



The Australian spirit during COVID-19

Exploring the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australians

JULY 2020

mccrindle

The Different Co.

Contents

Research objectives	3
Research methodology	3
Expectations of the future	5
Australians, COVID-19 and spirituality	10
Demographic summary	12
Additional demographics	13

Research objectives

This research, conducted by McCrindle in partnership with The Different Co., endeavours to understand the Australian public and their response to COVID-19.

The key objectives of this research are to:

- Explore Australians' attitudes and beliefs about the COVID-19 pandemic
- Understand Australians' outlook on the future
- Explore Australians' sentiment and behaviours following the government's response to the pandemic

Research methodology

The Australian spirit during COVID-19: exploring the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australians report is the collation of quantitative data collected via an online panel. The nationally representative survey of Australians aged 18+ was in field from the 24th to the 28th of July 2020 and yielded 1,002 responses.

Graphs and rounding

Data labels on the graphs in this report have been rounded for simplicity. Some graphs, may, therefore sum to 99% or 101%. Any calculations where two data points have been added are based on raw data (not the rounded data labels on the graph) which have been rounded once combined.

Terminology

Throughout this report the total sample of respondents are referred to as Australians. In addition to this several segmentation filters are applied to understand the results. Filters used include workers, faith and church attendance. The questions and response options used to develop the segmentation filters are included on the following page.

Data sets	Question and option/s chosen	No. of respondents
Australian workers	Q. Which of the following best describes your employment status? 'Full-time', 'part-time/casual' or 'self-employed/independent contractor'	580
Identify with Christianity	Q. What religion do you currently practise or identify with? 'Christianity (Catholic/Orthodox)' or 'Christianity (Protestant/Evangelical)	506
Regular church attenders	Q. How frequently do you attend church? Please select the response that most applied to you before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. 'Weekly', 'Fortnightly' or 'Monthly'	240

Expectations of the future

Australians are positive despite expecting the effects of COVID-19 to be ongoing

Australians are feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only are they feeling personally drained by the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions (61%) but are likely to have growing questions around how the government and authorities are handling the situation (66%).

Australians say the effects of the pandemic are likely to continue. Four in five Australians (80%) have a growing sense that we are going to be stuck in this COVID-19 challenge for at least two years.

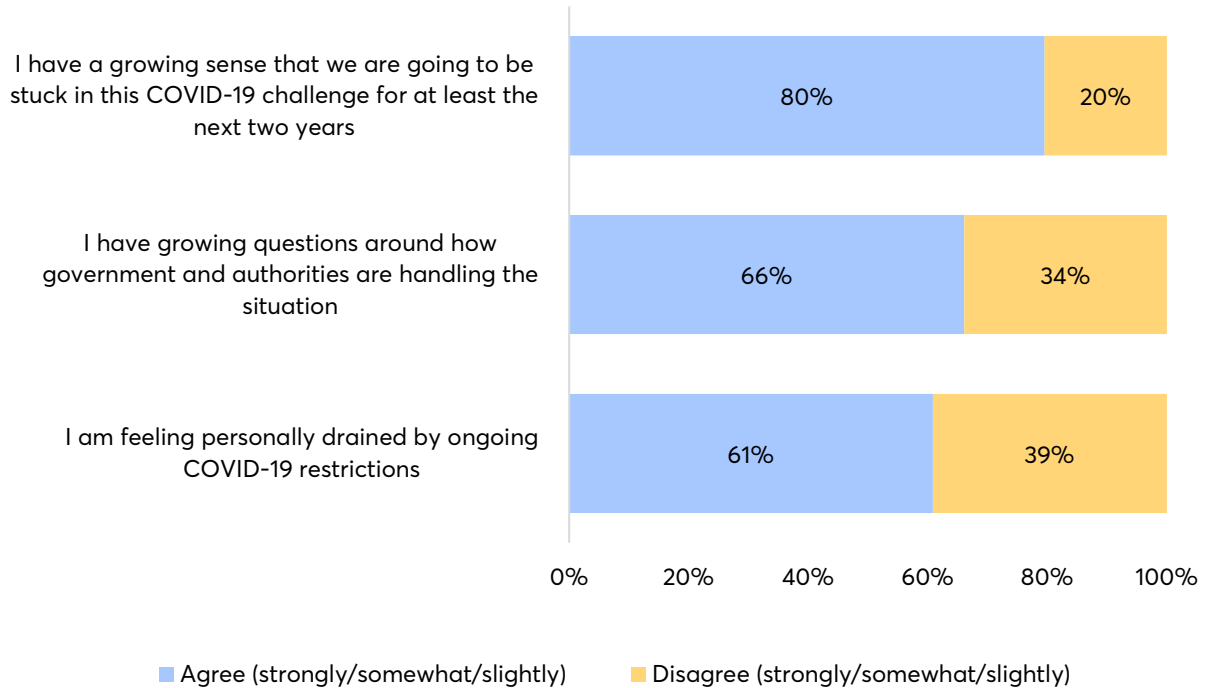
"COVID-fatigue is impacting the sentiment and compliance of Australians currently. The second-wave has sapped the optimism that residents of this Lucky Country usually express. There is a sense that there will not be a snap-back to how things were, and for now at least, personal anxiety is high and national resilience is low."

