

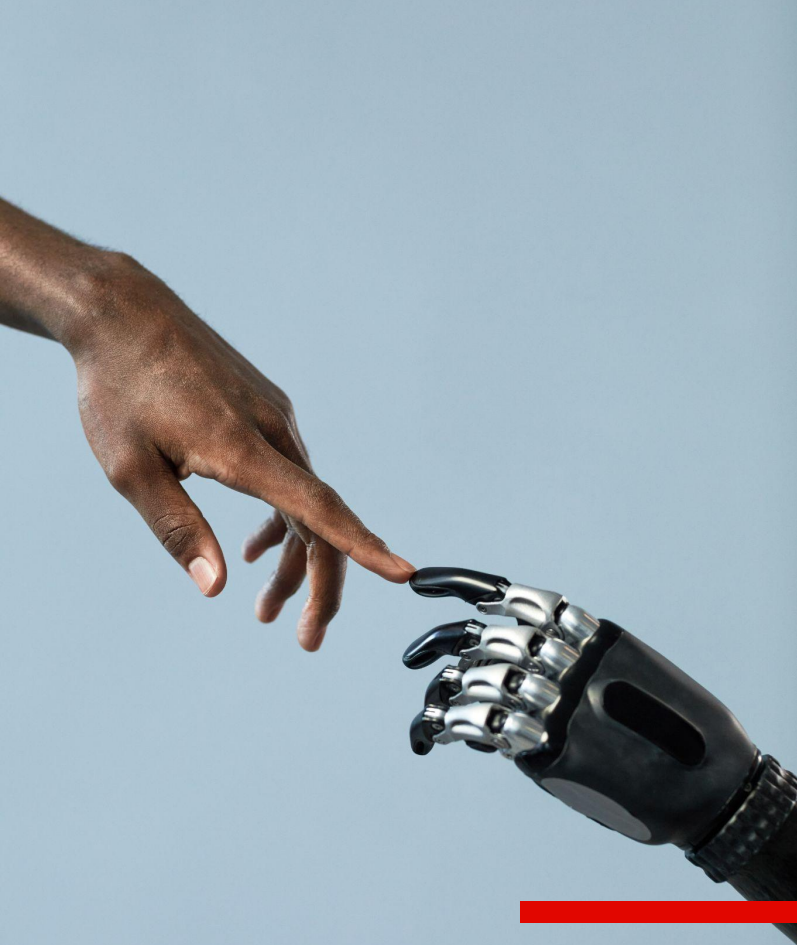
EX⁷ NEXT

AI In The Church Survey 2024



gloo





What's Inside

- Key Findings
- Current State Of AI Utilization
- Perceived Benefits & Applications
- Challenges & Concerns
- Policies & Training
- Demographics
- Next Steps

About The Survey

In 2024, Exponential launched a national survey titled *“The State of AI in the Church”* by the AI NEXT initiative team. The survey drew input from a wide spectrum of church leaders that are associated with ministries across 20+ denominations as well as non-denominational churches. AI NEXT collaborated with additional organizations to increase the reach of the national survey including AI for Church Leaders.com, ChurchTechToday.com, and Gloo. The aim is to serve the thousands of churches that are exploring and adopting artificial intelligence in their ministry work today. We welcome your feedback and comments! Email Barbara Martinez at barbara@exponential.org

The State Of AI In The Church Overview

The responses to this survey demonstrate a growing interest among church leaders in integrating AI into various aspects of ministry. However, there's a balanced mix of excitement and caution, reflecting the nascent stage of AI's adoption in religious contexts. The enthusiasm for AI's potential in enhancing ministry effectiveness contrasts with concerns about ethical implications and the need to preserve the human touch.



663

 Respondents

Key Findings

87%

of respondents said they are **FOR** the use of AI in ministry to some degree. *Only 13% are fully against it.*



Key Findings

66%

are already using AI tools for ministry purposes at least occasionally. **13%** are using AI tools daily.



Key Findings

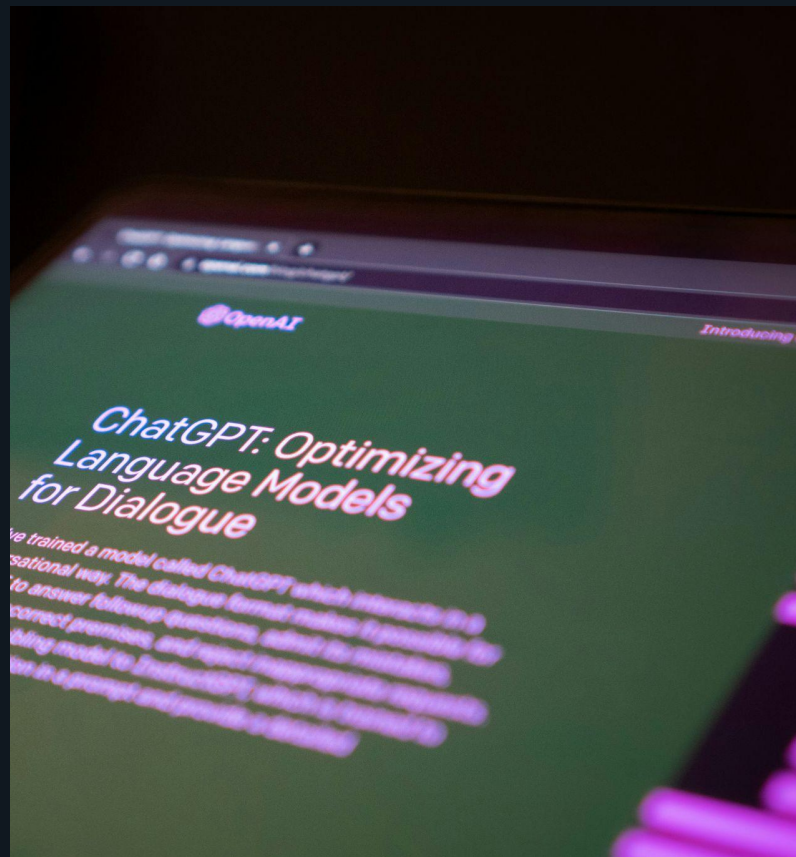
The top ways AI is being used include —

- Informational/research (27%)
- Text/Content generation (25%)
- Image/Graphics generation (15%)
- Process automation (8%)

Key Findings

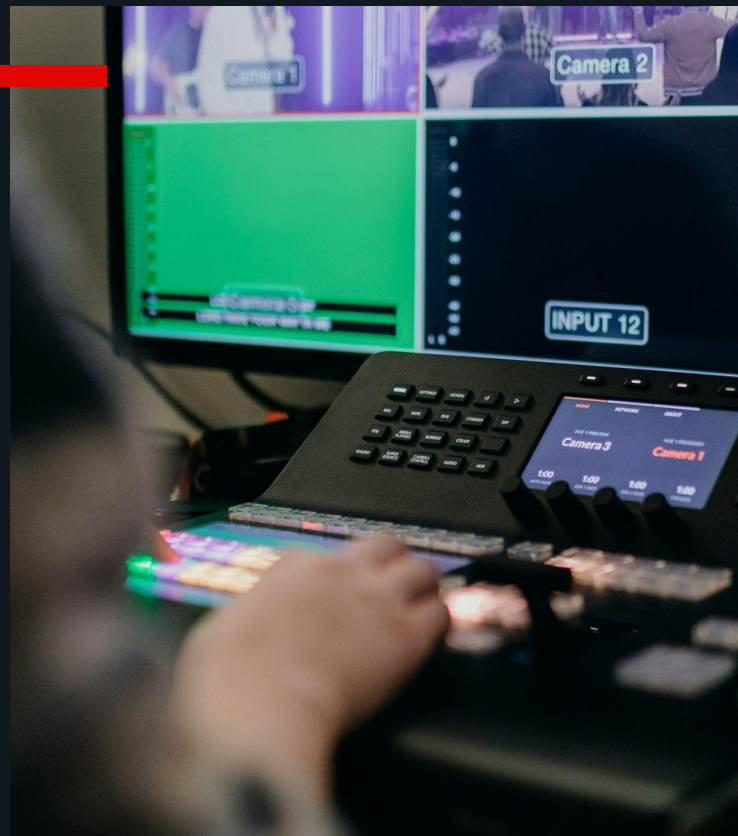
The most popular AI tools being used are —

- ChatGPT (25%)
- Grammarly (13%)
- Canva Magic (10%)
- Google Gemini (Bard) (9%)

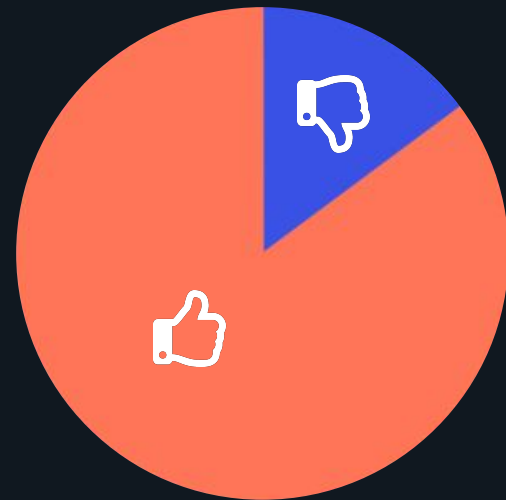


AI Utilization

The variety in AI tool usage underscores the technology's versatility in supporting church operations and spiritual activities. Yet, it also highlights the necessity for targeted training and resources to maximize AI's benefits while navigating ethical considerations.



Are you **FOR** or **AGAINST** the use of AI in ministry work?

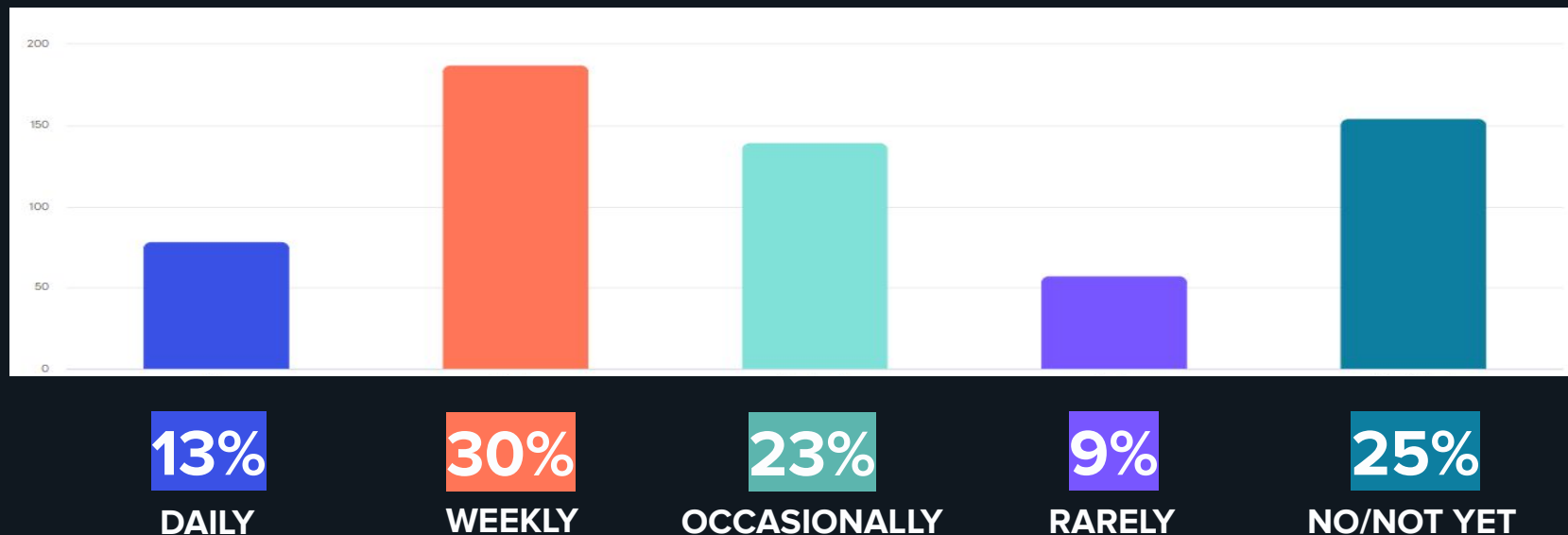
**87%****FOR**

Any and all degrees
of use is included.

