

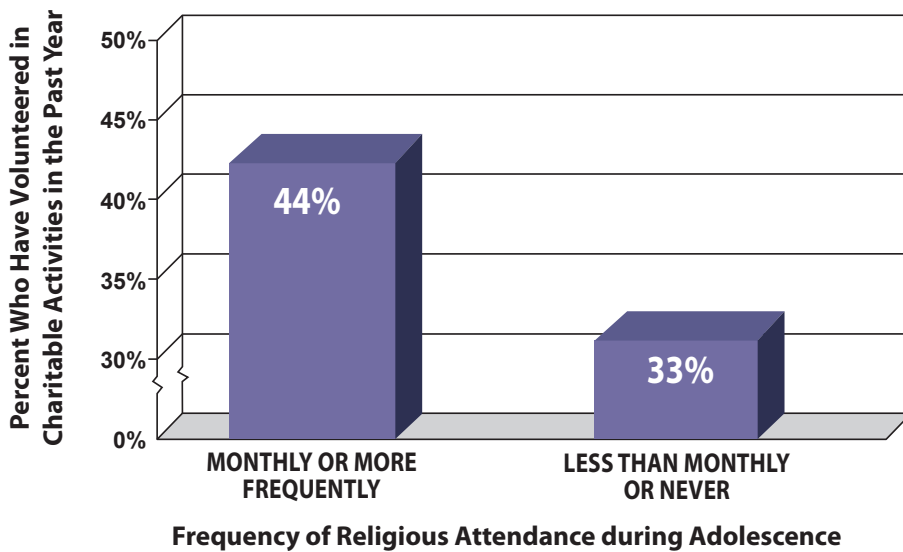


Mapping America

Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good – Number 43

Intergenerational Links to Volunteering in Charitable Activities: Religious Attendance

Percent Who Have Volunteered in Charitable Activities in the Past Year by Frequency of Their Religious Attendance during Adolescence



Source: General Social Survey (GSS)

This chart is taken from a study conducted by Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai for Family Research Council.

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents are more likely to have volunteered in a charitable activity in the past year.

According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 44 percent of adults who attended religious services at least

monthly as adolescents had volunteered in a charitable activity in the last year, compared to 33 percent of adults who attended worship less than monthly as adolescents.¹

Other Studies

Several other sources corroborate the direction of these findings. Jerry Park of the University of Notre Dame and Christian Smith of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that “[c]hurchgoing Protestants who participate in church activities very frequently are more likely to volunteer in their local communities” and that “religious community...empowers churchgoers to help out in their neighborhoods.”²

Peggy Thoits and Lyndi Hewitt of Vanderbilt University reported that “volunteer hours are moderately and positively correlated with frequent attendance at religious services.”³

In a study of congregations and individuals in four upstate New York communities, Penny Becker of Cornell University and Pawan Dhingra of Bucknell University also found that church attendance predicts volunteering.⁴

As the evidence indicates, those who devote time to religious services, as adolescents or adults, are more likely to volunteer time for charitable activities.

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- 1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Survey in 1998. Two samples totaling approximately 3,000 people were used.
 - 2 Jerry Park and Christian Smith, "To Whom Much Has Been Given...": Religious Capital and Community Voluntarism among Churchgoing Protestants," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 39 (2000): 272-286.
 - 3 Peggy Thoits and Lyndi Hewitt, "Volunteer Work and Well-Being," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 42 (2001): 115-131.
 - 4 Penny Becker and Pawan Dhingra, "Religious Involvement and Volunteering: Implications for Civil Society," *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 62 (2001): 315-335.



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