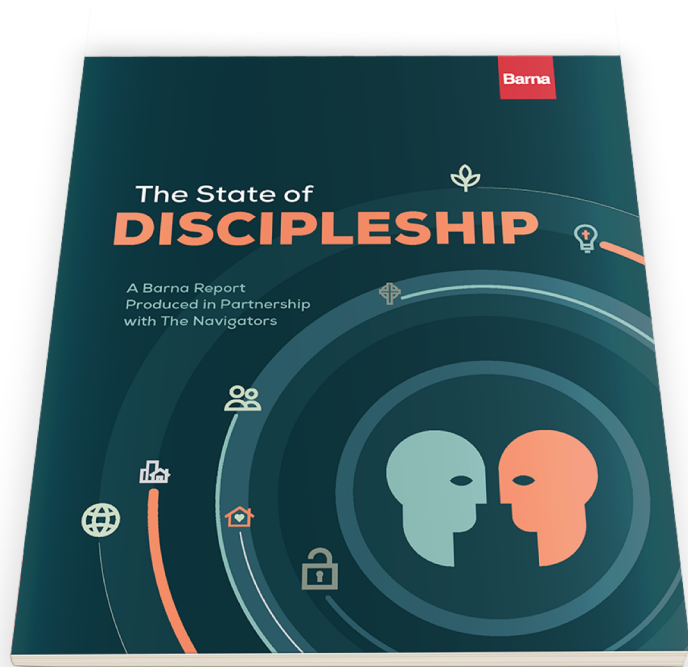


# The State of **DISCIPLESHIP**





For more information about this study and to see the complete findings, check out our 2015 report:

### ***The State of Discipleship***

The full report is available at [\*\*shop.barna.com\*\*](https://shop.barna.com) or through Barna Access membership.

# METHODOLOGY



# A BROAD-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT

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## Who we interviewed:

- Exemplar church leaders
- Discipleship Educators
- Christians
- Pastors / Discipleship Pastors
- Navigators Alumni





# GOOD NEWS & BAD NEWS



# PEOPLE LIKE THE IDEA OF GROWTH

---

**% - spiritual progress in my life is very important**

- Navigators alumni – 94%
- Practicing Christians – 77%
- Non-practicing Christians – 37%



# ARE PEOPLE GROWING?

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OF CHRISTIANS SAY THEY ARE ALMOST TO WHERE THEY WANT TO BE IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE



OF CHRISTIANS SAY THEY ARE HAPPY WITH WHERE THEY ARE IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE



# ARE PEOPLE GROWING?

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## HAVE YOU MADE PROGRESS IN YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN THE PAST YEAR?

● PRACTICING CHRISTIANS

● NON-PRACTICING CHRISTIANS



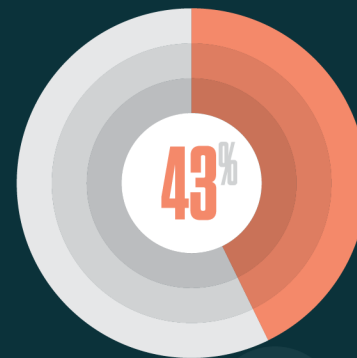
A LOT



SOME



A LOT



SOME



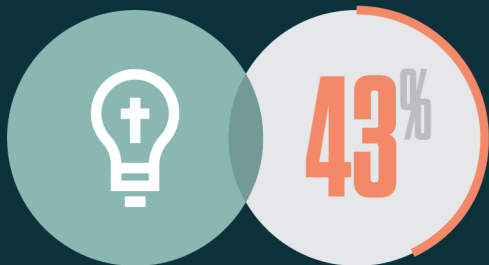
# MOTIVATIONS & BARRIERS



# ARE PEOPLE GROWING?

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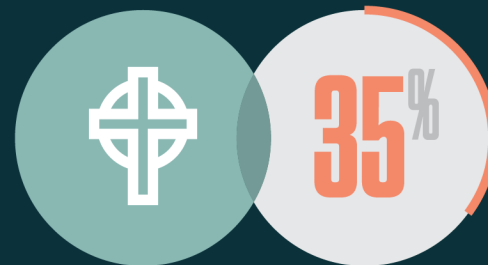
## TOP 3 REASONS CHRISTIANS WANT TO GROW SPIRITUALLY



I DESIRE TO KNOW JESUS,  
OR GOD, MORE



IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE IMPROVING  
OR GROWING IN ALL THINGS