– Mark McCrindle.

Females are more likely than males to agree they have a growing sense we are going to be stuck in this COVID-19 challenge for at least the next two years (83% cf. 76% males).

Victorians currently in lockdown are the most likely to feel personally drained by ongoing COVID-19 restrictions (76% cf. 60% NSW, 51% QLD).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how Australia is responding to COVID-19



Australians are facing up to the challenge of the ongoing pandemic

Australians are not afraid to sacrifice for the greater cause

Despite the ongoing challenge Australians are putting their best foot forward. More than nine in ten Australians (93%) are still actively listening and following the messages of the health experts and government officials.

Similarly, Australians are still willing to reduce their personal freedoms for the sake of community health (89%).

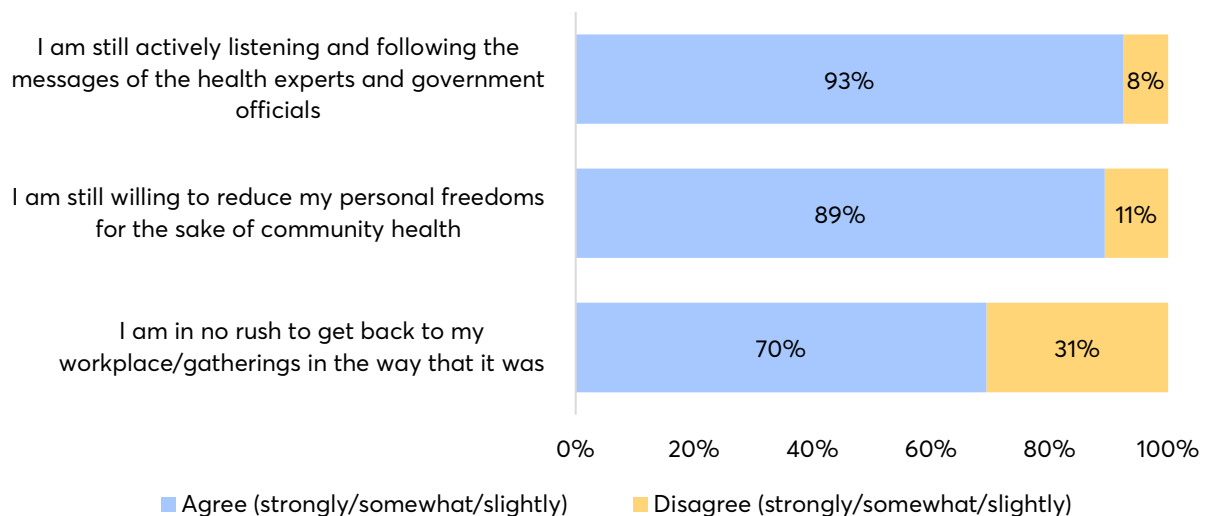
Australians are enjoying working from home

Many Australians are working from home as a response to COVID-19 restrictions. Seven in ten (70%) have revealed that they are in no rush to get back to their workplace/gatherings in the way that it was.

