

Gen Z and Millennials top in church attendance

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BOULDER, Colo. (BP)—For the first time in decades, Gen Z and Millennials are attending church more frequently than older adults, Barna and Gloo reported Sept. 3 from its latest [State of the Church](#) research.

However, despite the rise, the average Christian still only attends church 1.6 time per month, or twice every five weeks, researchers said.

“We were able to analyze our data in a fresh way to show what many pastors feel—that even really regular churchgoers do not attend that often. Among all churched adults, we found that they attend, on average, 1.6 times per month, or roughly two out of every five weekends,” Barna Vice President of Research Daniel Copeland said.

“This new analysis of the tracking data helps us better understand the frustrations pastors feel when they are trying to build momentum for their congregations, such as series-based preaching and mobilizing volunteers.”

Younger generations are attending church nearly twice as often as  they did five years ago, researchers said, with Gen Z and Millennials averaging 1.9 and 1.8 weekends a month, respectively, in the first half of 2025.

Elders and Boomers both averaged 1.4 times a month in attendance January through July, researchers said, noting Elders’ drop from 2.3 times monthly in 2000, and Boomers’ decline from twice monthly. Gen X has remained steady, averaging 1.6 times monthly.

Attendance for younger Christians is the highest it has been since they

reached adulthood and became old enough to be included in Barna's tracking, researchers noted.

"The fact that young people are showing up more frequently than before is not a typical trend," Copeland said. "It's typically older adults who are the most loyal churchgoers.

"This data represents good news for church leaders and adds to the picture that spiritual renewal is shaping Gen Z and Millennials today."

Congregational life 'more frayed and less gray'

The increase in attendance has not signaled an increase in devoted disciples, Barna Group CEO David Kinnaman said, but it gives pastors opportunities to create paths for spiritual mentoring that can help deepen the faith of younger generations.

"The significant drop-off among older generations shows that the fabric of congregational life is changing. It's more frayed and less gray than it was a decade ago," Kinnaman said.

"The influx of new generations represents a massive opportunity for congregational leaders, but this renewed interest must be stewarded well."

Kinnaman noted the challenge of "shaping hearts and minds to live out their faith beyond church participation."

Researchers advised churches to develop discipleship strategies that acknowledge and account for attendance that is less than half of all Sundays, recommending digital tools, church apps for texting, small groups and online resources for spiritual growth.

In uncovering these findings, researchers said they focused on adult Christians who attended church the past six months, highlighting the behavior of people already engaged in church life.

The 2025 State of the Church is based on online and telephone interviews within nationwide random samples of 132,030 adults conducted over 25 years through July. These studies are conducted utilizing quota sampling to represent all U.S. adults by age, gender, race, ethnicity, region, education and income, researchers said. The data also includes 5,580 online interviews collected January through July with quota sampling.

Regarding Gen Z, researchers only began tracking their churchgoing in 2017 and 2018, when the group born as early as 1990 reached adulthood. Data collected likely mirrored the attendance of the youths' parents, researchers said.