I DESIRE TO BE MORE  
LIKE JESUS



# IMPORTANT REASONS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

% among Christian adults, by generation

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● Millennials (18-30)

● Gen-Xers (31-49)

● Boomers (50-68)

● Elders (69+)



# IMPORTANT REASONS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

% among Christian adults, by generation

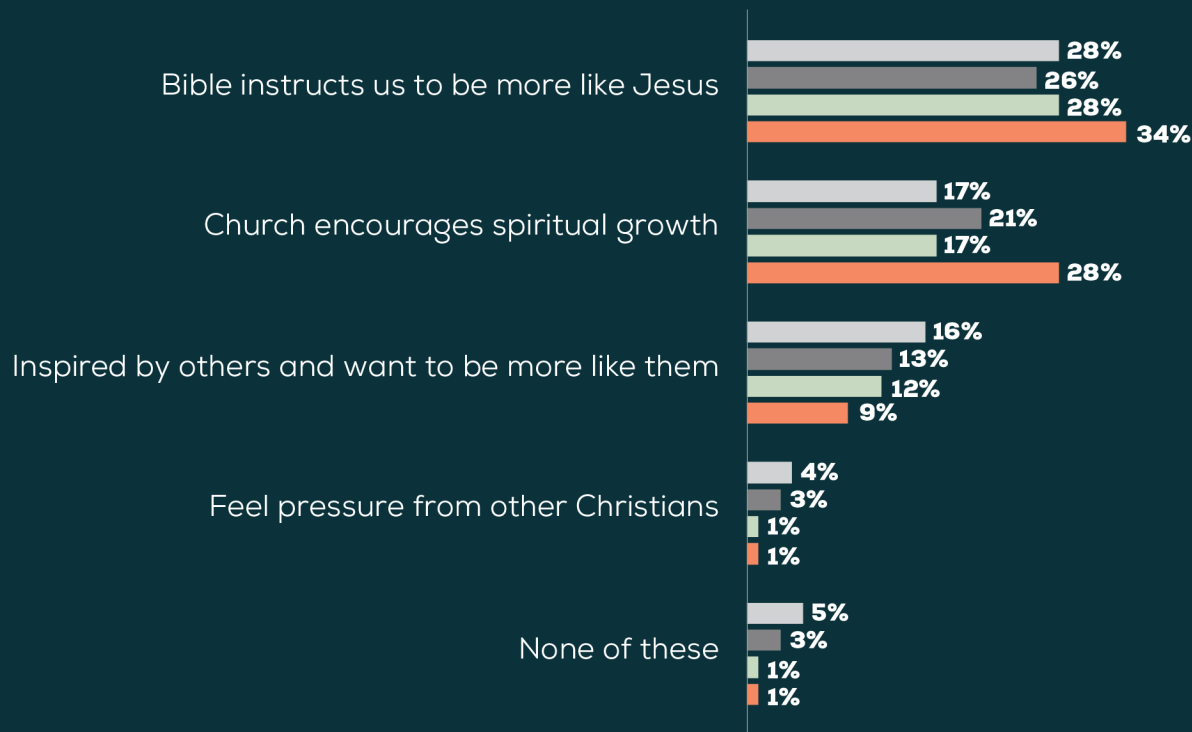
Barna

● Millennials (18-30)

● Gen-Xers (31-49)

● Boomers (50-68)

● Elders (69+)





# WHAT IS STANDING IN THE WAY?

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## TOP BARRIERS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH



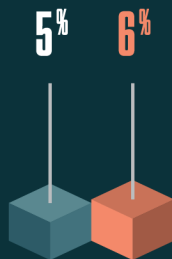
PRACTICING CHRISTIANS



NON-PRACTICING CHRISTIANS



I HAVEN'T  
FOUND  
ANYONE  
WILLING TO  
HELP ME



IT'S HARD TO  
FIND GOOD  
RESOURCES  
OR  
INFORMATION



I DON'T  
KNOW  
WHERE TO  
START



MY FAMILY  
MEMBERS  
ARE NOT  
SUPPORTIVE



MY FRIENDS  
ARE NOT AS  
INTERESTED  
IN  
SPIRITUAL  
THINGS



I HAVE  
OTHER MORE  
IMPORTANT  
PRIORITIES  
RIGHT NOW



# WHAT IS STANDING IN THE WAY?

## TOP BARRIERS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH



PRACTICING CHRISTIANS



NON-PRACTICING CHRISTIANS



I DON'T  
WANT TO  
THINK  
ABOUT  
MISTAKES  
I'VE MADE  
IN THE PAST



SPIRITUAL  
GROWTH  
WILL  
REQUIRE A  
LOT OF HARD  
WORK



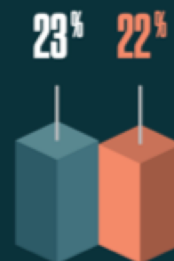
I DON'T  
WANT TO  
GET TOO  
PERSONAL  
WITH OTHER  
PEOPLE



I'VE HAD  
BAD PAST  
EXPERIENCES  
WITH  
GROUPS OR  
INDIVIDUALS



I CAN'T FIND  
A GOOD  
CHURCH OR  
CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY



GENERAL  
BUSYNESS  
OF LIFE



# THE DISCIPLE-MAKING CONTEXT



# THE DISCIPLESHIP LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING

---

- People are lonelier
- We live in a distracted age
- Which is powered by our screens
- We are experiencing the rise of the iSoul



# TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE?

## % among adults

97% - You have to be true to yourself.

91% - The best way to find yourself is to look within yourself.

84% - The highest goal in life is to enjoy it as much as possible.



# TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE?

## % among practicing Christians

91% - You have to be true to yourself.

76% - The best way to find yourself is to look within yourself.

66% - The highest goal in life is to enjoy it as much as possible.



# WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY...



# WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

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## HOW DO PEOPLE TALK ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP?

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE TERMS CHRISTIANS MOST PREFER FOR “DISCIPLESHIP”

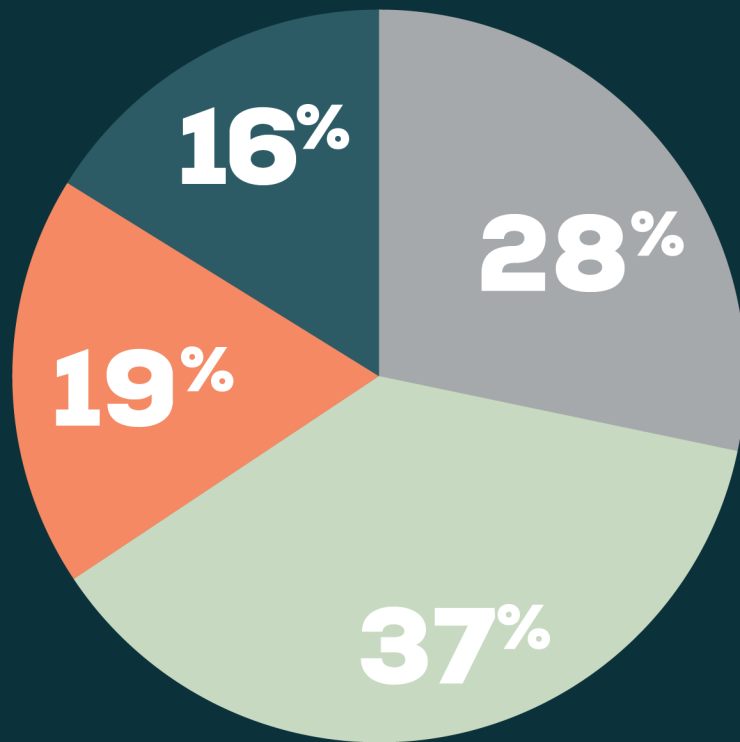




# RELEVANCE OF THE TERM "DISCIPLESHIP"

% among Christian adults NOT choosing "discipleship" as preferred term

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- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not too relevant
- Not at all relevant