"Australians have recognised that the COVID-19 battle will not be a quick fight but a drawn-out campaign and so understandably most are feeling personally drained. Even worse than the fatigue is the anxiety Australians are feeling around what were once the mainstays of our lives: heading to a workplace or attending a gathering."

- Dr Lindsay McMillan

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how Australia is responding to COVID-19



COVID-19 is affecting Australians' relationships and personal lives

Australians are experiencing relational and personal challenges. Two in five Australians (42%) have experienced tension in their most significant relationships. While four in five (79%) feel that COVID-19 has clarified the relationships within which they want to invest their time into.

Almost three in five Australians (58%) have experienced an increase in a feeling of loneliness because of the pandemic.

The extended lockdown period is likely taking its toll on Victorians as they are the most likely to have experienced an increase in a feeling of loneliness (67% cf. 59% NSW, 50% QLD).

Younger generations are heavily affected

Younger Australians are more likely than their older counterparts to say COVID-19 has clarified the relationships in which they want to invest their time (83% Gen Z, 84% Gen Y cf. 80% Gen X, 72% Baby Boomers, 71% Builders). While there has been positive clarification around where they want to invest their time, there has also been challenges.

Gen Z in particular are more likely to have experienced tension in their most significant relationships (63% Gen Z, 56% Gen Y cf. 42% Gen X, 22% Baby Boomers, 19% Builders).

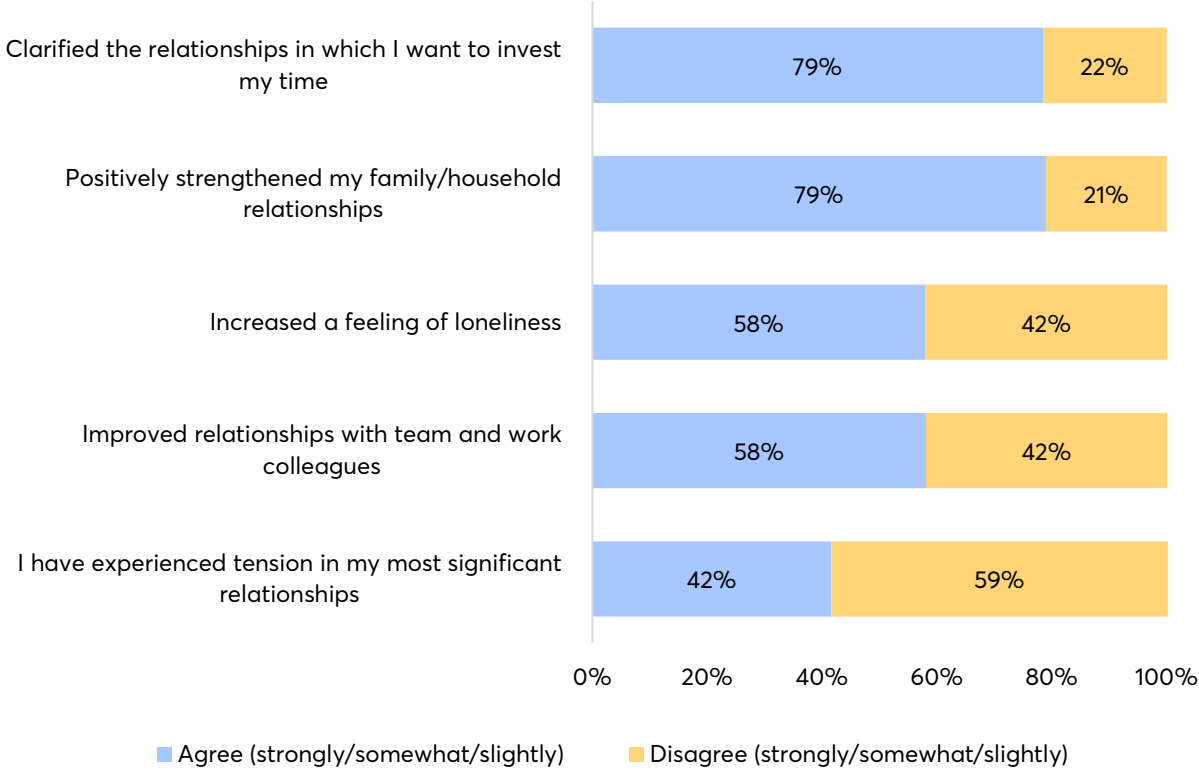
Three in four Gen Z (78%) and two in three Gen Y (68%) have experienced an increase in a feeling of loneliness compared to half of Gen X (55%), and two in five Baby Boomers (44%) and Builders (42%).

