (39%) and Hispanics (35%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (55%) or with a Graduate Degree (57%) are more likely to select than those with some college (44%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (46%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (59%) are more likely to select than those who attend three times a month (43%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the most likely to select (65%)

“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Talks about imprisonment openly so that the topic is not so taboo

- Those age 18-29 (36%) and 30-49 (34%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (21%) and 65+ (13%)
- African Americans (32%) and Hispanics (35%) are more likely to select than Whites (20%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month are the most likely to select (32%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (29%), 250-499 (25%), and 500+ (26%) are more likely to select than those with less than 50 (14%)

“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Financially supports a ministry outside the church serving the incarcerated and their families

- Those age 18-29 (31%) and 30-49 (24%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (12%) and 65+ (8%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the least likely to select (6%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the least likely to select (6%)

“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Provides counseling for families of individuals during incarceration or returning from correctional facilities

- Those age 18-29 (43%) and 30-49 (42%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (28%) and 65+ (14%)
- African Americans (35%) and Hispanics (42%) are more likely to select than Whites (26%)
- Those with some college (36%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (32%) are more likely to select than those with a Graduate Degree (22%)
- Those who attend a worship service twice a month (34%) or three times a month (36%) are more likely to select than those who attend once a month (19%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the least likely to select (17%)

“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Provides counseling for individuals returning from correctional facilities

- Those age 18-29 (43%) and 30-49 (41%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (26%) and 65+ (15%)
- African Americans (36%) and Hispanics (41%) are more likely to select than Whites (25%)
- Those with some college (34%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (31%) are more likely to select than those with a Graduate Degree (19%)
- Those who attend a worship service twice a month (32%) or three times a month (37%) are more likely to select than those who attend once a month (19%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the least likely to select (15%)

“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

Supports residential programs that help with reentry of people leaving correctional facilities

- Those age 18-29 (35%) and 30-49 (37%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (19%) and 65+ (11%)
- African Americans (33%) and Hispanics (39%) are more likely to select than Whites (18%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (26%) and 100-249 (25%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (15%)

“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”

Among Protestant churchgoers

None of these

- Those age 50-64 (54%) and 65+ (71%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (31%) and 30-49 (33%)
- Whites (57%) are more likely to select than African Americans (38%) and Hispanics (35%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (55%) or with a Graduate Degree (61%) are more likely to select than those with some college (44%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (46%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month (58%) or 4 or more times a month (52%) are more likely to select than those who three times a month (42%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the most likely to select (69%)

“Have you been involved in prison ministry activities or training?”

- Those age 50-64 (92%) or 65+ (96%) are more likely to select “No” than those 18-29 (84%) and 30-49 (83%)
- Those in the Northeast are the most likely to select “Yes” (18%)
- Whites are the most likely to select “No” (94%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the most likely to select “No” (100%)

“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry

Distance

- No meaningful significant differences

Fear

- Those age 18-29 are most likely to select (25%)

“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry

Too busy with family, work, life

- Those age 18-29 (38%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (26%) and 65+ (11%)
- Hispanics (38%) are more likely to select than Whites (22%) and African Americans (25%)
- Those with a Bachelor's Degree (28%) or a Graduate Degree (33%) are more likely to select than who are High School Graduates or less (20%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (35%) are more likely to select than those who attend 4 or more times a month (22%)

Lack of interest

- No meaningful significant differences

“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry

Already involved in other ministries

- Hispanics (26%) are more likely to select than African Americans (15%)
- Those with a Bachelor's Degree (26%) or with a Graduate Degree (24%) are more likely to select than who are High School Graduates or less (11%) or with some college (16%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month are the most likely to select (23%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 are the least likely to select (8%)

“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry

Do not know where to learn about this ministry

- Those age 18-29 (23%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (13%) and 65+ (11%)
- Other Ethnicities (24%) are more likely to select than African Americans (12%) and Hispanics (11%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (22%) are more likely to select than those with 100-249 (13%), 250-499 (10%), and 500+ (9%)

Not aware of the need in my area

- Those who attend churches with attendance of 500+ are the least likely to select (7%)

“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry

Not aware of ministries in my area

- Those age 18-29 (28%) are more likely to select than those 30-49 (15%)
- Those in the Northeast (29%) are more likely to select than those in the South (18%) and West (19%)
- Other Ethnicities are the most likely to select (36%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (31%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of less than 100-249 (18%), 250-499 (16%), and 500+ (15%)

Prisoners are not deserving of redemption

- No meaningful significant differences

“Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry?”