13%**AGAINST**

No use at all is
appropriate.

Do you use any AI tools for ministry work-related purposes / activities?



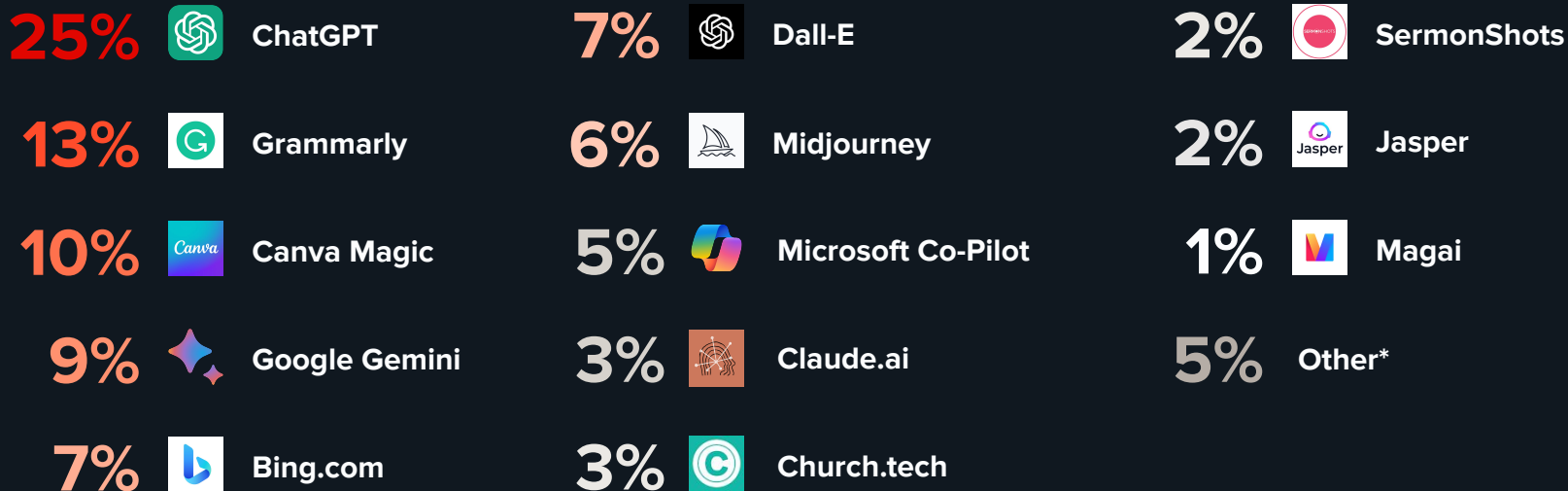
Key Findings

43%

use AI tools frequently.
(weekly or daily)



Which of the following AI tools have you used?



*Other AI tools mentioned: Notion, Pastors.ai, WriteSonic, Zoom, Looka, Perplexity, Photoshop, Adobe, Pulpit AI, Gloo, Playground.ai, Leonardo, OpusClip, ClickUp, Podcastle.ai, Starry, Sermons.tech, Text in Church, Chatbox, Sermon Spark, Otter AI, Veed, Eleven Labs, Motion App, CastMagic, Pica AI, AI Wise Mind, Predis.ai, Vidy.ai, SermonAI

What's one specific example of an AI tool and/or how you use AI in a ministry work context within the last month?

Most common uses:

- Sermon preparation
- Research
- Article creation, management, distribution
- Creating content or resources
- Drafting documents or presentations
- Planning activities or events
- Translating text or speech
- Learning tools
- Data analysis or visualization
- Digital assistant or task automation



10:13

LTE

About

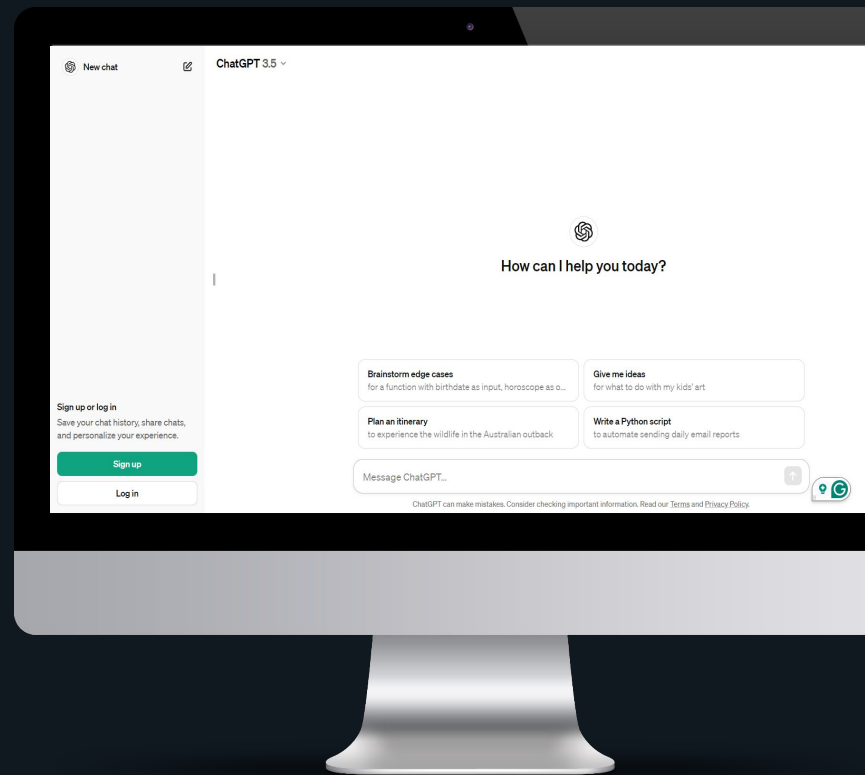
OpenAI is an AI research company. Our mission is to ensure that artificial general intelligence benefits all of humanity.

A Closer Look At The Top 5 Utilized Tools

Chat GPT, Grammarly, Canva Magic, Google Gemini, Bing.com

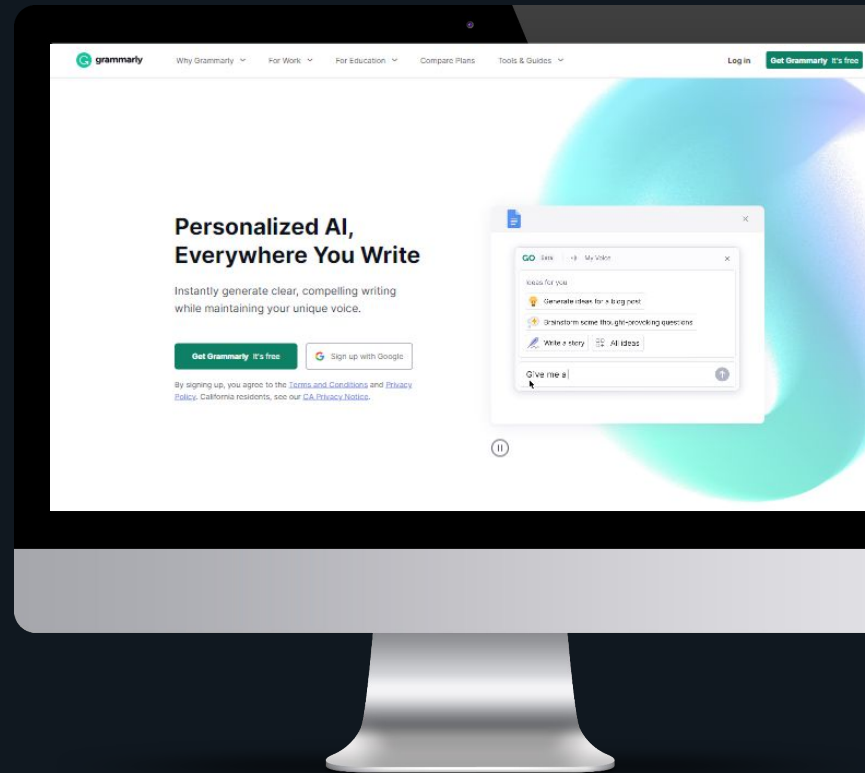
ChatGPT

ChatGPT is the most visible generative AI tool that can engage in human-like conversations and assist with a wide range of tasks, from answering questions to generating content. As the most popular AI tool among church leaders (25%), ChatGPT is being used for applications such as sermon preparation, research, and crafting church communications. Its versatility and ease of use make it a powerful asset for streamlining ministry work and sparking creative ideas.



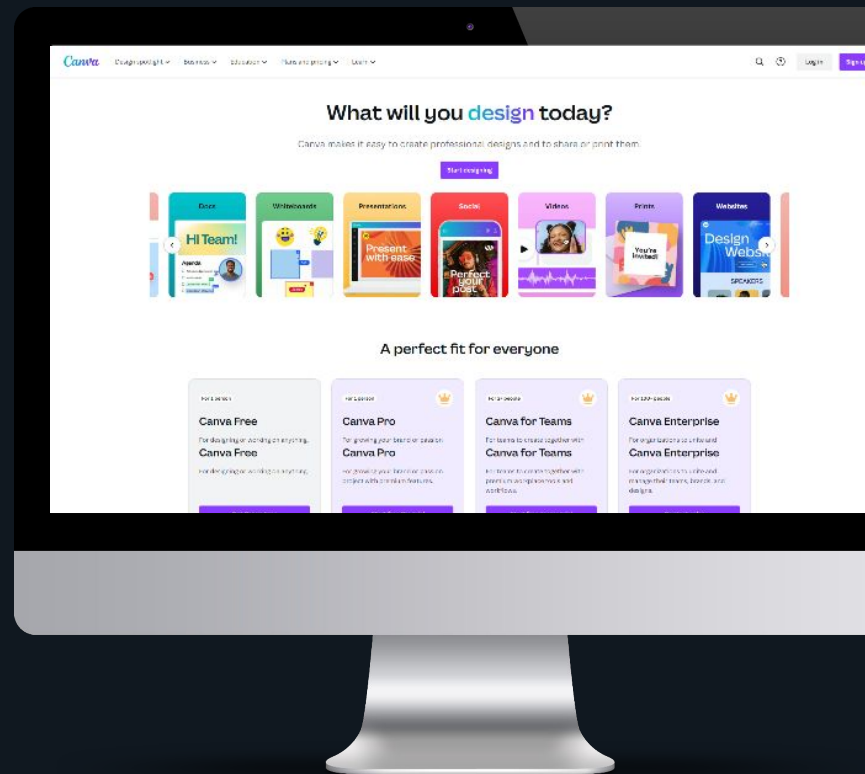
Grammarly

Grammarly is an AI-powered writing assistant that helps users improve the clarity, concision, and correctness of their written content. 13% of church leaders reported using Grammarly, likely for tasks such as polishing emails, newsletters, blog posts, and other church communications. By catching errors and suggesting improvements, Grammarly can help church staff produce high-quality written materials more efficiently.