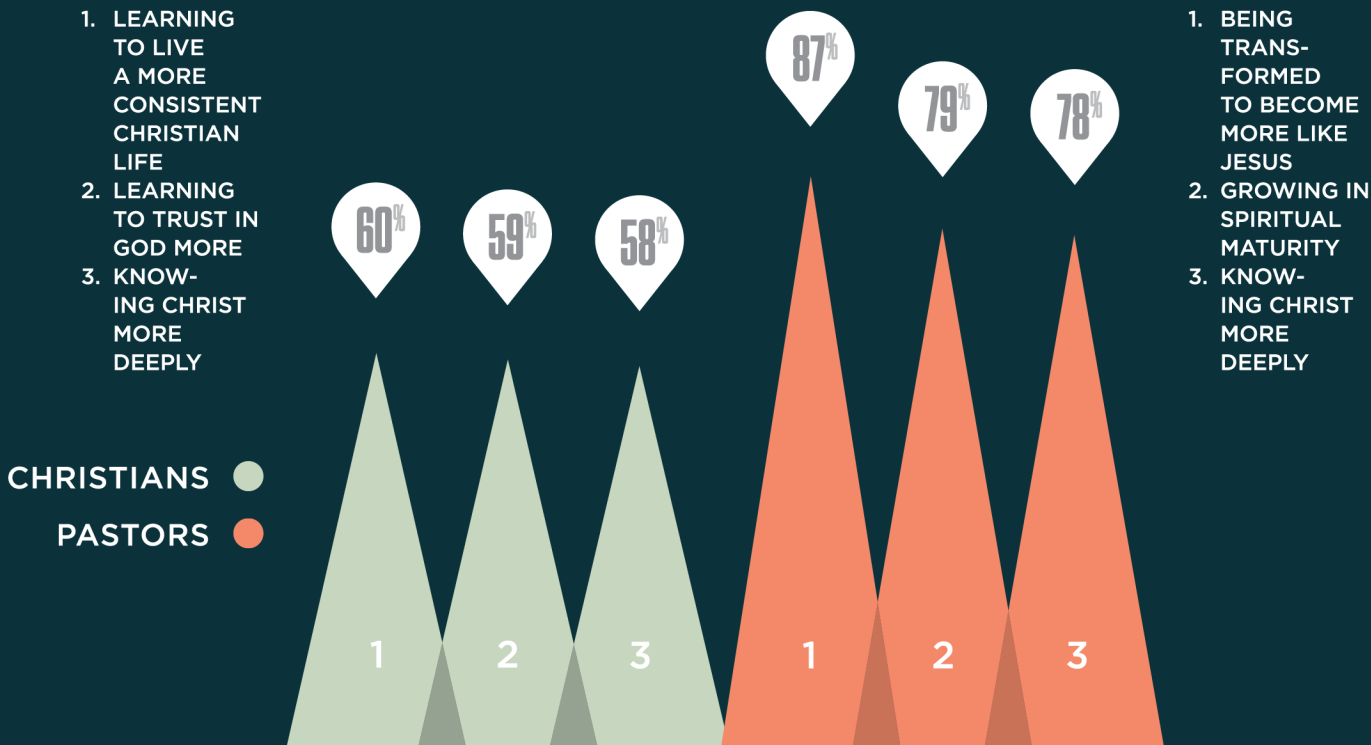


# WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

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## TOP 3 GOALS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

