

HUMANIST SOCIETY SCOTLAND

**BELIEFS IN
SCOTLAND
2018**

**A study of religion and
belief in Scotland**



**Humanist
Society
Scotland**

NOTES

Belief in Scotland
2018

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Fieldwork
5th - 10th July 2018
Online Panel
1,002 Sample size
Aged 18+ resident in
Scotland

Names of areas in this
report relate to Scottish
Parliament regions

Rounding of figures
may lead to results not
adding to 100% in some
instances.

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Full tables breaking down each
question asked with results are
available to download at:

www.humanism.scot/belief2018

WELCOME

Scotland's population is changing.

In 2017 Humanist Society Scotland Registered Celebrants solemnised more marriages than any religious body, including the Church of Scotland.

Previous Census and Scottish Social Attitudes survey results have shown how beliefs have shifted over the last century. Once a country with a majority Christian population, Scotland is now a nation where most people see no evidence for a God, do not pray and do not identify with any religion.

In this, the first edition of 'Beliefs in Scotland', we look at attitudes of people in Scotland to religious identity and wider spiritual beliefs.

Is there a life after death? Is there a God or higher power? Are divine miracles real?

We also look at tendency to worship and self reported levels of attendance at church.



KEY FINDINGS

01

Most people in Scotland (59%) identify as Non-religious

This rises to just under 70% (69%) for those aged 18-24.

Women report being non-religious in higher numbers (62%) than men (55%).

The single biggest religion in Scotland reported by respondents to this research was Christian (37%). Of those, over half linked themselves to the Church of Scotland (58%).

The North East of Scotland has the most non-religious people (66%).

See page 6 for detail.

02

Most people (51%) do not believe in life after death

This compares with around a third (34%) who do, with the remainder replying “don’t know” (15%).

This was the most common supernatural/spiritual belief with a similar number (33%) believing in heaven.

Less common beliefs include reincarnation (21%) and a judgement day where god will punish some and reward others (18%).

See page 8 for detail.

03

Most people (53%) never pray

However 13% of the research panel did report praying daily or almost daily.

A further 17% said they would pray between a few times a week and once a year, with another 17% saying they prayed “hardly ever”.

60% of respondents reported never attending church outside of weddings, funerals and other special occasions.

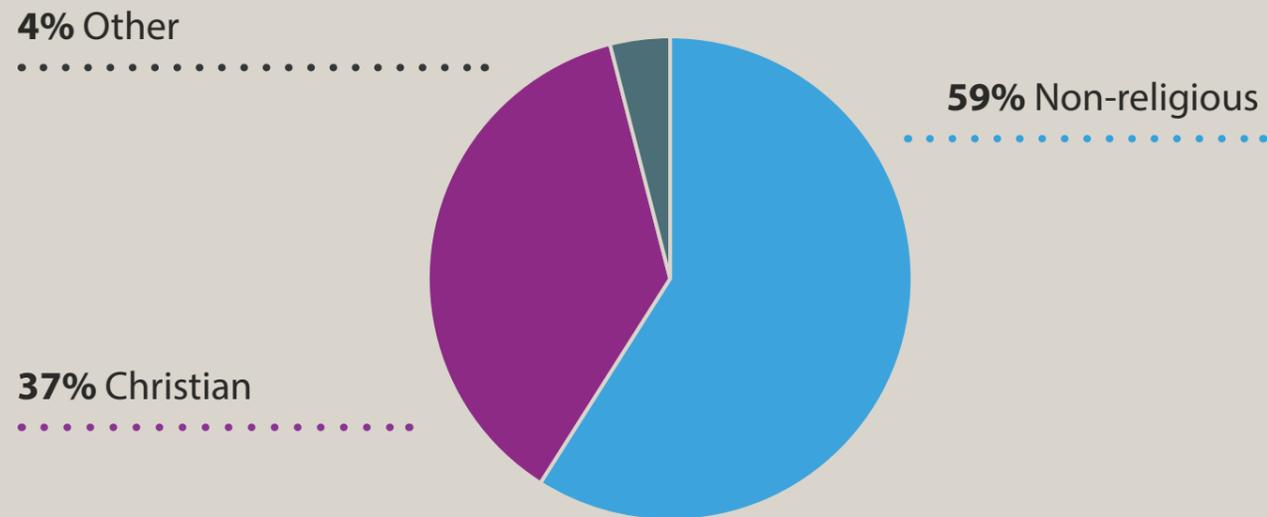
Mid-Scotland and Fife were the least likely to attend, with people from Glasgow the most likely to attend at least once a week.