"Although young people have been the least impacted from the health impacts of COVID-19, economically through employment challenges, and socially through cancelled activities and life plans, they have been the most impacted." – Mark McCrindle

COVID-19 unexpectedly improving household and working relationships

Australians are also experiencing positive effects on their relationships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Four in five Australians (79%) believe that COVID-19 has positively strengthened their family/household relationships and almost three in five (58%) have improved relationships with team and work colleagues.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how Australia is responding to COVID-19



Australians, COVID-19 and spirituality

Australians are addressing life's big questions

Almost one in two Australians (47%) have thought about their mortality more, with a similar proportion (47%) thinking about the meaning of life more during their experience of COVID-19.

One in five Australians (21%) have also been more superstitious and three in ten (33%) have thought about God more during the experience of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is increasing faith activities in Australia with one in four Australian's engaging in more (much/somewhat/slightly) spiritual conversations (26%) and praying more (28%). A further one in five Australians have read their Bible more (19%) and one in six (16%) have attended church more often (either physically or online).

Younger generations are more likely than older generations to have thought about their mortality more (56% Gen Z, 53% Gen Y cf. 42% Gen X, 40% Baby Boomers, 41% Builders) and been more superstitious during the experience of COVID-19 (40% Gen Z, 30% Gen Y cf. 19% Gen X, 10% Baby Boomers, 4% Builders).

Australian workers have a spiritual life

Australian workers are participating more in spiritual practices. One in three Australian workers (35%) are praying more (much/somewhat/slightly) and having more spiritual conversations (33%). A further two in five (41%) are thinking about God more and one in four are reading the Bible more (25%).

Australian workers are asking life's big questions. One in two Australian workers are thinking about their own mortality (53%) and the meaning of life (55%) during the experience of COVID-19.

The picture for the Australian church is not as bleak as some may think

COVID-19 has seen an increase in spiritual practices for regular church goers. Two in five regular church goers are attending church more often (38%), reading their Bibles more (45%) and praying more (63%).