PASTORS AND LAYPEOPLE HAVE VERY DIFFERENT GOALS FOR DISCIPLESHIP



# PREFERRED TERMS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

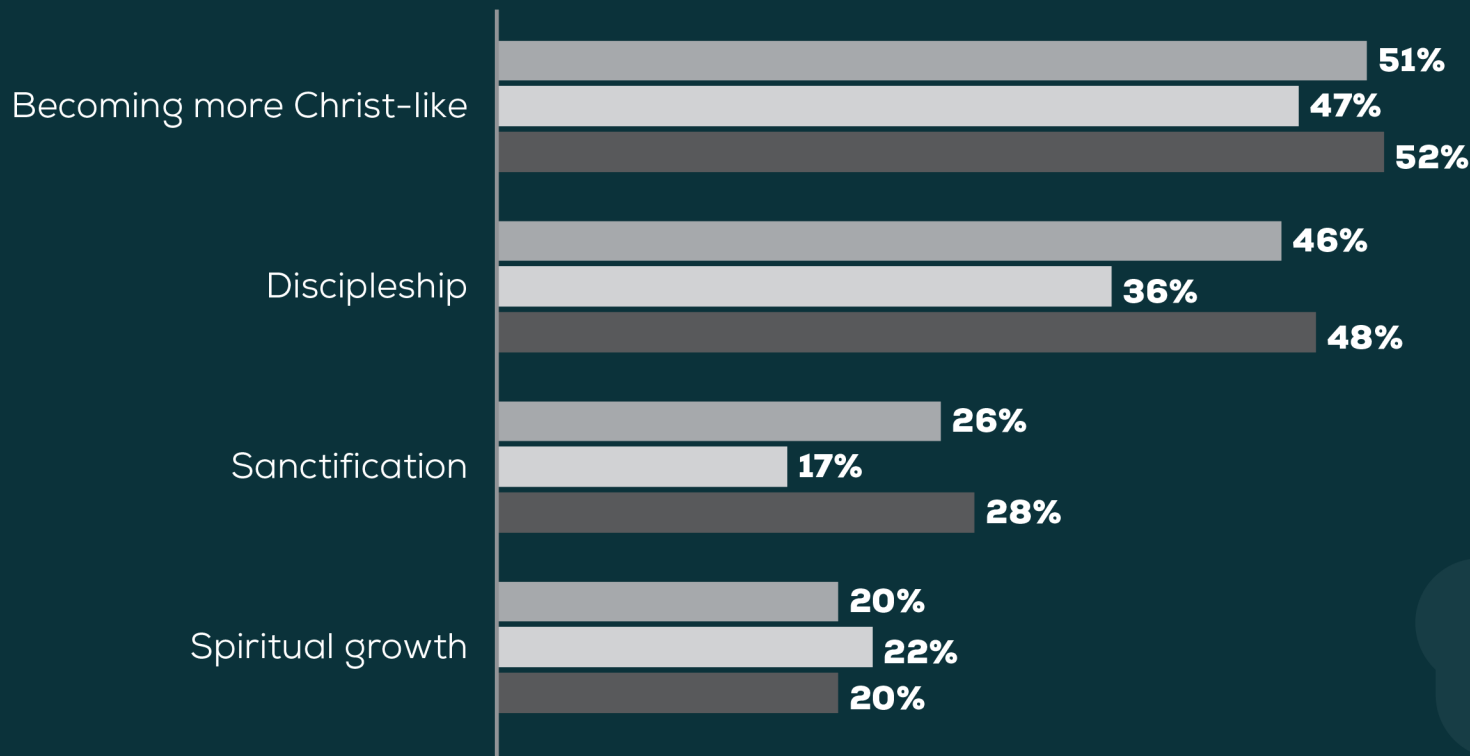
*% among church leaders*

Barna

● All church leaders

● Mainline leaders

● Non-mainline leaders

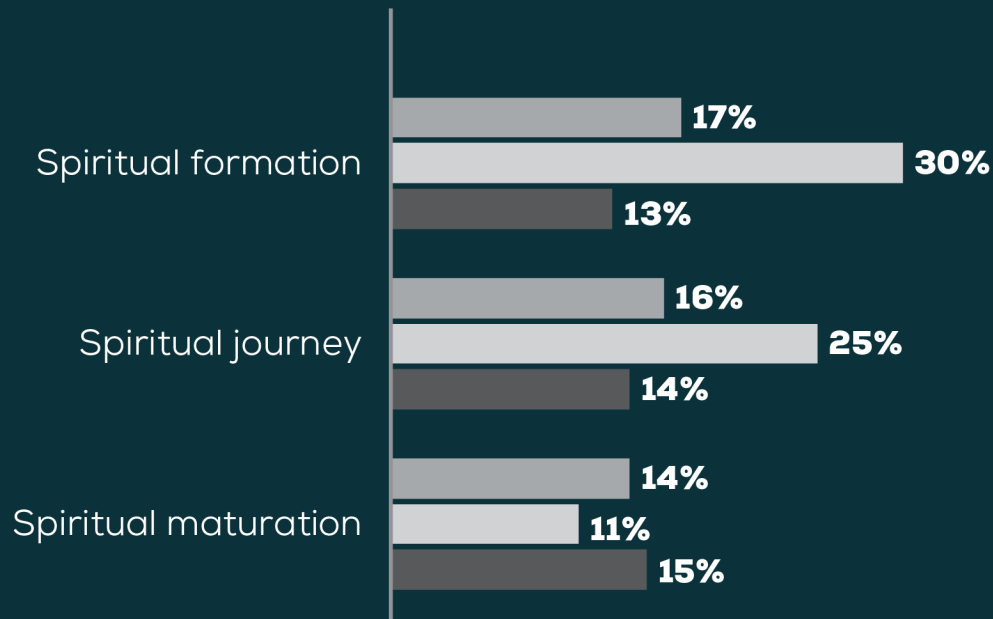


# PREFERRED TERMS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

*% among church leaders*

Barna

● All church leaders    ● Mainline leaders    ● Non-mainline leaders

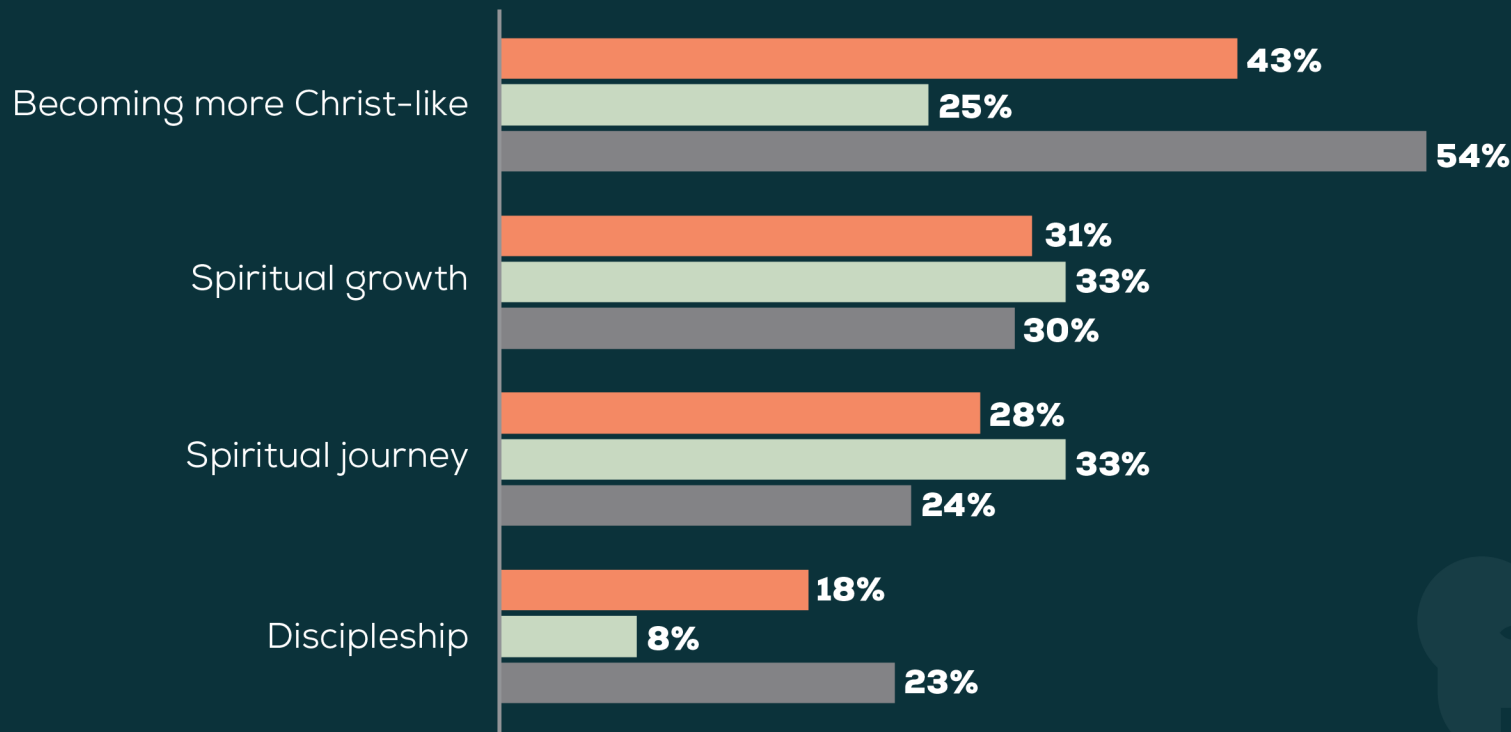