See page 10 for detail.

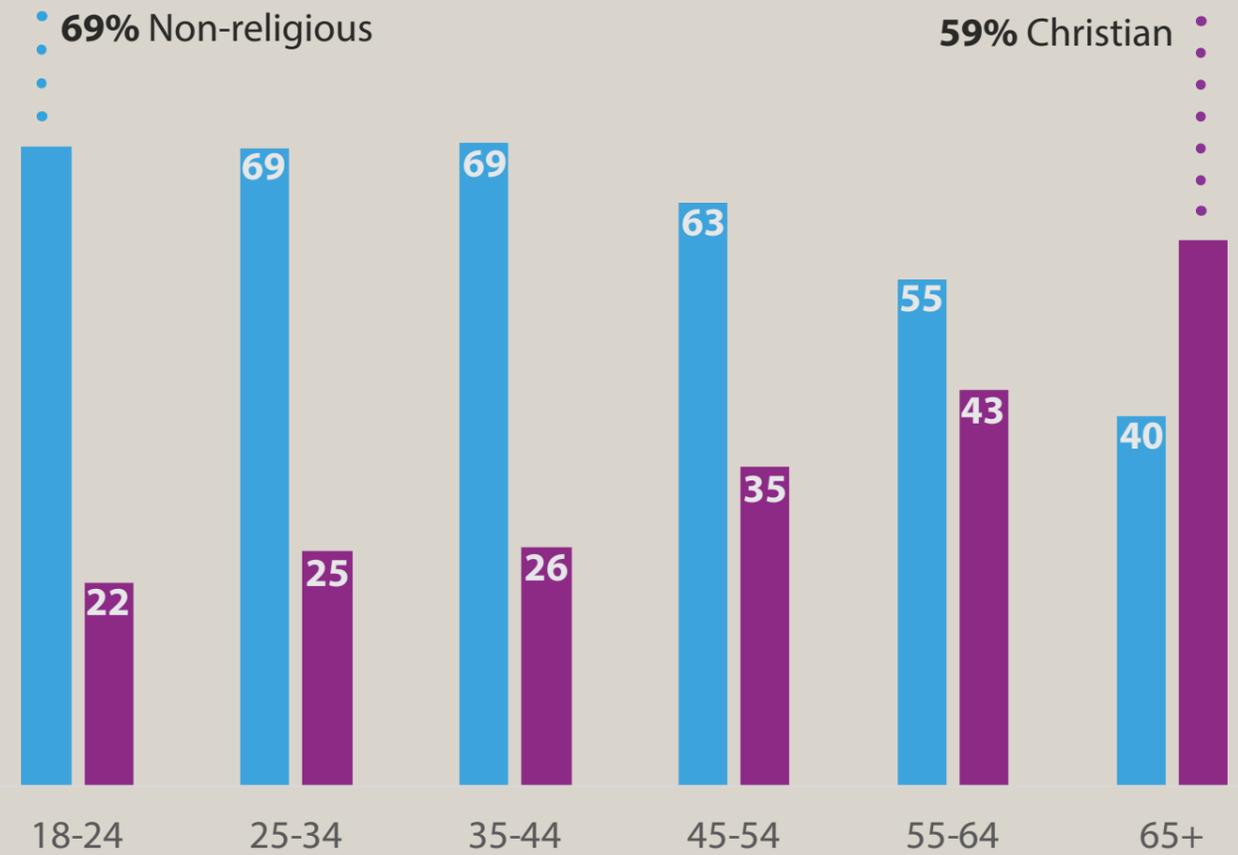
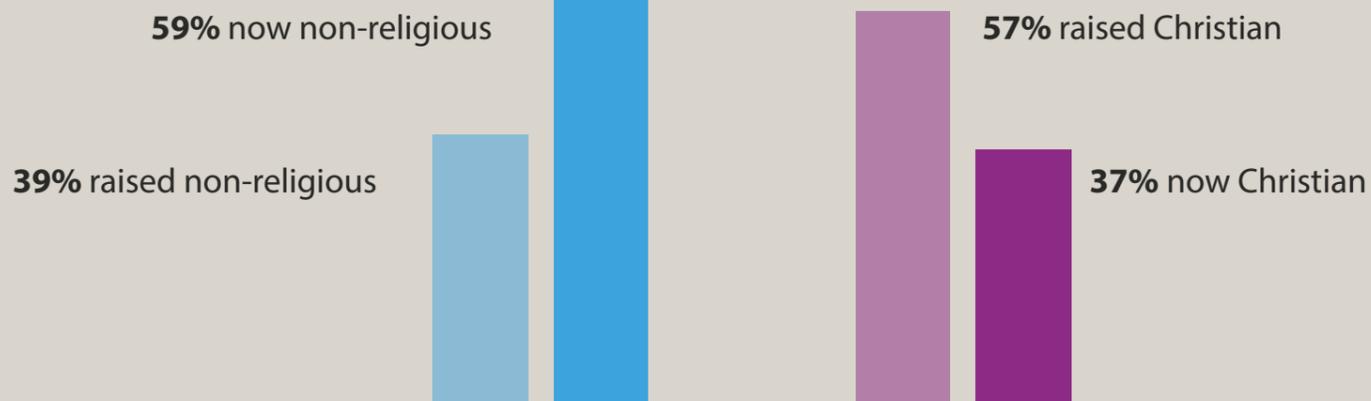
RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Religious identity



