

Barna: Twentysomethings found less likely to attend church_10603

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Twentysomethings found less likely to attend church

VENTURA, Calif. (RNS)—Americans in their 20s are less likely to attend church or read the Bible than older Americans, a Barna Research Group study has found.

Thirty-one percent of twentysomethings attend a worship service in a typical week, compared to 42 percent of those in their 30s and 49 percent of all adults ages 40 and older.

The level of Bible reading also decreases by age group. Researchers found 30 percent of twentysomethings had read the Bible in the past week, compared to 37 percent of Americans in their 30s, 44 percent of

fortysomethings, 47 percent of Americans in their 50s and 55 percent of adults ages 60 and older.

Comparisons on giving are more dramatic—30 percent of Americans in their 20s donated to a church in the past year, compared to 61 percent of older adults.

Despite the lower percentages in religious practice, researchers found internal aspects of faith rank higher among those in their 20s. For example, 80 percent of twentysomethings said faith is very important in their life; 75 percent said they had prayed to God in the past week; and 57 percent said they had made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life.

“The notion that these people will return to the church when they get older or once they become parents is only true in a minority of cases,” said David Kinnaman, vice president of the research firm. “More importantly, that reasoning ignores the real issue—millions of twentysomethings are crystallizing their views of life without the input of church leaders, the Bible or other mature Christians.”

Research for the overall study was based on nationwide telephone interviews with 14,091 adults from January 2000 through May 2003, with a margin of error of plus or minus 1 percentage point. A total of 2,660 adults in their 20s were interviewed, with a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

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