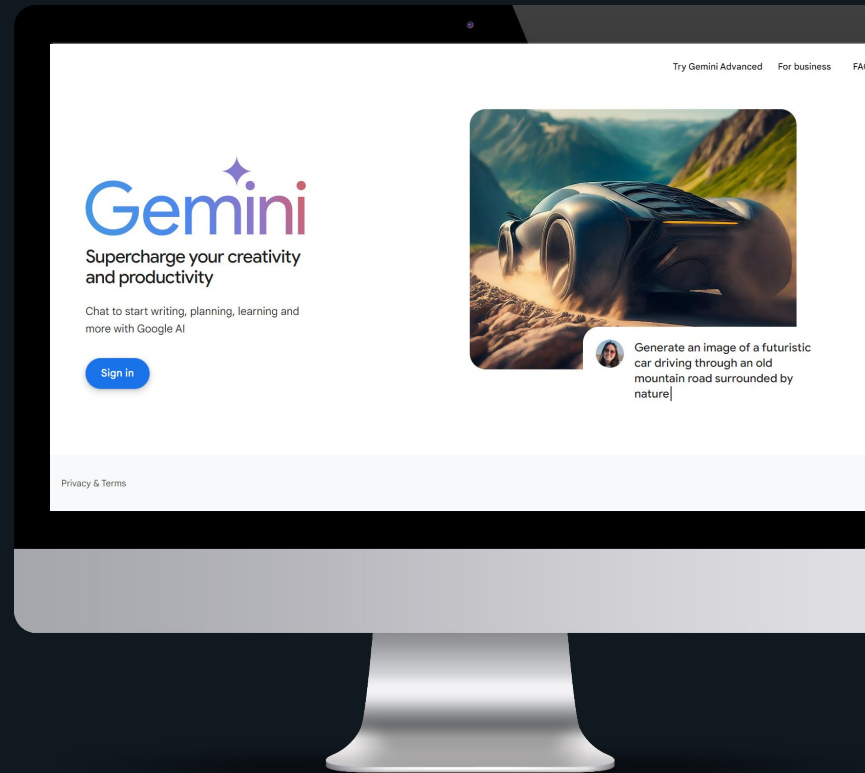
Canva Magic

Canva Magic is an AI-driven set of design capabilities within the Canva design platform that enables users to quickly create professional-looking graphics and visuals. 10% of church leaders indicated they use Canva Magic AI features. It can be used for tasks like designing social media posts, event flyers, presentation slides, generative AI fill, and other visual design functions.



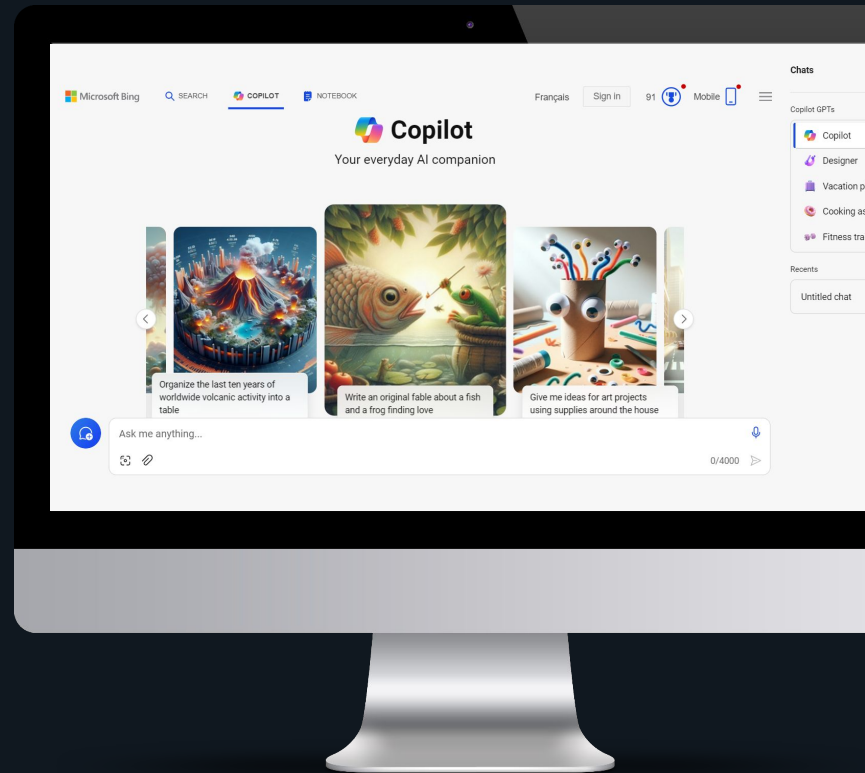
Google Gemini (Bard)

Google Gemini is an AI chatbot and language model developed by Google, similar in functionality to ChatGPT. 9% of church leaders reported using Google Gemini, likely for purposes such as research, content generation, and answering questions. As a powerful AI assistant, Google Gemini can help church staff quickly find information, brainstorm ideas, and complete writing tasks more efficiently.



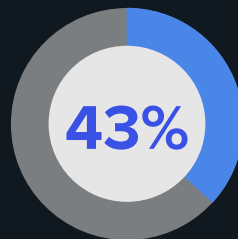
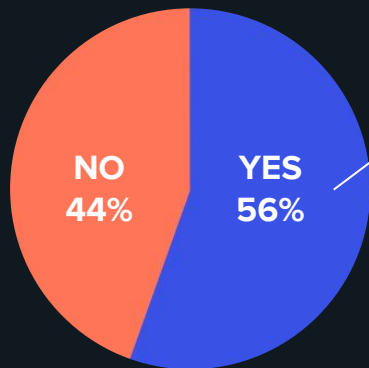
Bing.com

Bing.com is a search engine developed by Microsoft that now incorporates the same underlying AI technology as Open AI's ChatGPT to provide intelligent and conversational search results. 7% of church leaders indicated they use Bing.com, for tasks such as research, finding relevant resources, and getting quick answers to questions, and image generation. By leveraging Bing.com's AI-enhanced chatbot capabilities, church staff can access information and insights more quickly and easily.

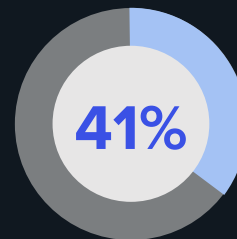


Have you used any AI tools in your sermon preparation and writing process?

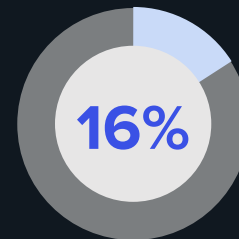
Do you prepare/write sermons (with or without AI) in your role?



Yes



No, not yet. I might/plan to in the future



No, I will **NEVER** use AI for this activity



AI For Sermon Prep

The survey reveals that a large segment (43%) of church leaders who prepare sermons are already using AI tools in their sermon writing process. This suggests that **AI** is quickly becoming a key tool for pastors in their weekly message preparation.

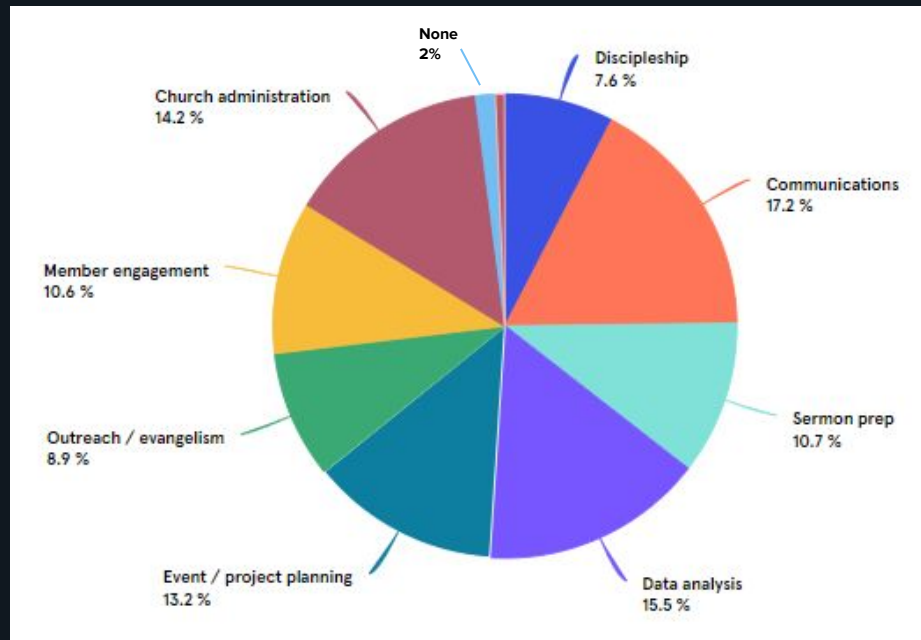


AI For Sermon Prep

While some may view this as a concerning trend, others likely see it as a way to enhance their research, writing efficiency, and creativity. As AI sermon writing tools continue to improve, it will be important for church leaders to find the right balance between leveraging AI's capabilities and maintaining their unique voice and spiritual insights.

In which specific areas do you believe AI can improve the work of the church?

17%	Communications
16%	Data analysis
14%	Church administration
13%	Event/project planning
11%	Sermon prep
11%	Member engagement
9%	Outreach/evangelism
8%	Discipleship
1%	None
1%	Other



The Perceived Value Of AI

The majority of respondents believe that AI can enhance ministry and also indicated that AI can improve church work. Leaders prioritized operational domains such as —

- Communications (17%)
- Data analysis (16%)
- Administration (14%)
- Event/project planning (13%)



The Perceived Value Of AI

Traditional ministry areas like member engagement (11%), outreach/evangelism (9%), and discipleship (8%) were seen as less promising, possibly reflecting hesitancy about AI's role in relational and spiritual contexts.

As AI advances, however, new opportunities may emerge to apply it in these areas for enhanced ministry outcomes. Church leaders should strategically explore and experiment with AI across all aspects of ministry.