# PREFERRED TERMS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

% among Christian adults

Barna

● All Christian adults ● Non-practicing Christians ● Practicing Christians

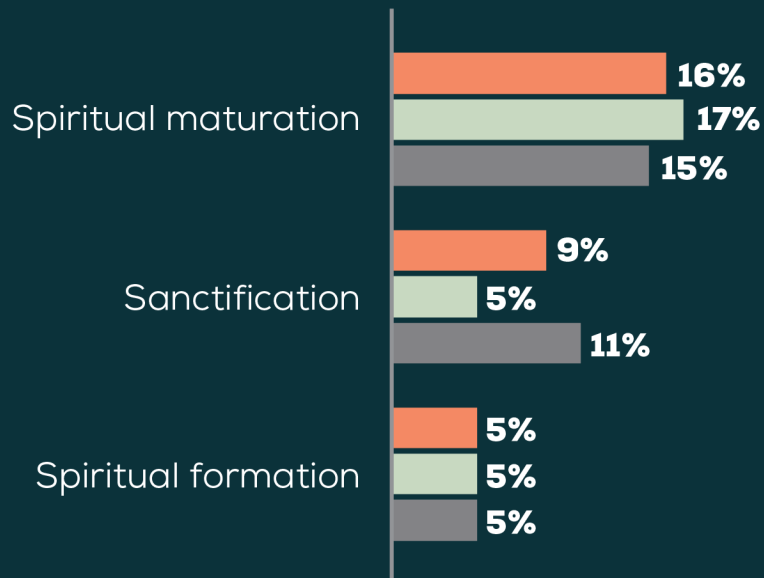


# PREFERRED TERMS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

% among Christian adults

Barna

● All Christian adults    ● Non-practicing Christians    ● Practicing Christians



# DISCIPLESHIP IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR

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I BELIEVE MY  
SPIRITUAL LIFE HAS  
AN IMPACT ON ...