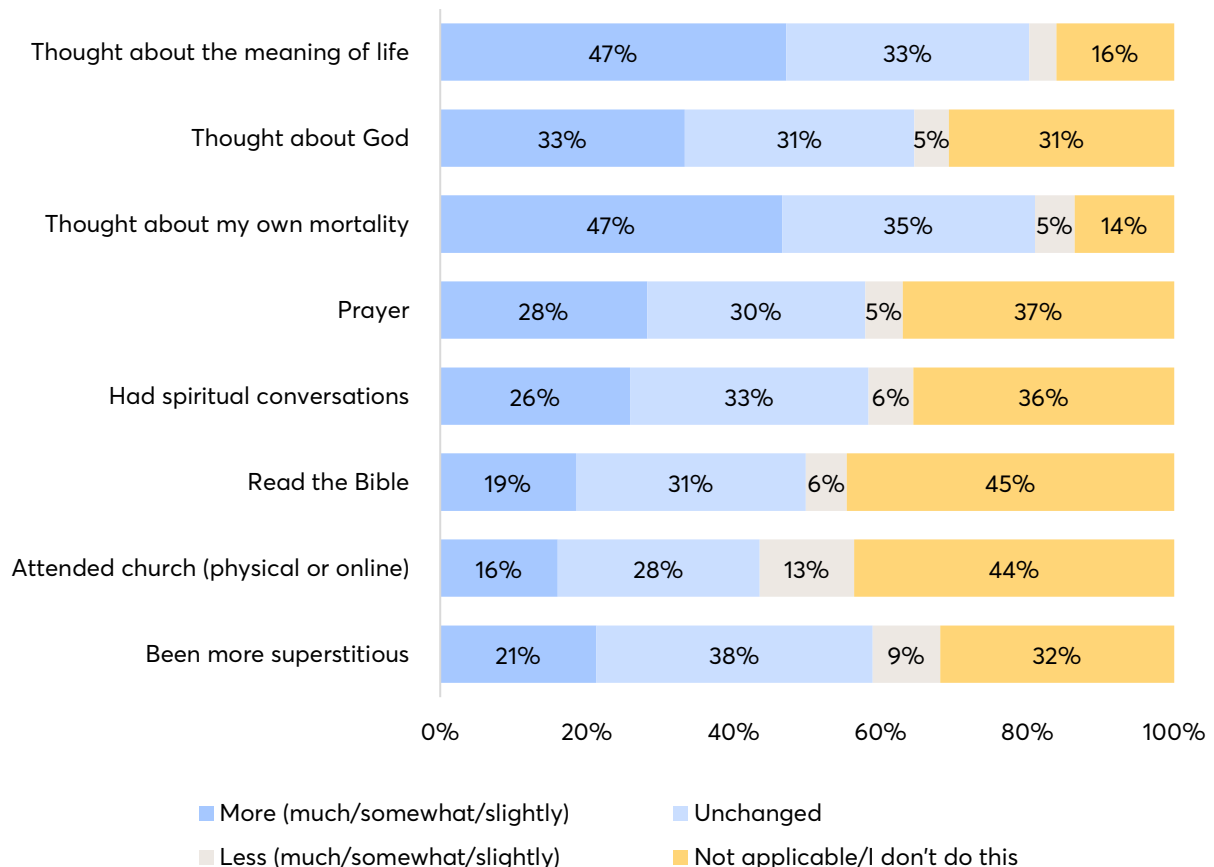
Regular church goers are also more likely to agree they have had more spiritual conversations compared to Australians identifying with Christianity who are less regularly church goers (49% cf. 18% less than monthly).

"While there is a perception that "Australians don't do religion", the reality is quite different. Not only are Australians

engaging in spiritual pursuits, they are engaging even more in faith practices since COVID-19. This research backs up what I'm seeing consistently in my work: most workers are spending more time thinking about purpose and meaning, God conversations are up, as is prayer."
- Dr McMillan.

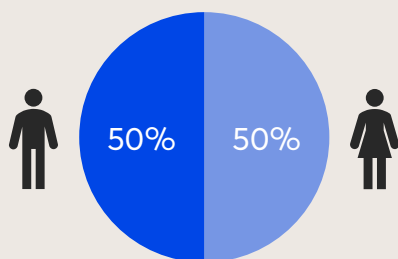
Younger Australians are more likely than older Australians to have attended church more often (25% Gen Z, 23% Gen Y cf. 16% Gen X, 6% Baby Boomers, 7% Builders) and thought about God more (44% Gen Z, 40% Gen Y cf. 33% Gen X, 24% Baby Boomers, 23% Builders) during the experience of COVID-19.