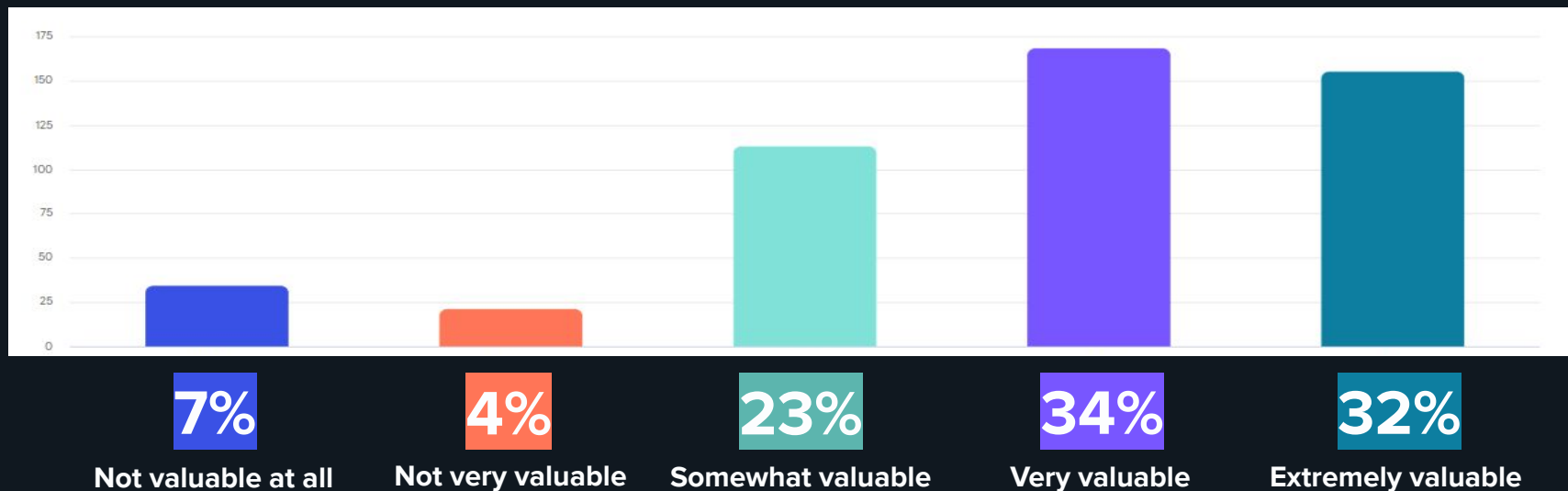


The Perceived Value Of AI

As AI advances, new opportunities may emerge to apply it in these areas for enhanced ministry outcomes. Church leaders should strategically explore and experiment with AI across all aspects of ministry.



How valuable do you believe the potential of AI tools to be in enhancing ministry-related work within the church?





The Potential Of AI

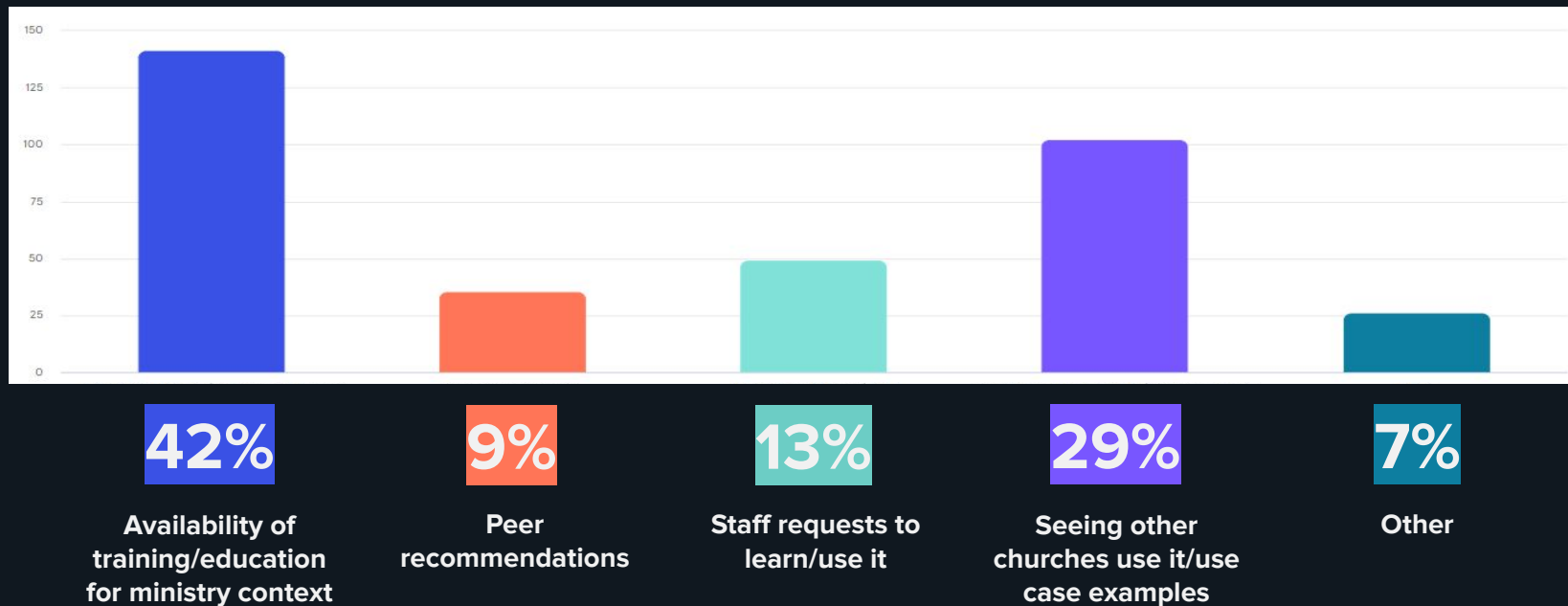
The optimism for AI spans across various areas of church life, from communications and administration to outreach and discipleship. As AI tools become more sophisticated and tailored to ministry use cases, the possibilities for increased efficiency, expanded reach, and data-driven decision making are vast.



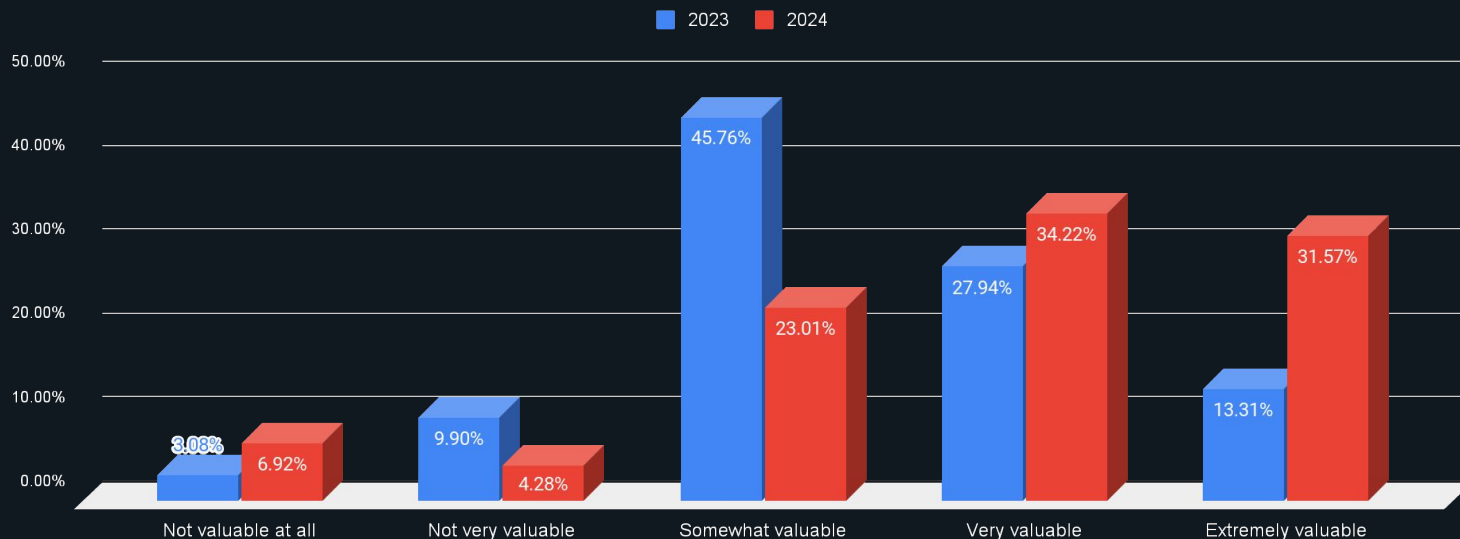
The Potential Of AI

Realizing the potential of AI will require not just technological adoption, but also a willingness to rethink and adapt long-standing ministry strategies and practices. Churches that can successfully navigate this transformation could unlock new levels of impact and growth.

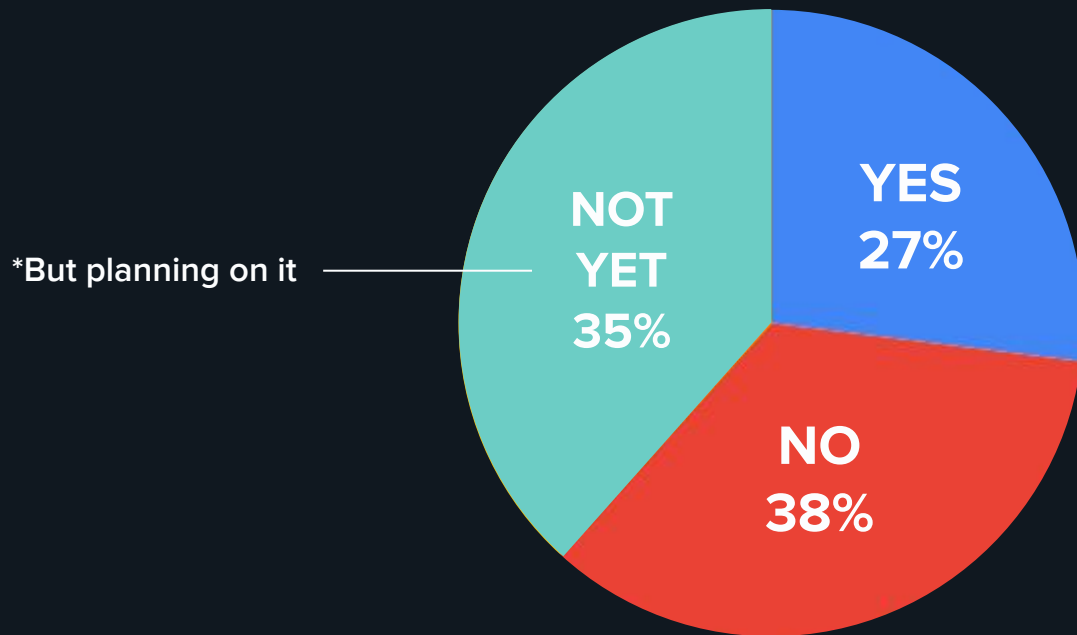
Which factor would MOST encourage you to adopt AI in your church?



