



Young Adults Are Going to Church for Prayer, New Research Finds

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New Gloo and Barna research finds that 45% of 18- to 35-year-olds name prayer as the most selected spiritual reason for attending church.

BOULDER, Colo.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 24, 2026-- Young adults attending church more frequently cite prayer as their [primary spiritual motivation](#) (45%), while [social motivations](#) are tied between wanting deeper relationships with other Christians (24%) and learning from others who have gone through similar things (24%), according to new research released today.

This new State of the Church research was released today by [Gloo](#) (Nasdaq: GLOO), a leading technology platform for the faith and flourishing ecosystem, in partnership with [Barna Group](#), a Christian research organization.

The data looks at the motivation behind an [upward trend of church attendance](#) by young adults: about [one in three \(34%\)](#) say they're attending church more often than one year ago. Nearly half (45%) report no change. Attendance increases are highest among young men at 41 percent, Black young adults at 41 percent and Hispanic young adults at 36 percent. About one in five (21%) young adults say they are attending less often.

The findings cover the first two installments of a three-part series on what young adults want from church, part of Gloo's ongoing [State of the Church](#) initiative. Taken together, the two installments suggest that [reaching the next generation](#) may depend less on reinventing the church experience than on the practices churches already have.

"Young people are showing up to talk to God, next to their people," said Brianne Shaw, Director of Marketing and Church Spokesperson at Gloo. "For church leaders, that raises some practical questions: How easy is it for someone new to find someone to pray with? And will someone notice when they're missing?"

Part one, "[What Young Adults Are Looking for Spiritually at Church](#)," and part two, "[The Social Reasons Why Young Adults Go to Church](#)," are available now. Part three publishes next week. Learn more about the 2026 State of the Church initiative at gloo.com/stateofthechurch.

About Gloo

[Gloo](#) (Nasdaq: GLOO) is a leading technology platform serving the faith and flourishing ecosystem. Gloo helps missional organizations amplify their impact by powering their technology and expanding their reach, so that people flourish and organizations thrive. The company's values-aligned AI platform modernizes systems, workflows and data, while its marketing and donor solutions expand reach, awareness and long-term giving for mission-based organizations.

About Barna Group

Since 1984, Barna Group has conducted more than two million interviews over the course of thousands of studies and has become a go-to source for insights about faith, culture, leadership, vocation and generations. Barna is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization.

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