# THE METHODOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP



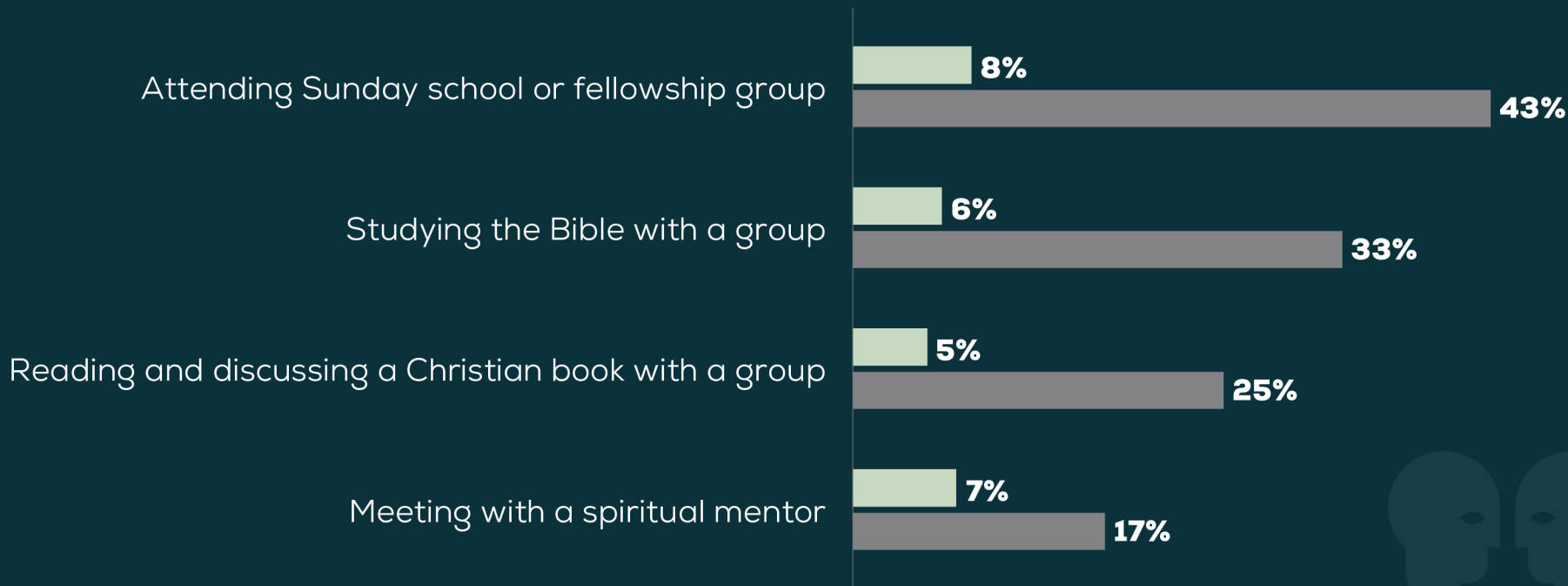


# PARTICIPATION IN DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

(% who say spiritual growth is at least somewhat important)