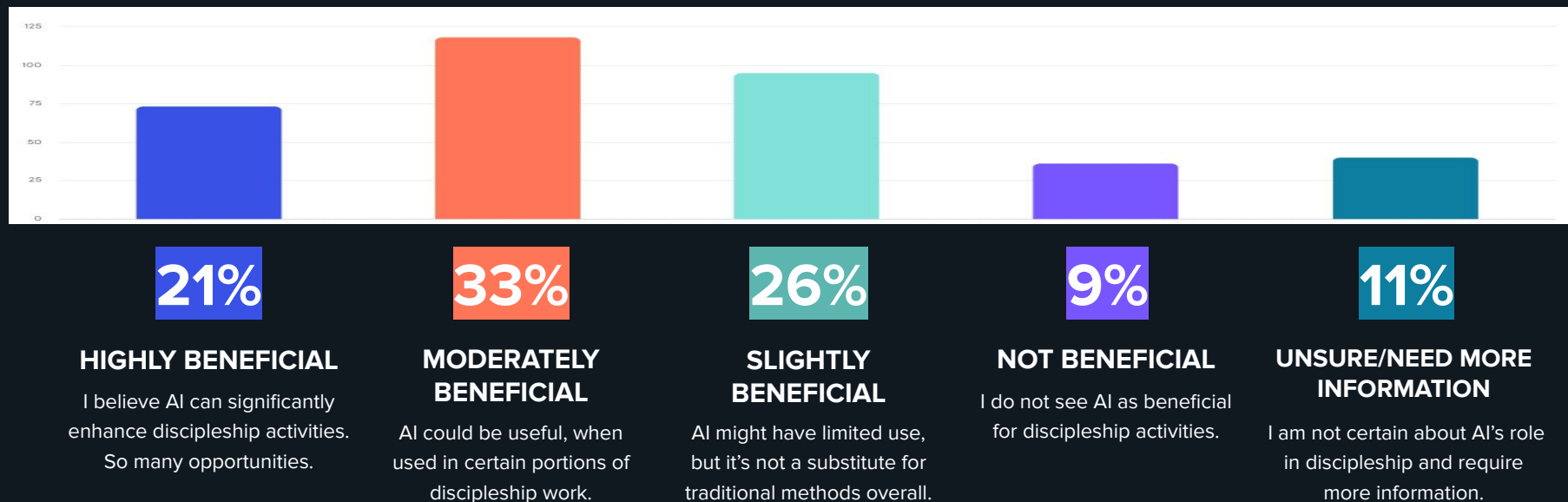
2023 vs 2024: The perceived value of AI is on the rise



Have you led your staff / team to discuss the topic of using AI for ministry work?



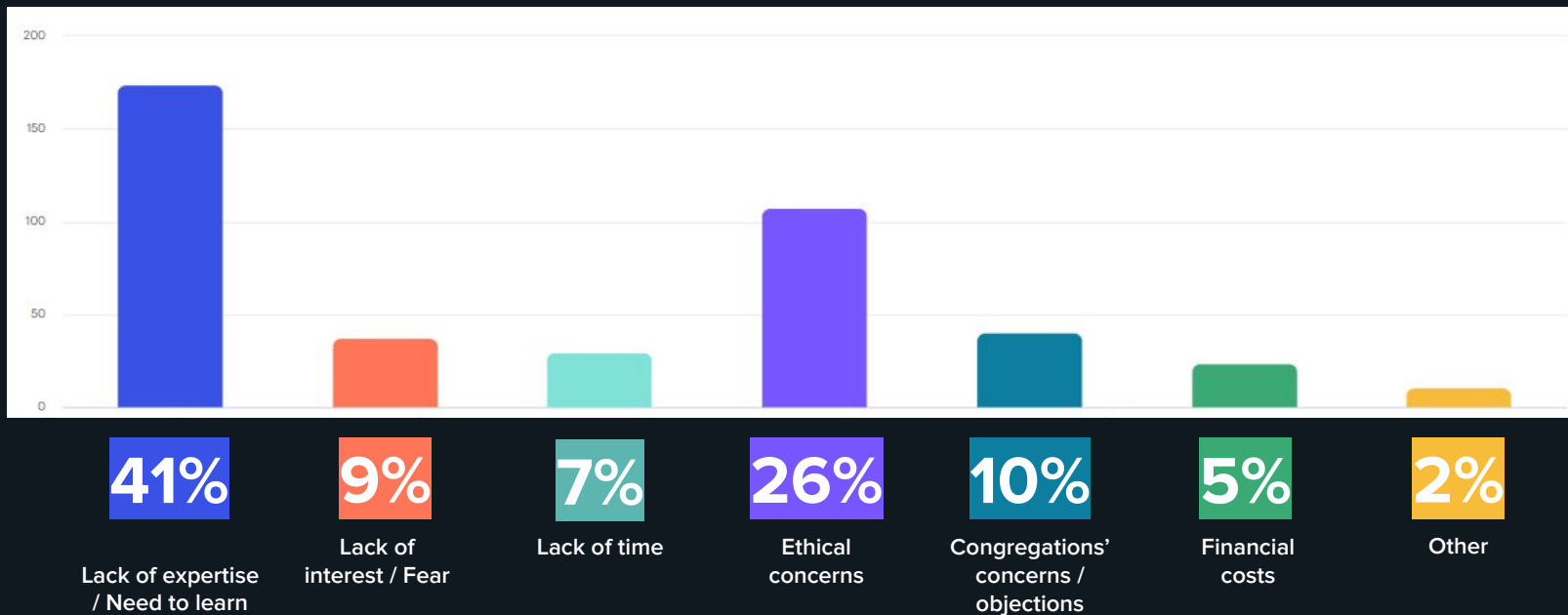
Do you believe AI tools can be used to help with DISCIPLESHIP-related work and activities?



Which category of ministry work do you perceive as having the LEAST resistance to the integration of AI technologies?



Which challenge do you see as most significant in adopting AI in your church?



The Known Challenges Of AI

Lack of AI expertise (41%) and ethical concerns (26%) are the most significant challenges to AI adoption in churches. **This suggests a need for church leaders to prioritize AI education and training**, as well as the development of ethical frameworks to guide responsible usage. Addressing these key barriers will be critical to building the capacity and confidence necessary for churches to fully leverage AI's potential in ministry.



Largest reported challenges to AI adoption in churches



**ETHICAL
CONCERNS**



**LACK OF EXPERTISE
/ NEED TO LEARN**

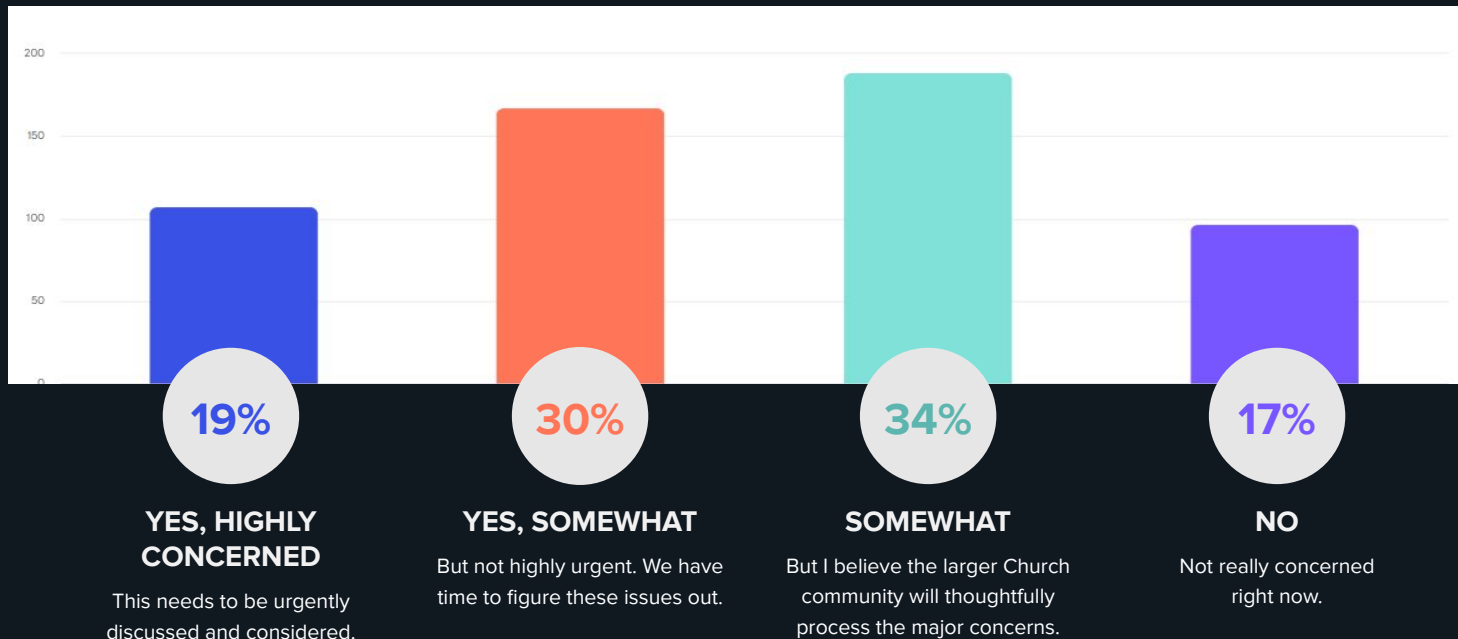


**CONGREGATIONAL
CONCERNS /
OBJECTIONS**



**FEAR /
LACK OF INTEREST**

Do you have ethical concerns regarding the overall use of AI in a church setting?

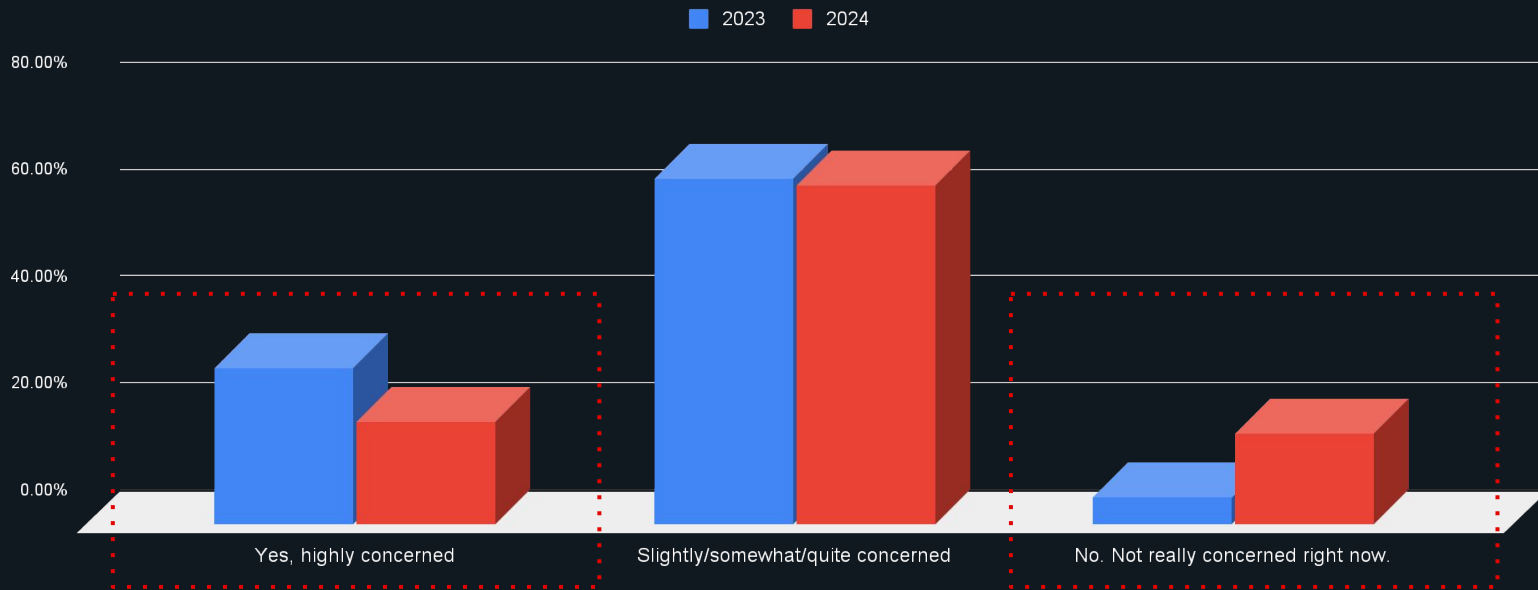




Ethical Concerns Around AI

Ethical concerns significantly influence the church's cautious approach towards AI integration. The focus on specific AI tool training, communications, and content creation reflects a practical outlook towards AI adoption, emphasizing the need for clear guidelines and ethical frameworks to ensure responsible use.

