

# More than half of Americans rarely go to church

March 26, 2024

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The most popular church in America might be St. Mattress, followed by Bedside Baptist.

Those two—euphemisms for sleeping in on Sundays—increasingly describe the attitude of many Americans toward attending churches or other houses of worship.

More than half of Americans (56 percent) say they seldom or never attend religious services, according to new data from Gallup. Less than a third (30 percent) say they attend on a weekly or almost weekly basis.

Gallup found almost all of the so-called Nones (95 percent) say they seldom or never attend services. More than half of Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and Orthodox Christians say they rarely attend as well.

Among religious Americans, Latter-Day Saints (67 percent) are most likely to say they attend weekly or almost weekly, followed by Protestants (44 percent), Muslims (38 percent) and Catholics (33 percent).

## Percentage of nonattenders doubled in 30 years

Overall, the percentage of Americans who never attend services has more than doubled since the early 1990s, while the share of those who say they rarely attend has stayed stable, according to Gallup data.

An earlier report from Gallup found that in 1992, those who attended

weekly (34 percent) outnumbered those who never attended (14 percent) by 2 to 1. Since 2018, the number of Americans who never attend services has outnumbered the number who attend weekly.

Gallup Senior Editor Jeffrey Jones said the decline in attendance is driven mostly by generational shifts. Not only are younger Americans less likely to identify with any religion, they also are less likely to have been raised with a religion.

“If you were raised in a religion and you have fallen away, you can come back to it,” he said. “Younger people, a lot of times, weren’t brought up in any religion. So, they don’t have anything to come back down.”

Americans today are also less religious overall and less likely to identify as Christian, meaning the nation’s largest religious tradition—whose adherents are most likely to attend weekly services—has declined, leading to lower attendance.

Jones said an overall loss of faith in the nation’s institutions likely plays a role in the declining attendance. A Gallup poll last year found only a third of Americans had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the church or organized religion.

But the growth of the “nones”—those who do not identify with any religion—likely played a larger role in the attendance decline, Jones said.

Gallup’s findings echo the data from other major organizations, such as Pew Research Center, that track religion and other cultural trends and have found both religious identity and participation are declining.

A recent Pew study found most Americans believe [religion’s influence is waning](#). Half think that is a bad thing. The other half think the decline is good or don’t care.