Difference between how people reported they were brought up as a child to what their beliefs are now



Proportion who identify as non-religious



The majority of the respondents to our research said they were non-religious (59%).

The biggest faith reported was Christian with 37% of respondents self-identifying as such. A further 4% identified with another faith group.

Non-religious identity was stronger with females (62%) than males (55%).

Younger respondents were more likely to identify as non-religious, 69% of 18-24 compared to 40% of 65+.

Respondents from the North East of Scotland were the most likely to say they were non-religious (66%) this compared with a smaller majority in other areas, for example Glasgow (55%).

BELIEFS IN DETAIL

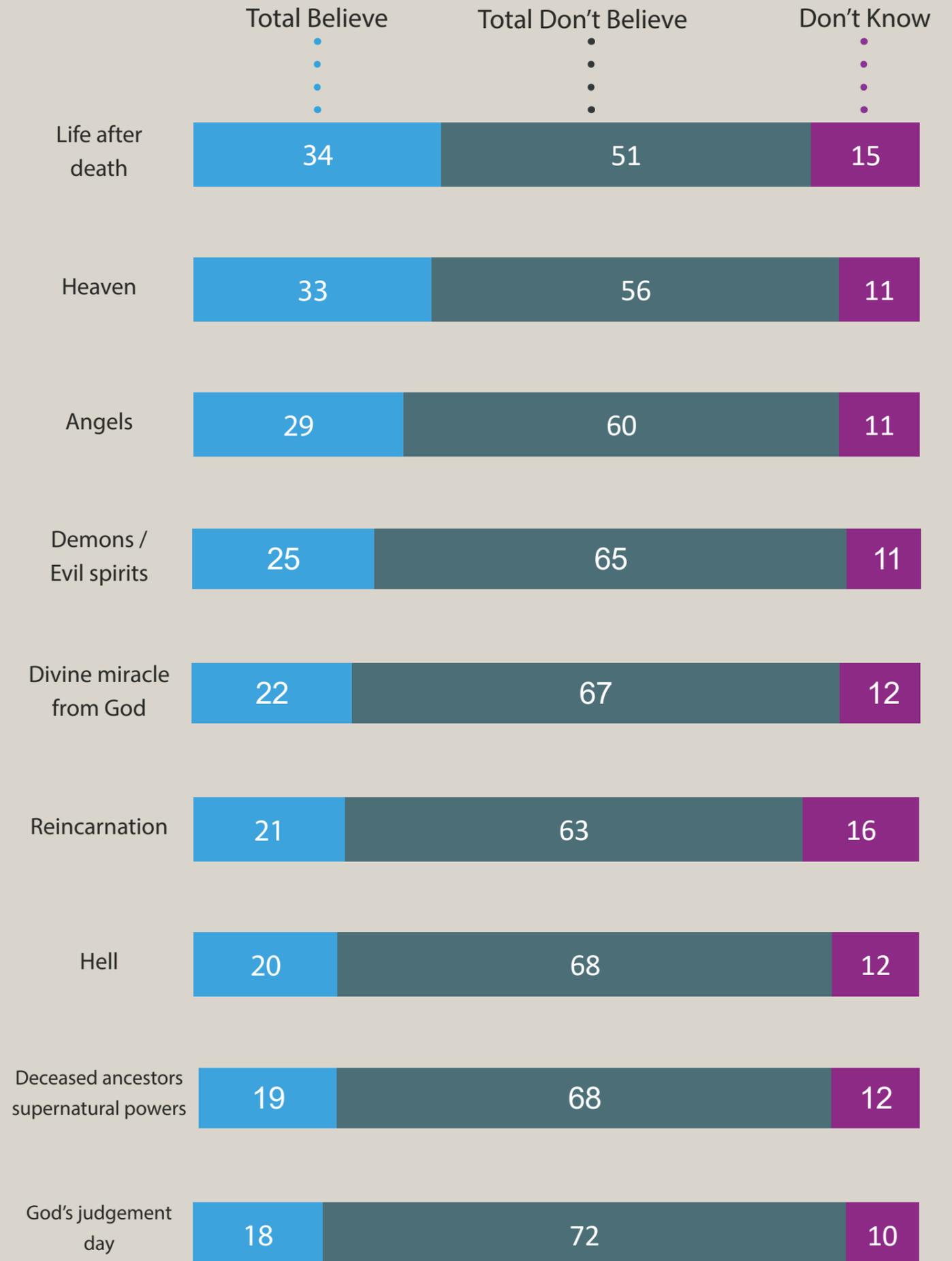
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Respondents were most likely to say they didn't believe in God or a higher power (32%), or that they didn't know if there was a God or higher power and didn't think there was any way to find out (26%).

18% of the overall sample were certain that God exists. This rises to 30% of those aged over 65. 17% of all respondents said they found themselves believing in God at some times but not others.

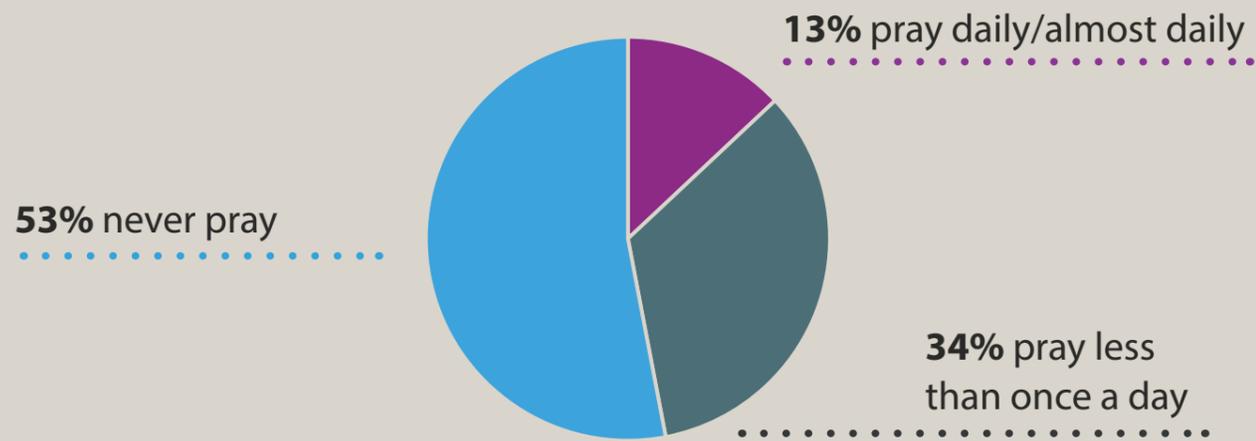
We also polled respondents' views of wider spiritual or supernatural beliefs. In all of these categories over half of respondents said they did not believe. Of these beliefs, life after death was the most popular at 34%.

