

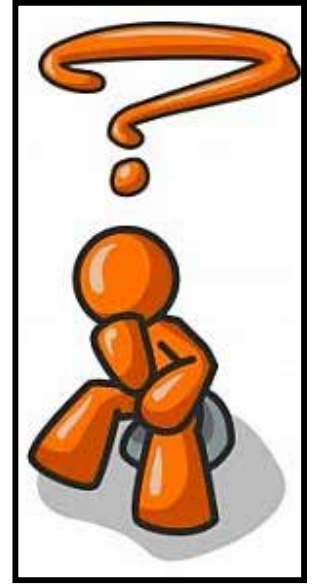
What About ... the Statistics on Pastors

BY DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

First of all, I want to say that there is no such thing as what we call a “pastor” in the New Testament. The position of “pastor” is quite recent in church history, created by the covenant, not the anabaptist, wing of the Reformation. The office of “pastor” is just something our society has created. All Christian leaders in the Bible were:

1. Always a plurality [the Apostle John condemned the idea of one who is first among them (1 John 9)]
2. Always men of responsibility, not authority, not lording it over people (1 Peter 3:5)
3. Always involved throughout the city in which they lived, never a CEO of an assembly –*Appoint elders in every city* (Titus 1:5)

But that’s not what this “What About” is about. I wrote something about “pastors.” If you are interested, see “The New Testament Church,” by David A. DeWitt (Chapter 17) under “books” at relationalconcepts.org.



This “What About” is about what is going on today with this job we have created. Nothing below this paragraph is from me. It is just a list of statistics that others have found. Below each web site are the statistics listed at that site. I include their findings without further comment (all emphasis are theirs).

<http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562>

After over 18 years of researching pastoral trends and many of us being a pastor, we have found (this data is backed up by other studies) that pastors are in a dangerous occupation! We are perhaps the single most stressful and frustrating working profession, more than medical doctors, lawyers, or politicians. We found that over 70% of pastors are so stressed out and burned out that they regularly consider leaving the ministry. Thirty-five to forty percent of pastors actually do leave the ministry, most after only five years. On a personal note, out of the 12 senior pastors that I have served under directly, two have passed away, and four have left the ministry totally—that is, not only are they no longer in the pulpit, but they no longer even attend a church. And, I run into ex-pastors on a regular basis at conferences and speaking engagements; makes me wonder “what’s up with that,” as my kids would say.

From our recent research we did to retest our data, 1050 pastors were surveyed from two pastor’s conferences held in Orange County and Pasadena, Ca—416 in 2005, and 634 in 2006. (This is a small local sampling to assess causes and motivations, not necessarily indicative of a national sampling.)

- Of the one thousand fifty (1,050 or 100%) pastors we surveyed, every one of them had a close associate or seminary buddy who had left the ministry because of burnout, conflict in their church, or from a moral failure.
- Nine hundred forty-eight (948 or 90%) of pastors stated they are frequently fatigued, and worn out on a weekly and even daily basis (did not say burned out).
- Nine hundred thirty-five (935 or 89%) of the pastors we surveyed also considered leaving the ministry at one time. Five hundred ninety (590 or 57%) said they would leave if they had a better place to go—including secular work.
- Eighty-one percent (81%) of the pastors said there was no regular discipleship program or effective effort of mentoring their people or teaching them to deepen their Christian formation at their church (remember these are the Reformed and Evangelical—not the mainline pastors!). **(This is Key.)**

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- Eight hundred eight (808 or 77%) of the pastors we surveyed felt they did not have a good marriage!
- Seven hundred ninety (790 or 75%) of the pastors we surveyed felt they were unqualified and/or poorly trained by their seminaries to lead and manage the church or to counsel others. This left them disheartened in their ability to pastor.
- Seven hundred fifty-six (756 or 72%) of the pastors we surveyed stated that they only studied the Bible when they were preparing for sermons or lessons. This left only 38% who read the Bible for devotions and personal study.
- Eight hundred two (802 or 71%) of pastors stated they were burned out, and they battle depression beyond fatigue on a weekly and even a daily basis.
- Three hundred ninety-nine (399 or 38%) of pastors said they were divorced or currently in a divorce process.
- Three hundred fifteen (315 or 30%) said they had either been in an ongoing affair or a one-time sexual encounter with a parishioner.

<https://www.standingstoneministry.org/40-of-pastors-admit-to-having-extramarital-affair>

Today I read a shocking statistic. Forty percent of pastors surveyed admitted to having an extra marital affair after entering the ministry! 40%! How does that happen? Of course, it is common knowledge that there have been pastors that have had moral failures, after all we are dealing with human beings. But to have a whopping 40% admit to an affair? Is anyone else shocked or am I just naive? What, if anything, can we do to help affair-proof the marriages of our ministry couples?

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/january/how-pastors-struggle-porn-phenomenon-josh-mcdowell-barna.html>

- “Most pastors (57%) and youth pastors (64%) admit they have struggled with porn, either currently or in the past,” Barna reported. “Overall, 21 percent of youth pastors and 14 percent of pastors admit they currently struggle with using porn.”
- More than 1 in 10 youth pastors (12%) and 1 in 20 pastors (5%) said they’re addicted.

<https://ccmw4thepreacherswife.wordpress.com/being-a-pastors-wife/sobering-statistics-about-pastors-wives>

- 56% say they have no close friends in the church
- 84% feel unqualified and discouraged in their roles
- 80% feel pressured to do things and be something in the church that they are not
- 80% believe their spouse is overworked
- 80% wish their spouse would choose another profession
- 50% of their marriages will end in divorce