Fewer church leaders report ethical concerns about AI in 2024



Comparison of results to the same question from 2023 Gloo AI & The Church Survey vs. 2024 AI NEXT State of AI in the Church Survey

Top Concerns

Moral and Theological Implications

The broader implications of AI use in moral and ethical decision-making within church activities.



Top Concerns

Replacement Of Human Interactions

Worry about AI replacing or diminishing personal, spiritual guidance, and the quality of human relationships within the church community.



Top Concerns

Privacy And Data Security

How personal data is used including collection, storage and protection of data from the congregation that is processed by AI.



Top Concerns

Bias And Discrimination

Misinformation; accuracy/
reliability of information provided
by AI as well as unintended
biases that manifest themselves
in outputs used for decision
making.



What is your **PRIMARY** ethical concern regarding the use of AI in a church setting?

23%**Moral and Theological Implications**

Concerns regarding how AI aligns with theological beliefs and moral principles of the church.

10%**Misuse of Technology**

Concerns about the potential for AI to be used unethically or in ways that contradict church teachings.

17%**Replacement of Human Interaction**

Worries about AI replacing meaningful human pastoral care and community connections.

10%**Dependence on Technology**

Fears about over-reliance on technology in spiritual and community aspects of church life.

14%**Privacy and Data Security**

Concerns over how personal data of church members is collected, stored, and used by systems using AI.

7%**Accountability and Transparency**

Questions about who is responsible for AI decisions and how understandable AI use & processes are.

13%**Bias and Discrimination**

The risk of AI algorithms unintentionally perpetuating biases or discriminating against certain groups

2%**Church's Responsibility as Employer**

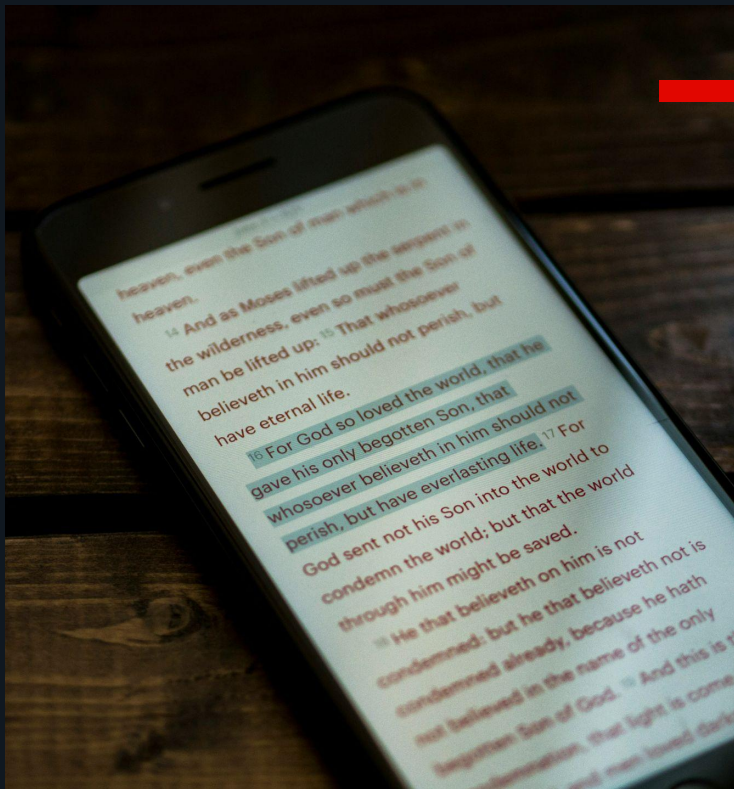
Considering the impact of AI on employment, preserving staff roles & livelihoods.

4%**Other**



AI Policies & Training

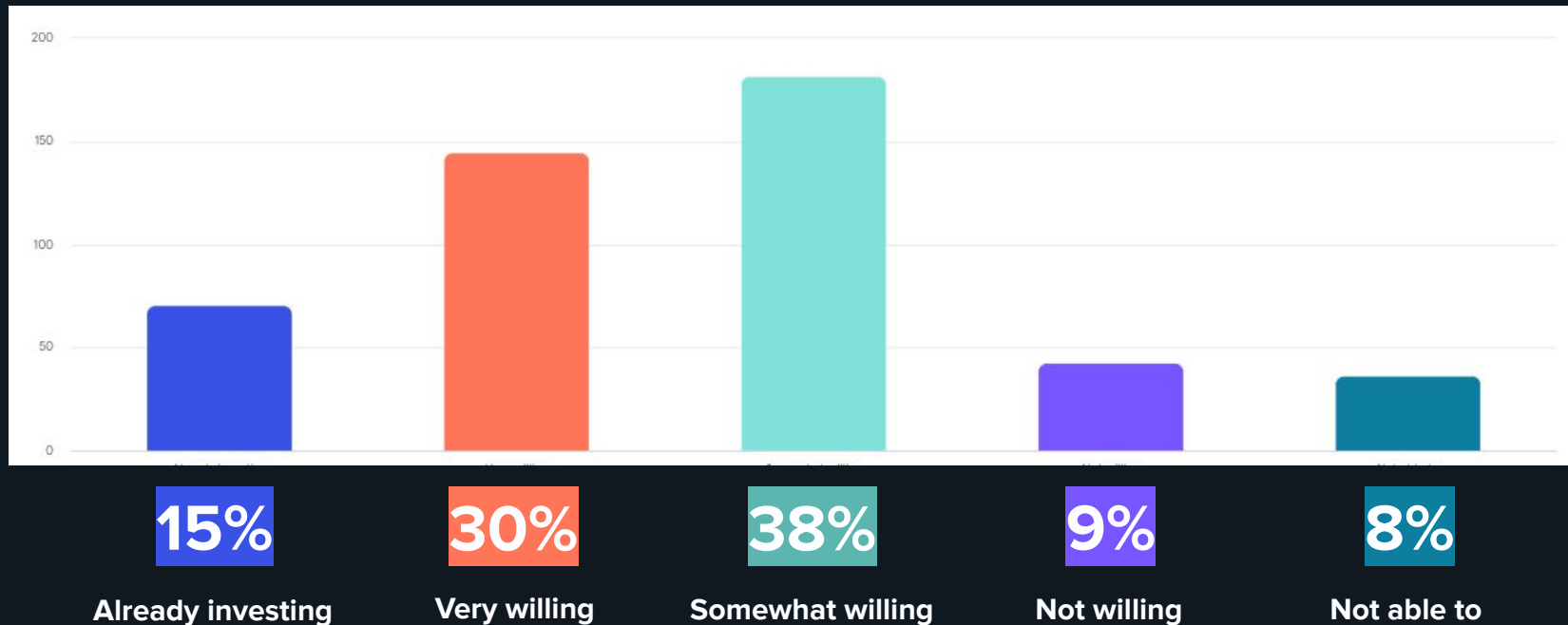
To overcome known hurdles, church leaders will need to prioritize AI education and training for themselves and their staff. This could include attending workshops, partnering with AI experts, and investing in ministry-specific AI resources.



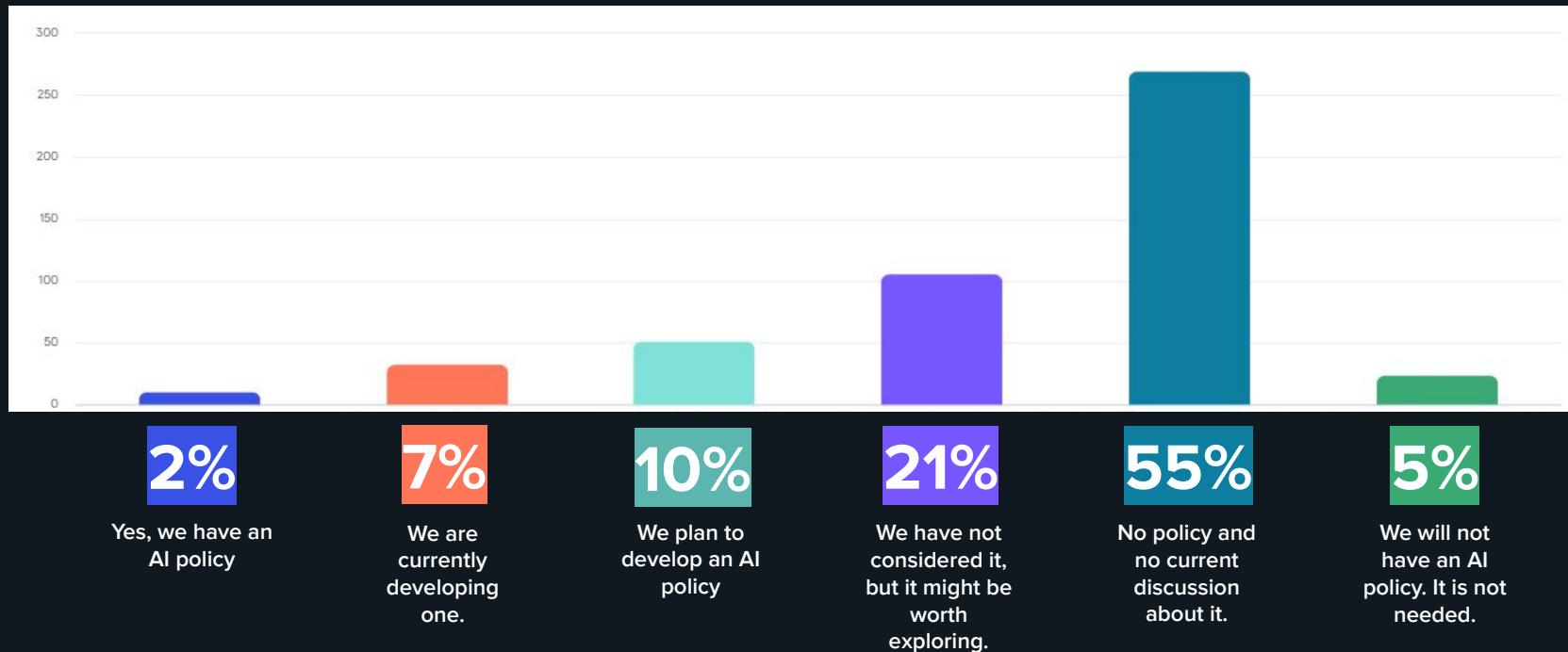
AI Policies & Training

Proactively addressing ethical considerations through the development of robust AI policies and frameworks will be critical to building trust and buy-in from congregations. By taking these steps, churches can position themselves to reap the benefits of AI while mitigating potential risks.