A judgement day where God rewards some and punishes others was the least reported belief with only 18% saying they believed this to be true.



WORSHIP IN SCOTLAND

RESEARCH FINDINGS



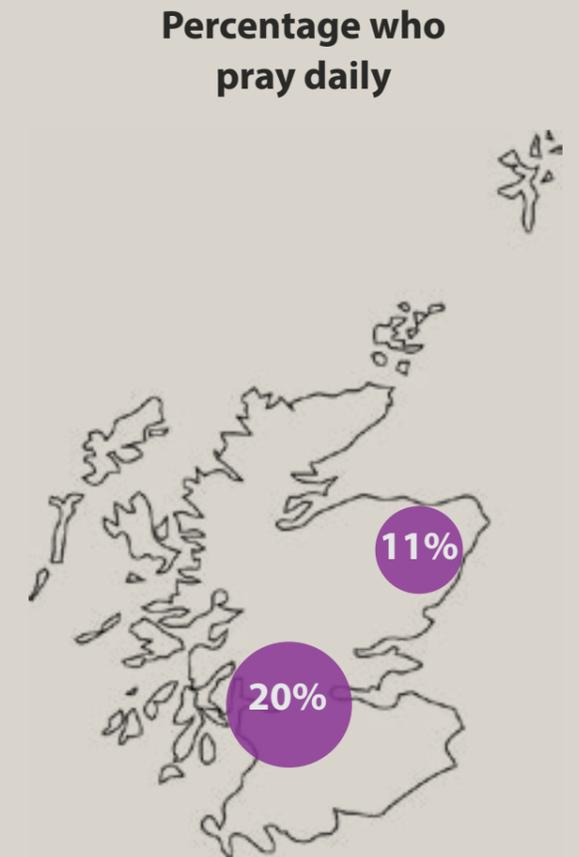
Respondents were asked, outside of church services how often they prayed. Most people (53%) said they never prayed.

Younger people (18-34) were the most likely to never pray (63%). This compared to only 34% of respondents aged over 65 who said they never prayed.