Among Protestant churchgoers who are not currently involved in prison ministry

Do not feel called to serve prisoners

- Those age 50-64 (28%) and 65+ (34%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (17%) and 65+ (18%)
- Whites (29%) are more likely to select than African Americans (17%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (36%) are more likely to select than who are High School Graduates or less (24%) or with some college (24%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 250-499 (34%) and 500+ (32%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (22%)

Pastors or church leaders should handle this

- No meaningful significant differences

“Most people with a felony can go on to lead productive lives with help and hard work.”

- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (94%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend once a month (84%) or 4 or more times a month (89%)

“Most people who commit crimes have little hope of changing for the better.”

- Those age 50-64 (81%) and 65+ (78%) are more likely to Disagree than those 18-29 (69%)
- Those in the West (25%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Midwest (14%)
- Hispanics (29%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (17%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (84%) are more likely to Disagree than who are High School Graduates or less (72%)

“Local churches have a responsibility to care for the incarcerated in my community.”

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to Agree (57%)
- Those in the Northeast (79%) and South (70%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Midwest (61%) and West (55%)
- African Americans (71%) and Other Ethnicities (79%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (63%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to Agree (58%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (69%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend once a month (58%) or twice a month (59%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (73% v. 59%)

“Local churches have a responsibility in their local communities to care for families and children of the incarcerated.”

- Those in the Northeast (85%) and South (78%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Midwest (69%) and West (69%)
- Other Ethnicities (85%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (73%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to Agree (67%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (80%) or 4 or more times a month (76%) are more likely to Agree than those who once a month (67%) or twice a month (69%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (79%) and 500+ (80%) are more likely to Agree than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (68%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (82% v. 68%)

“Local churches have a responsibility to provide resources and support for youth and adults leaving correctional facilities.”

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to Agree (64%)
- Those in the Northeast (83%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Midwest (69%) and West (68%)
- Whites (18%) and Hispanics (17%) are more likely to Disagree than African Americans (8%)

“Seeking justice requires prison or jail time for those guilty of crimes.”

- Females are more likely to Agree than males (79% v. 69%)
- Those age 18-29 (25%) are more likely to Disagree than those 50-64 (16%) and 65+ (14%)
- Hispanics (83%) are more likely to Agree than African Americans (69%)

“Prisoners can bless community volunteers who serve in prison ministry.”

- Those age 30-49 (83%) and 50-64 (83%) are more likely to Agree than those 18-29 (73%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month are the most likely to Agree (83%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (86% v. 72%)

“Which, if any, of the following should churches advocate for in legislation and public policy?”

Ensuring all punishments fit the severity of the crime

- Those with a Graduate Degree (48%) are more likely to select than who are High School Graduates or less (37%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (34%)

Offering rehabilitation to those in jail and prison

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (54%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (53%)

“Which, if any, of the following should churches advocate for in legislation and public policy?”

Ensuring prison conditions are humane

- Those age 50-64 (61%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (50%)
- Those in the Northeast (65%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (51%)
- African Americans (66%) and Hispanics (66%) are more likely to select than Whites (53%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (48%)

“Which, if any, of the following should churches advocate for in legislation and public policy?”

Offering second chance opportunities after prison

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (60%)
- Those in the Northeast (76%) and South (73%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (64%)
- African Americans (77%) and Hispanics (80%) are more likely to select than Whites (67%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (61%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (74%) and 500+ (75%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of less than 250-499 (63%)

“When was the last time you heard a sermon that mentioned the incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, or their families?”

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Never” (31%)
- Those age 18-29 (23%) and 30-49 (23%) are more likely to select “In the last six months” than those 50-64 (13%) and 65+ (8%)
- Hispanics (24%) are more likely to select “In the last six months” than Whites (13%) and Other Ethnicities (10%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the least likely to select “In the last six months” (7%)

“Which of the following is true for you?”