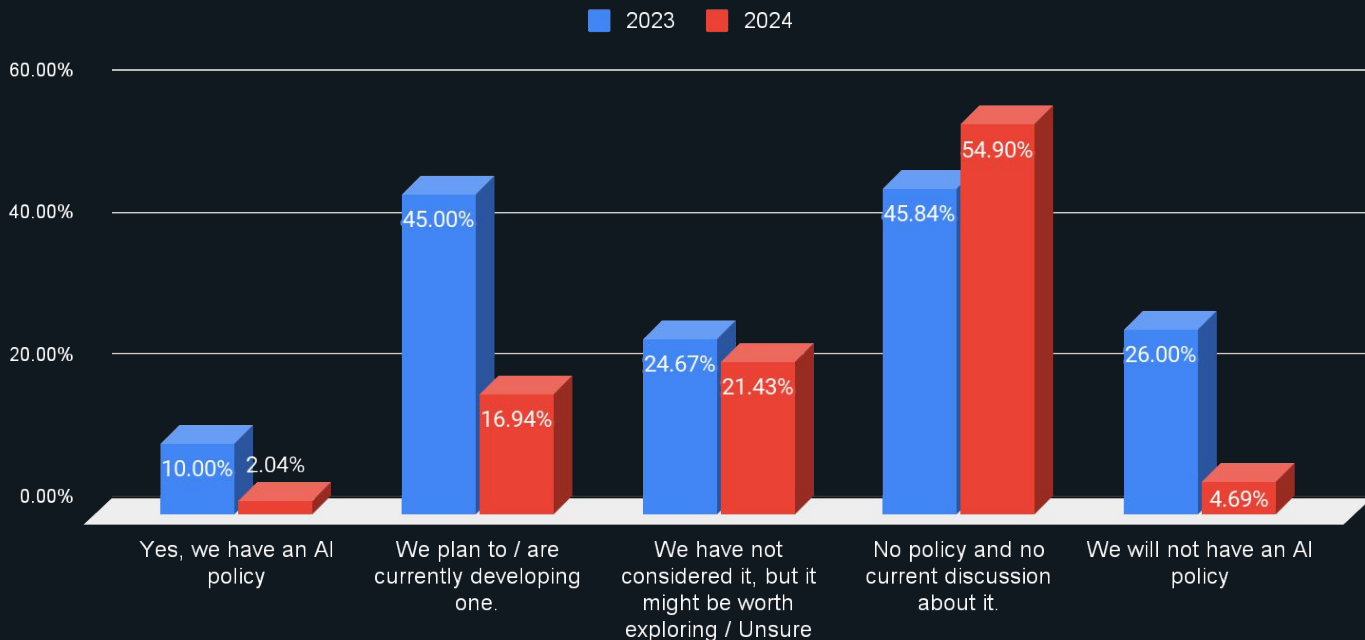
Are you willing to invest in AI education & training for yourself and/or your church staff?



Does your ministry have an AI Policy in place?



2023 vs 2024: Does your ministry have an AI Policy in place?



What level of AI training do you believe is necessary for your church staff to effectively utilize AI tools?



Which area of AI training and education would you prioritize as **MOST** valuable for you and your church staff?

24%**Training on specific AI tools**

ChatGPT, Midjourney, etc.

13%**Strategic analysis and planning**

Analyzing, giving data, project planning

18%**Building communications tools & workflows**

Custom website chatbots, email processing

9%**AI policy & ethical frameworks for AI****18%****Content creation & design**

Images, audio & video cloning, video scripts

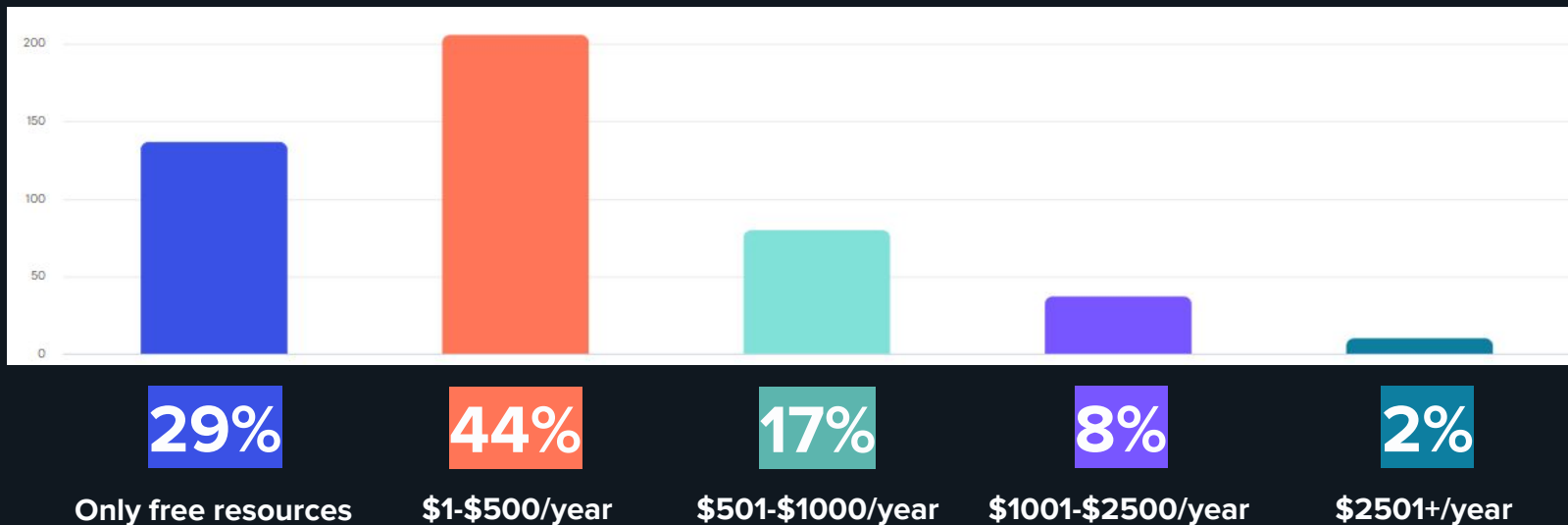
1%**Other**

No training at all

16%**Fundamentals of AI**

General overview

If AI training could tangibly impact your ministry work, how much would you be willing to budget for AI learning (courses, conferences, workshops, cohorts, etc.) for your church staff training and development?



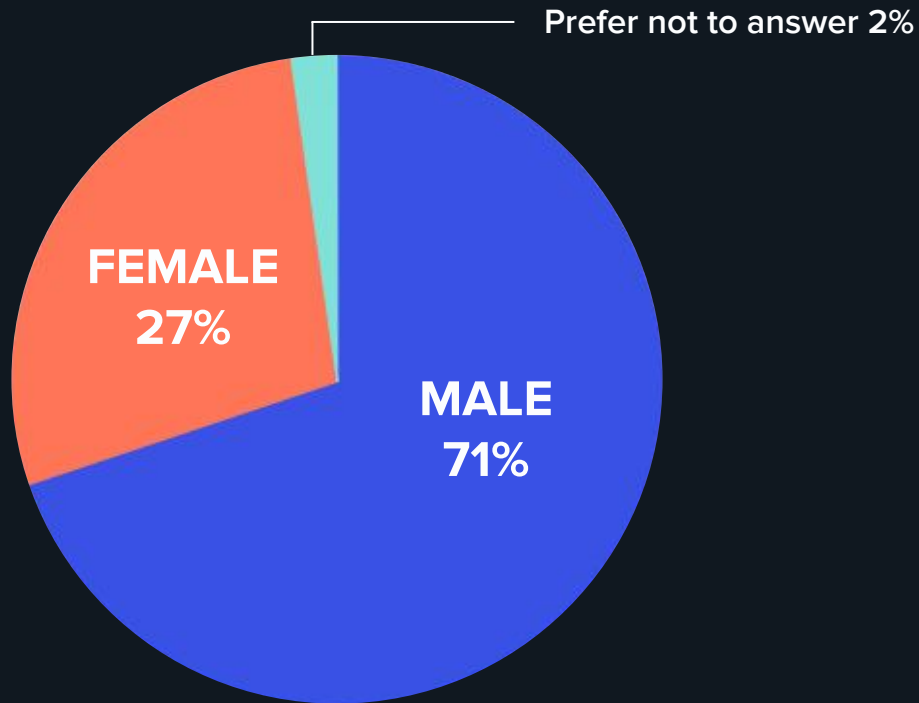
Survey Demographics

The demographics reveal a broad interest in AI across different leadership roles within the church, with a **significant representation from Gen X and Millennials.**

This diversity suggests a wide acknowledgment of AI's relevance but also indicates the potential for generational divides in technology acceptance and usage.