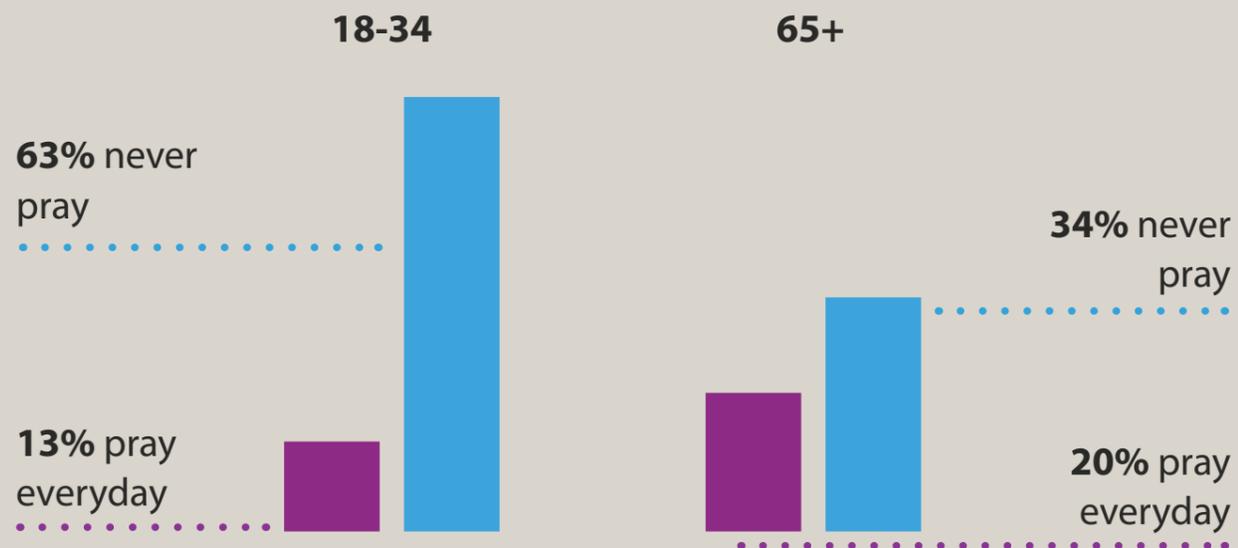
Glasgow had the highest proportion of people who reported they prayed at least once a day at 20%. This compares with just 11% in the North East.

We also asked how often in the last year did people attend church outside of weddings and funerals they may have attended. 60% said they had never attended a church service in the last year.

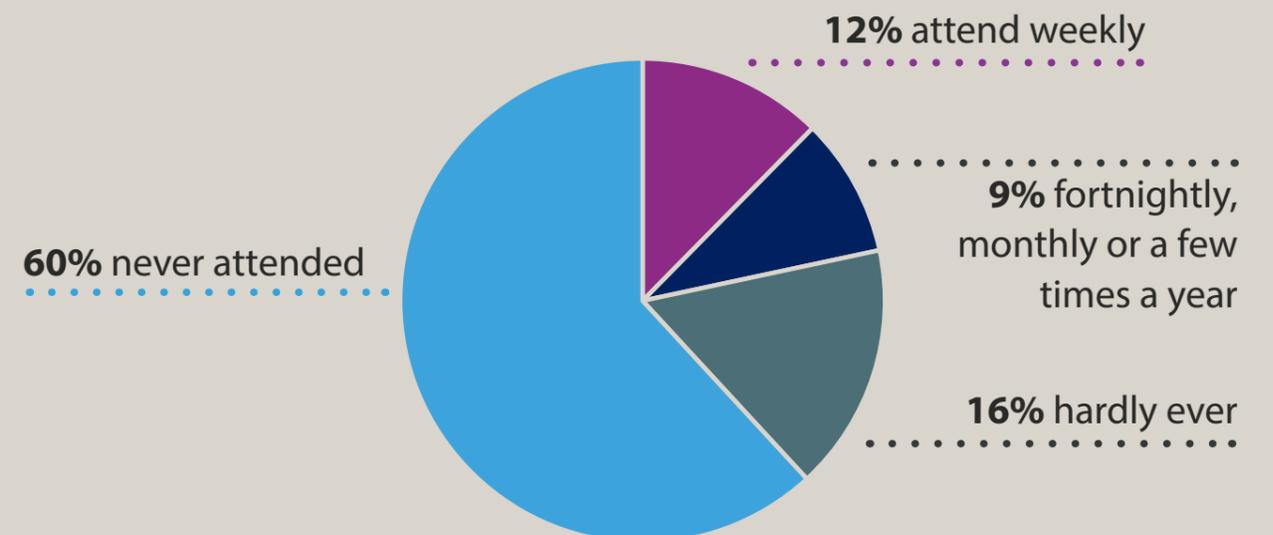
Around 12% of people said they attended church on at least a weekly basis.



Prayer by age



Attendance at Church in last year



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