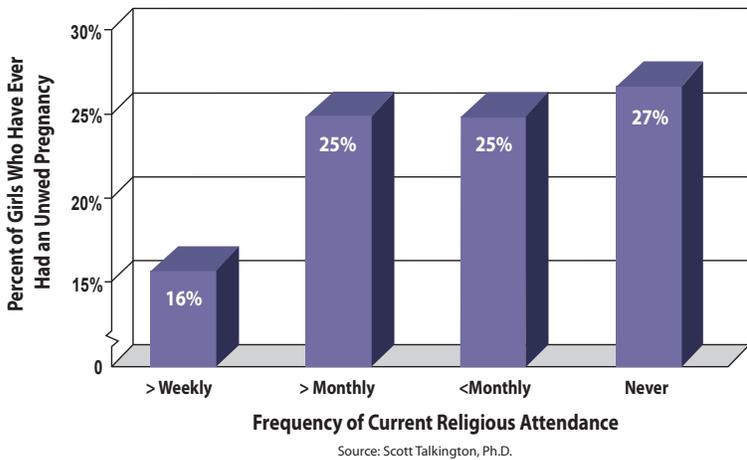




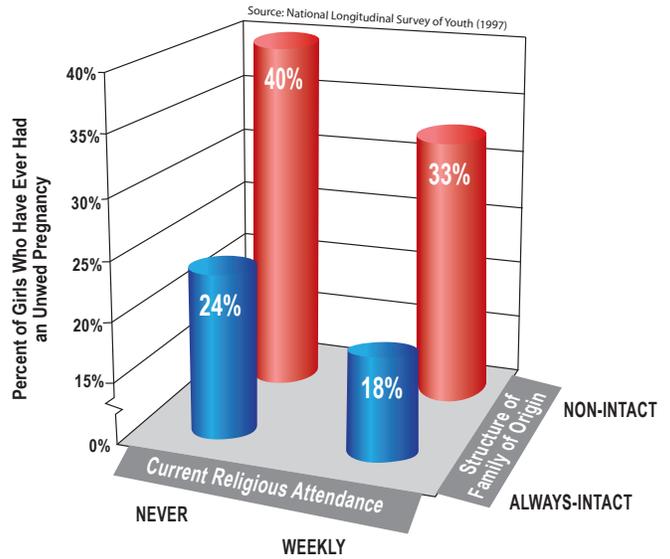
Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good – Number 101

“Ever Had an Unwed Pregnancy” by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

“Ever Had an Unwed Pregnancy”
by Current Religious Attendance

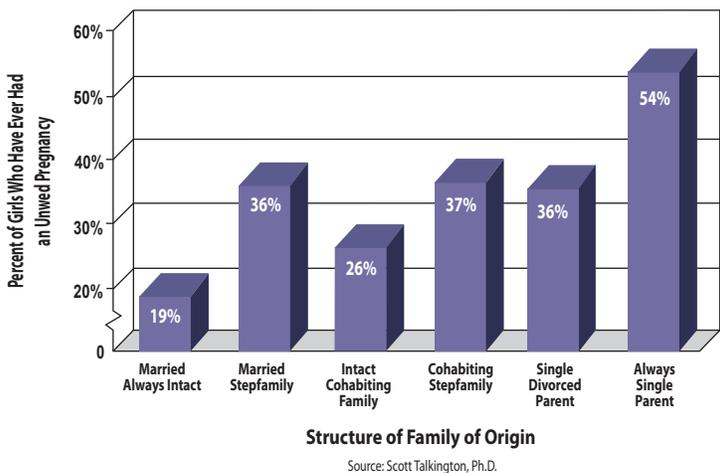


“Ever Had an Unwed Pregnancy”
by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin



Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin Combined
Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

“Ever Had an Unwed Pregnancy”
by Structure of Family of Origin



This chart looks at females who have had an unwed pregnancy at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. non-intact*) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

The always-intact married family that worships weekly;

The always-intact married family that never worships;

The non-intact family* that worships weekly;

The non-intact family* that never worships.

(* The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)

“Ever Had an Unwed Pregnancy” by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that females who grew up in intact families who frequently attended religious services are least likely to have had an unwed pregnancy.

Description: Examining **structure of family of origin**, 19 percent of females who grew up in an intact married family have had an unwed pregnancy, followed by females from intact cohabiting families (26 percent), single divorced parent families (36 percent) and married stepfamilies (36 percent), cohabiting stepfamilies (37 percent), and always single parent families (54 percent).

Examining only **current religious attendance**, 16 percent of females who worship at least weekly have had unwed pregnancy, followed by those who attend religious services between one and three times a month (25 percent) and those who attend religious services less than once monthly (25 percent), and those who never attend religious services (27 percent).

Examining **current religious attendance and structure of family of origin combined**, 18 percent of females who worship weekly and grew up in intact families have had an unwed pregnancy. By contrast, 40 percent of females who never attend religious services and come from non-intact family backgrounds have at some point become pregnant out of wedlock. Between these two extremes are those who never worship and grew up in intact families (24 percent) and those who attend religious services weekly but grew up in non-intact families (33 percent).

Related Insight from Other Studies

Studies based on the 1995 General Social Survey show that family structure affects the unwed pregnancy rate. According to Valerie Martin of McGill University, when compared with peers from intact families, adolescent and young adult women who experienced parental divorce were significantly more likely to give birth out of wedlock.¹

Using this same survey, Jay Teachman of Western Washington University also found intact families to be protective in many ways: Compared with peers from other family structures, women who grew up in intact families were less likely to form high-risk marriages, to cohabit before marriage, or to have a premarital birth or conception.²

Another study demonstrated the protective nature of the family's religion: When compared with peers whose mothers had not attended religious services frequently, 18-year-olds whose mothers attended religious services often were more likely to have attitudes about premarital sex, cohabitation, abortion, and divorce.³

The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Survey also showed the impact of religion on urban mothers, finding that urban mothers who attend church frequently are at least 70 percent more likely to be married when they give birth or to get married within one year of a nonmarital birth than are urban mothers who do not attend church frequently.⁴

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

Dr. Fagan is senior fellow and director of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI) at Family Research Council.

Scott Talkington has been Research Director for the National Association of Scholars and Senior Research Fellow at George Mason University School of Public Policy since 1998.

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