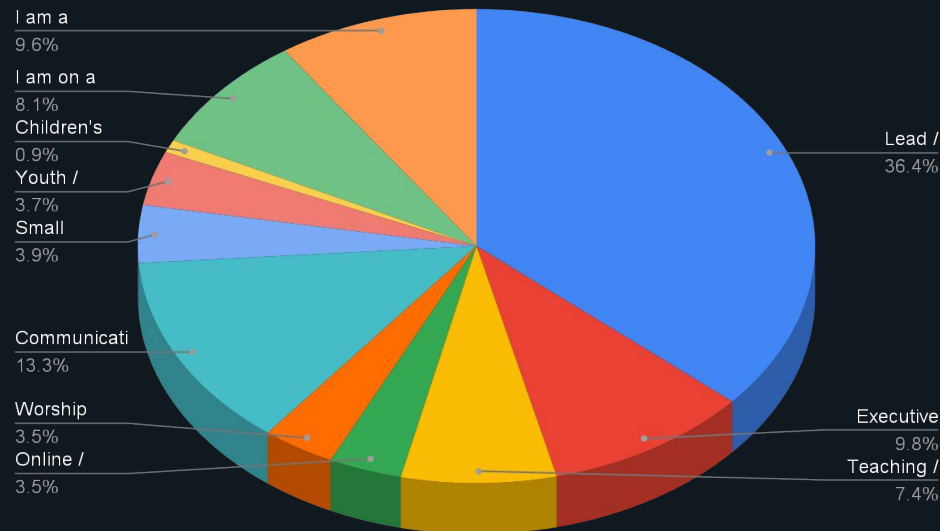


Please indicate your gender

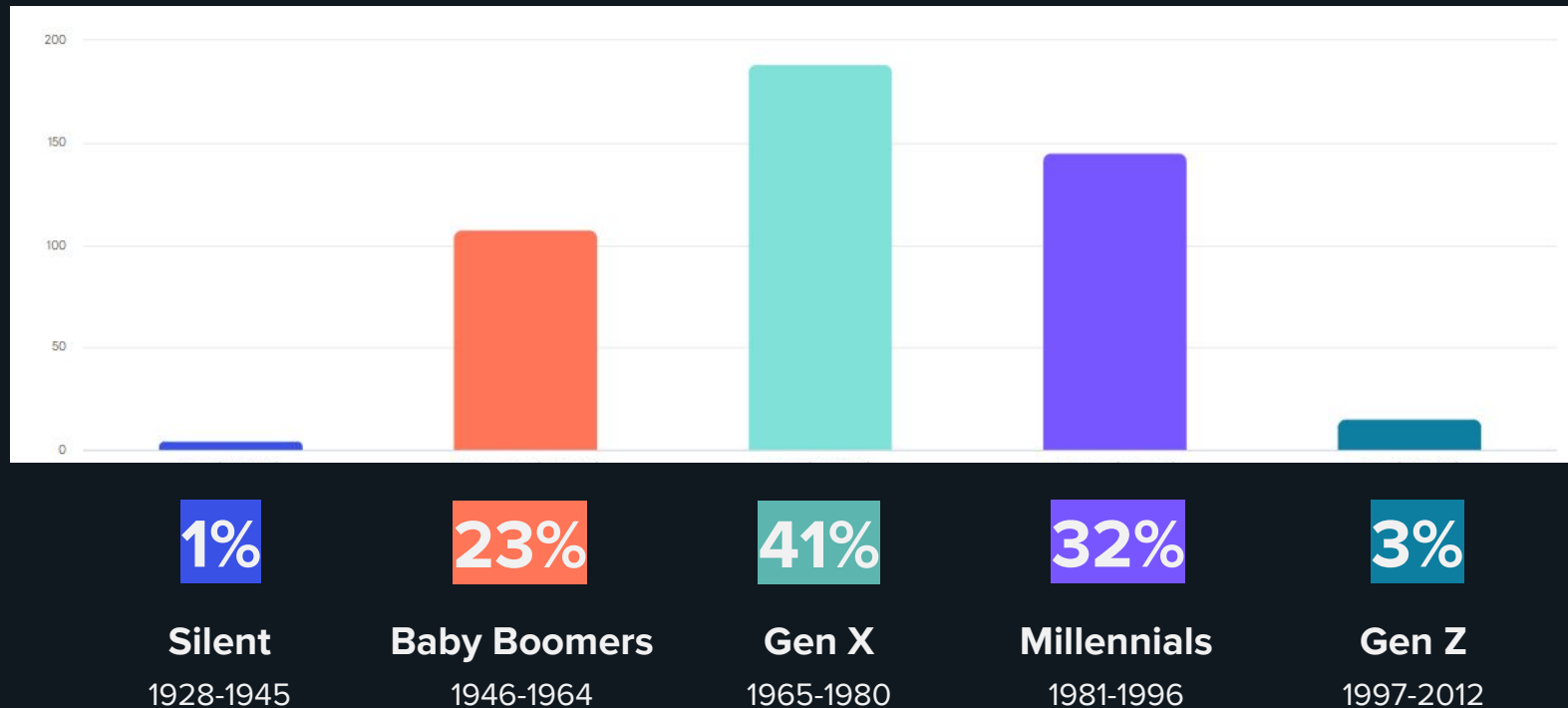


What is your primary role?

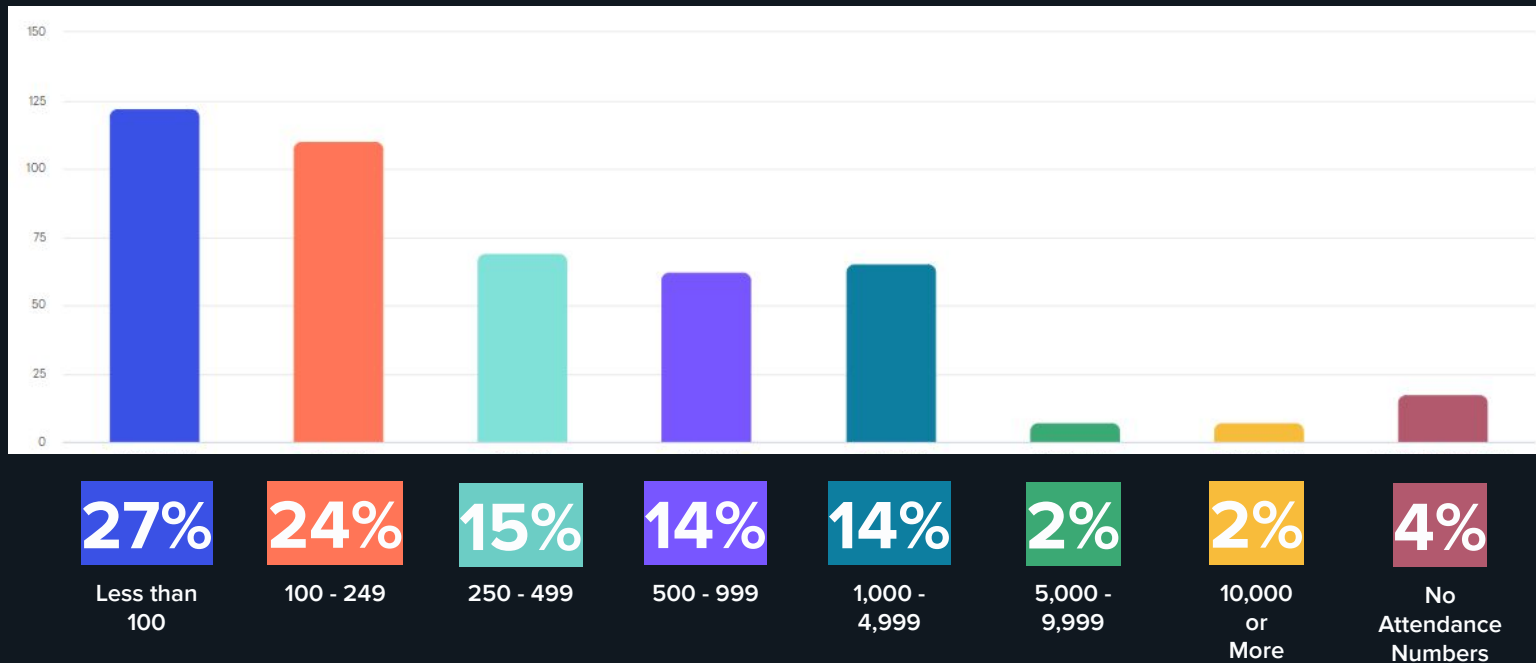
- 36%** Lead/Senior Pastor
- 10%** Executive Pastor/Director
- 7%** Teaching/Associate Pastor
- 3%** Online/Digital Pastor
- 3%** Worship Experience/Programming
- 13%** Communications/Media
- 4%** Small groups/Discipleship
- 4%** Youth/Young Adult Ministry
- 1%** Children's Ministry
- 8%** I am a church staff in another ministry area
- 10%** I am a member at a church / volunteer / attendee but NOT on staff



Which generation do you belong to?



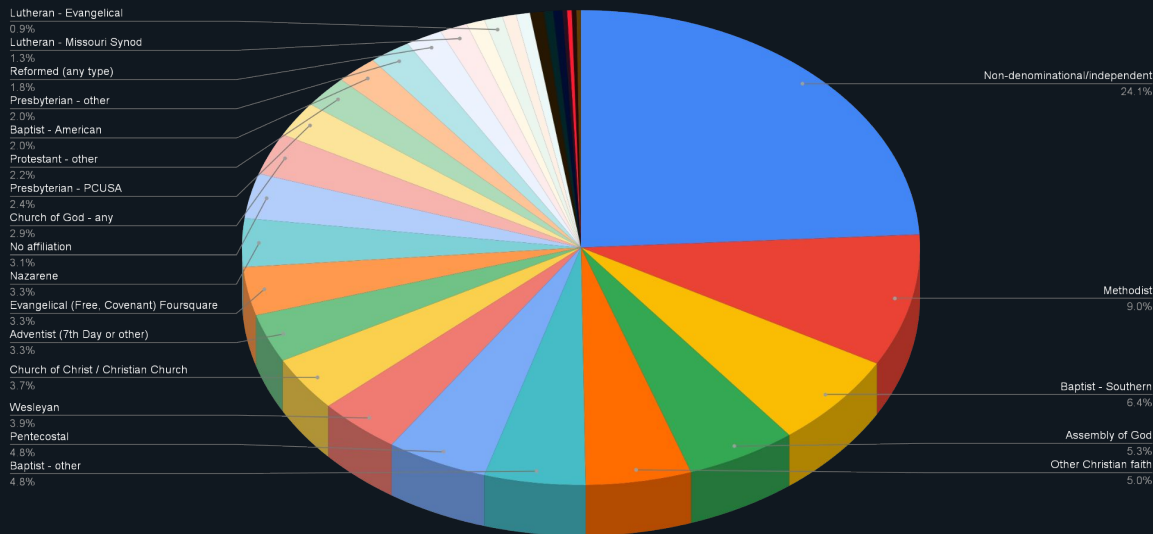
What is the average attendance of your ministry/church?



Indicate your denomination.

Top 10 Denominations (67% of total survey respondents)

- 24%** Non-denominational /independent
- 9%** Methodist
- 6%** Baptist - Southern
- 5%** Assembly of God
- 5%** Other Christian faith
- 5%** Baptist - other
- 5%** Pentecostal
- 4%** Wesleyan
- 4%** Church of Christ / Christian Church (independent)
- 3%** Adventist (7th Day or other)





What's Next For AI In The Church?

As churches continue to navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of AI, the path forward will require:

- Ongoing education
- Experimentation
- Ethical discussions
- Discernment



Conclusions

Overall, the survey depicts a church that is **increasingly open to the ministry possibilities of artificial intelligence**, while still grappling with the weighty ethical and practical considerations involved. Most churches seem to believe that **AI can be beneficial if used as a tool**, but not a replacement for human connection and spiritual discernment.



Conclusions

Pastors & church staff are **already actively using a variety of AI tools** - excited by the potential, cautious about the pitfalls, and committed to using technology in a way that ultimately serves their congregations and their core mission. More training & education is needed for all pastors and staff.

What exactly the will future of an AI-enabled ministry will look like is still unfolding.

What's NEXT For Your AI Journey?



AI NEXT Podcast

Listen to the AI NEXT Interview series on the Exponential NEXT Podcast anywhere you listen to audio.

exponential.org/nextpodcast



Education Resources

Learn more about how you can integrate AI into your ministry through AI NEXT articles & videos

exponential.org/ai-next



Peer Learning

Join 5,000+ members inside the **AI For Church Leaders** Facebook Group.

AlforChurchLeaders.com