During the experience of COVID-19 how, if at all, has the time you have spent on the following activities changed?

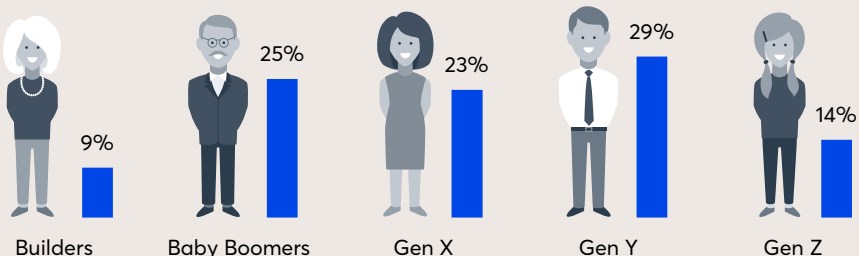


Demographic summary

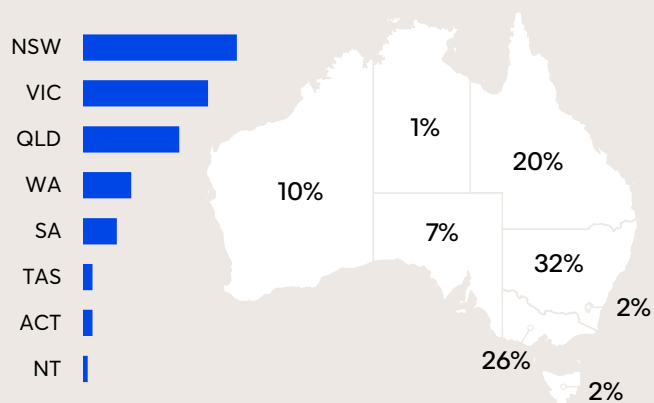
Are you male or female?



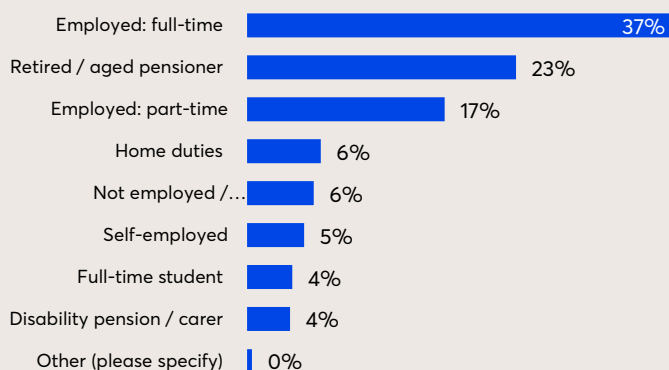
What age will you be in 2020?



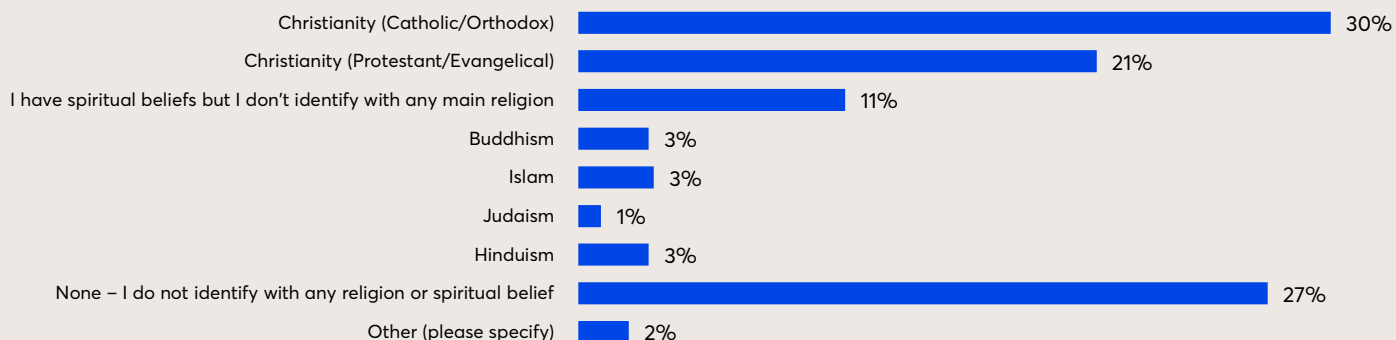
Where do you usually live?