I have had an immediate family member spend time in a jail, prison, or juvenile facility

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (24%)
- African Americans (53%) are more likely to select than Whites (29%) and Other Ethnicities (38%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (39%) or with some college (45%) are more likely to select than with a Bachelor's Degree (25%) or a Graduate Degree (23%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (41%), 50-99 (42%), and 100-249 (36%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (23%) and 500+ (27%)

“Which of the following is true for you?”

I have had a friend or acquaintance spend time in a jail, prison, or juvenile facility

- Those age 30-49 are the most likely to select (60%)
- African Americans (58%) and Hispanics (60%) are more likely to select than Whites (40%) and Other Ethnicities (38%)
- Those with some college are the most likely to select (54%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (49%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (36%)

“Which of the following is true for you?”

I have been incarcerated

- Those age 30-49 (20%) and 50-64 (15%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (7%) and 65+ (5%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (14%) or with some college (17%) are more likely to select than with a Bachelor's Degree (7%) or a Graduate Degree (6%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 500+ are the least likely to select (3%)

“Which of the following is true for you?”

I have visited a correctional facility

- Those age 30-49 are the most likely to select (47%)
- African Americans (47%) and Hispanics (46%) are more likely to select than Whites (30%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (40%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (30%) and 500+ (29%)

I have been a crime victim

- Those age 30-49 (23%) and 50-64 (23%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (12%)

“Which of the following is true for you?”

Someone in my family has been a crime victim

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (17%)
- Whites are the least likely to select (22%)
- Those with some college (32%) are more likely to select than with a Bachelor's Degree (20%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (31%) and 100-249 (29%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (20%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having someone who has been incarcerated ...

Move into my neighborhood

- Those age 30-49 (45%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those 50-64 (33%) and 65+ (26%)
- Those in the West are the most likely to select “Uncomfortable/Very Uncomfortable” (26%)
- Other Ethnicities (24%) are more likely to select “Uncomfortable/Very Uncomfortable” than African Americans (13%)
- Those with some college (41%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than with a Bachelor’s Degree (29%) or a Graduate Degree (28%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having someone who has been incarcerated ...

Attend church with me

- Those age 30-49 (81%) and 50-64 (80%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those 65+ (70%)
- Those who attend a worship service twice a month (80%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those who attend once a month (68%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having someone who has been incarcerated ...

Attend a small group with me

- Those in the Northeast (78%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those in the Midwest (67%) and West (67%)
- Hispanics (77%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than Other Ethnicities (61%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having someone who has been incarcerated ...

Come to my home for a meal

- Those age 50-64 (48%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those 65+ (38%)
- Whites (47%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than African Americans (37%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (46%) and 500+ (51%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (36%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having someone who has been incarcerated ...

Serve as my pastor

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Uncomfortable/Very Uncomfortable” (30%)
- Whites (25%) and African Americans (22%) are more likely to select “Uncomfortable/Very Uncomfortable” than Hispanics (10%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (35%) are more likely to select “Uncomfortable/Very Uncomfortable” than with some college (13%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (23%)
- Those who attend a worship service twice a month (50%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those who attend once a month (31%) or 4 or more times a month (38%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (44%) and 500+ (45%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (33%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having someone who has been incarcerated ...

As a friend

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” (52%)
- Those with some college (68%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than who are High School Graduates or less (60%) or with a Bachelor’s Degree (58%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 500+ (68%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (54%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ...

Move into my neighborhood

- Those age 30-49 are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those 65+ (58%)
- Those who attend a worship service twice a month (69%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those who attend once a month (54%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ...

Attend church with me

- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (84%) or 4 or more times a month (81%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those who attend once a month (71%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ...

Attend a small group with me

- Whites (80%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than African Americans (70%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (82%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than those who attend once a month (70%)

“Please indicate your level of comfort with each of the following scenarios.”

Having an individual with an incarcerated family member ...

Come to my home for a meal

- Whites (65%) are more likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” than African Americans (54%)
- Those who attend a worship service once a month are the least likely to select “Very comfortable/Comfortable” (48%)

“Which of the following describes your impressions of people who have been incarcerated? Most people who have been incarcerated are ...”

Dangerous

- No meaningful significant differences

Dishonest

- No meaningful significant differences

Likely to commit more crimes after release

- No meaningful significant differences

Basically bad people

- No meaningful significant differences

“Which of the following describes your impressions of people who have been incarcerated? Most people who have been incarcerated are ...”

Victims of circumstance

- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to select (38%)
- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (15%)
- Those in the Northeast (34%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (21%) and South (21%)
- Whites are the least likely to select (19%)
- Those with some college are the most likely to select (33%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (28%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (18%) and 500+ (18%)

“Which of the following describes your impressions of people who have been incarcerated? Most people who have been incarcerated are ...”

Deserving of help

- Those age 50-64 (75%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (64%) and 65+ (65%)
- Those in the West (79%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (69%) and South (65%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (61%)

As trustworthy as anyone else

- Those who attend a worship service twice a month (23%) are more likely to select than those who attend three times a month (13%)

“Which of the following describes your impressions of people who have been incarcerated? Most people who have been incarcerated are ...”

Not worth the money and time to rehabilitate

- No meaningful significant differences

Deserving a second chance

- Those age 50-64 (82%) and 65+ (80%) are more likely to select than those 18-29 (71%)

“Christians have a responsibility to minister to the incarcerated.”

- Those who attend churches with attendance of 100-249 (87%) and 500+ (89%) are more likely to Agree than those at churches with attendance of less than 50 (79%) and 50-99 (80%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (90% v. 78%)

“Prison ministry contributes positively to public safety.”

- Those with a Bachelor's Degree (89%) or a Graduate Degree (92%) are more likely to Agree than those who are High School Graduates or less (81%)

“Formerly incarcerated people can contribute to understanding the Gospel message.”

- No meaningful significant differences

“Formerly incarcerated people can be leaders in the broader Christian community.”

- No meaningful significant differences

“Racial bias contributes to an unfair difference in the incarceration rate by race.”

- Males are more likely to Disagree than females (35% v. 22%)
- Those age 18-29 (72%) and 30-49 (69%) are more likely to Agree than those 50-64 (56%) and 65+ (48%)
- African Americans are the most likely to Agree (89%)
- Those with some college (65%) or a Bachelor's Degree (63%) are more likely to Agree than those who are High School Graduates or less (52%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (66%) are more likely to Agree than those at churches with attendance of 250-499 (54%) and 500+ (50%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those with evangelical beliefs (65% v. 54%)

“The racial disparity within the prisoner population in America is unjust.”

- Males are more likely to Disagree than females (39% v. 24%)
- Those age 18-29 (71%) and 30-49 (69%) are more likely to Agree than those 50-64 (52%) and 65+ (37%)
- Those age 50-64 are the most likely to Disagree (35%)
- African Americans are the most likely to Agree (89%) and Whites are the least likely to Agree (41%)
- Those with some college (60%) or a Bachelor's Degree (60%) are more likely to Agree than those who are High School Graduates or less (47%)
- Those who attend a worship service three times a month (63%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend twice a month (52%) or 4 or more times a month (53%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of less than 50 (55%), 50-99 (60%), 100-249 (56%) are more likely to Agree than those at churches with attendance of 500+ (42%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those with evangelical beliefs (63% v. 47%)

“Having difficulty re-entering society from jail and prison is an issue in my community.”

- Those age 18-29 (66%) and 30-49 (68%) are more likely to Agree than those 50-64 (52%) and 65+ (38%)
- African Americans (68%) and Hispanics (63%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (48%)
- Those who attend a worship service twice a month (63%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend once a month (49%) or 4 or more times a month (52%)
- Those who attend churches with attendance of 50-99 (59%) are more likely to Agree than those at churches with attendance of 500+ (46%)

“Many jails and prisons offer rehabilitation programs for those in custody.”

- Those age 18-29 (26%) are more likely to Disagree than those 50-64 (17%) and 65+ (11%)
- Hispanics (70%) are more likely to Agree than Other Ethnicities (51%)

“Prisoners participating in rehabilitation programs in prison are much less likely to commit another offense.”

- Those with a Graduate Degree (79%) are more likely to Agree than those who are High School Graduates or less (67%)

Churchgoer Views of Prison Ministry

A SURVEY OF 1,006 AMERICAN CHURCHGOERS

Lifewayresearch

Sponsored By:



**CORRECTIONAL
MINISTRIES INSTITUTE**



PRISON
FELLOWSHIP



Correctional Ministries and
Chaplains Association



**Kairos Prison Ministry
International**