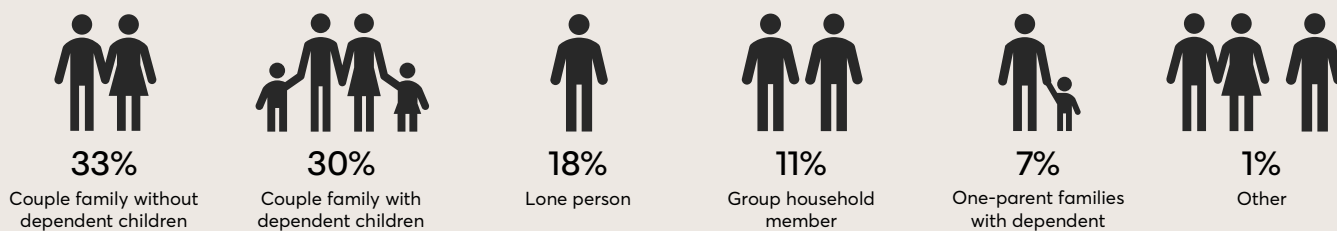
Which of the following best describes your employment status?



What religion do you currently practise or identify with?

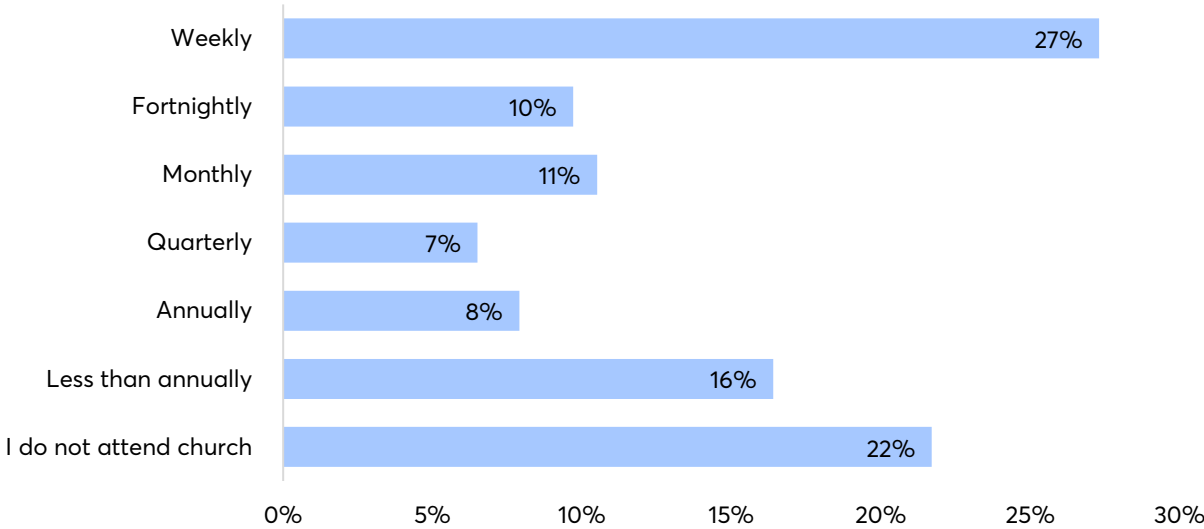


What type of household do you currently live in?



Additional demographics

How frequently do you attend church?
Please select the response that most applied to you before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic.



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