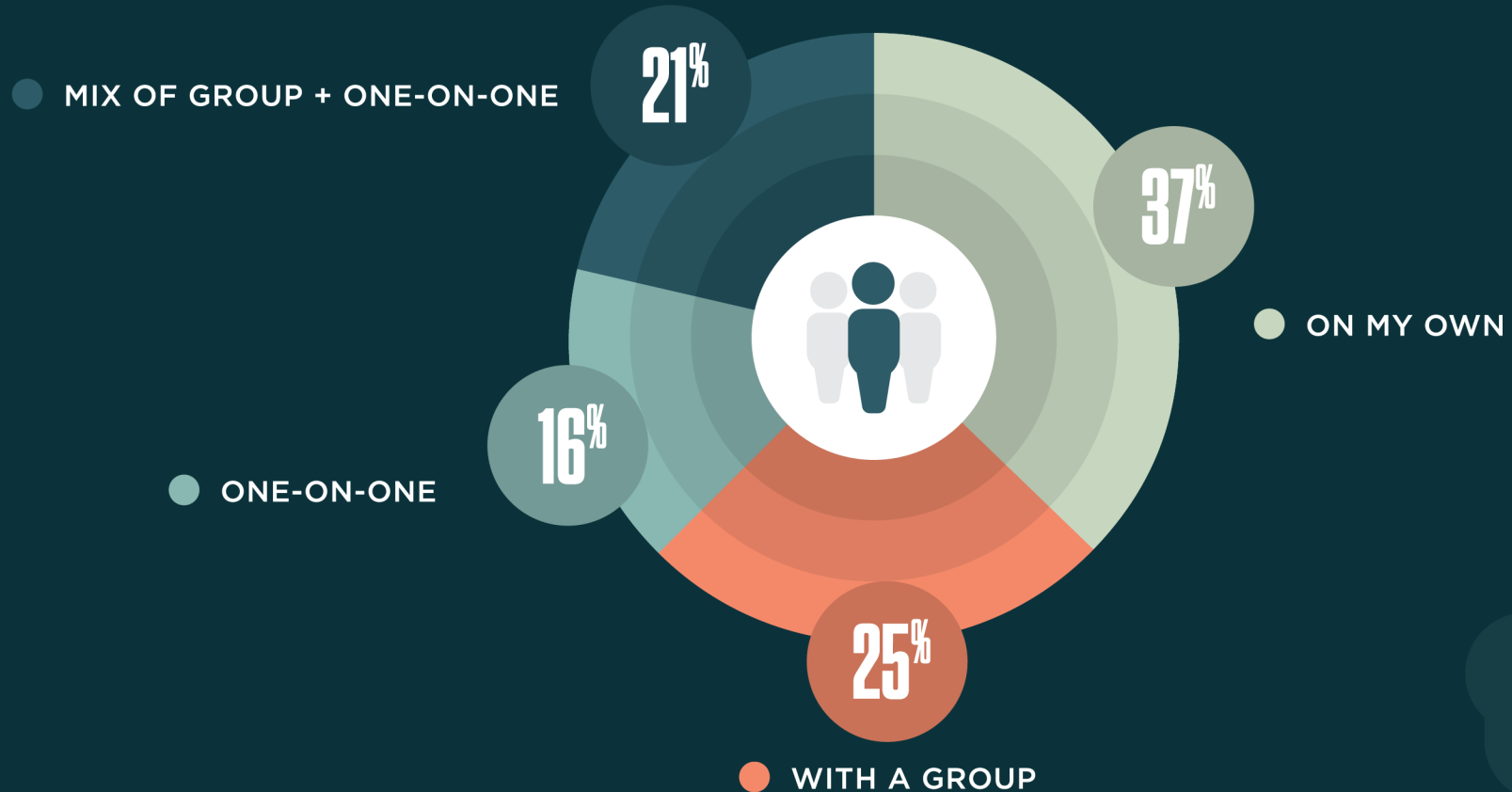
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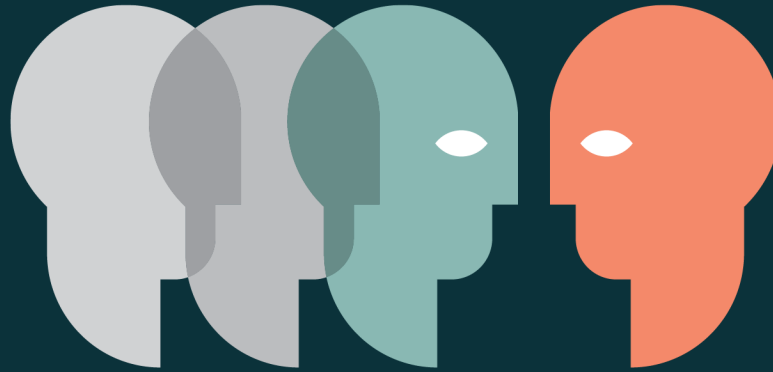
● Non-practicing Christians ● Practicing Christians



# HOW DO CHRISTIANS WANT TO BE DISCIPLED?

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**1 IN 3** CHRISTIANS  
IS LOOKING FOR  
ONE-ON-ONE  
DISCIPLESHIP.





**1 IN 4 CHRISTIANS  
IS CURRENTLY  
BEING DISCIPLED BY  
SOMEONE.**





**1 IN 5 IS  
DISCIPLING  
SOMEONE ELSE.**

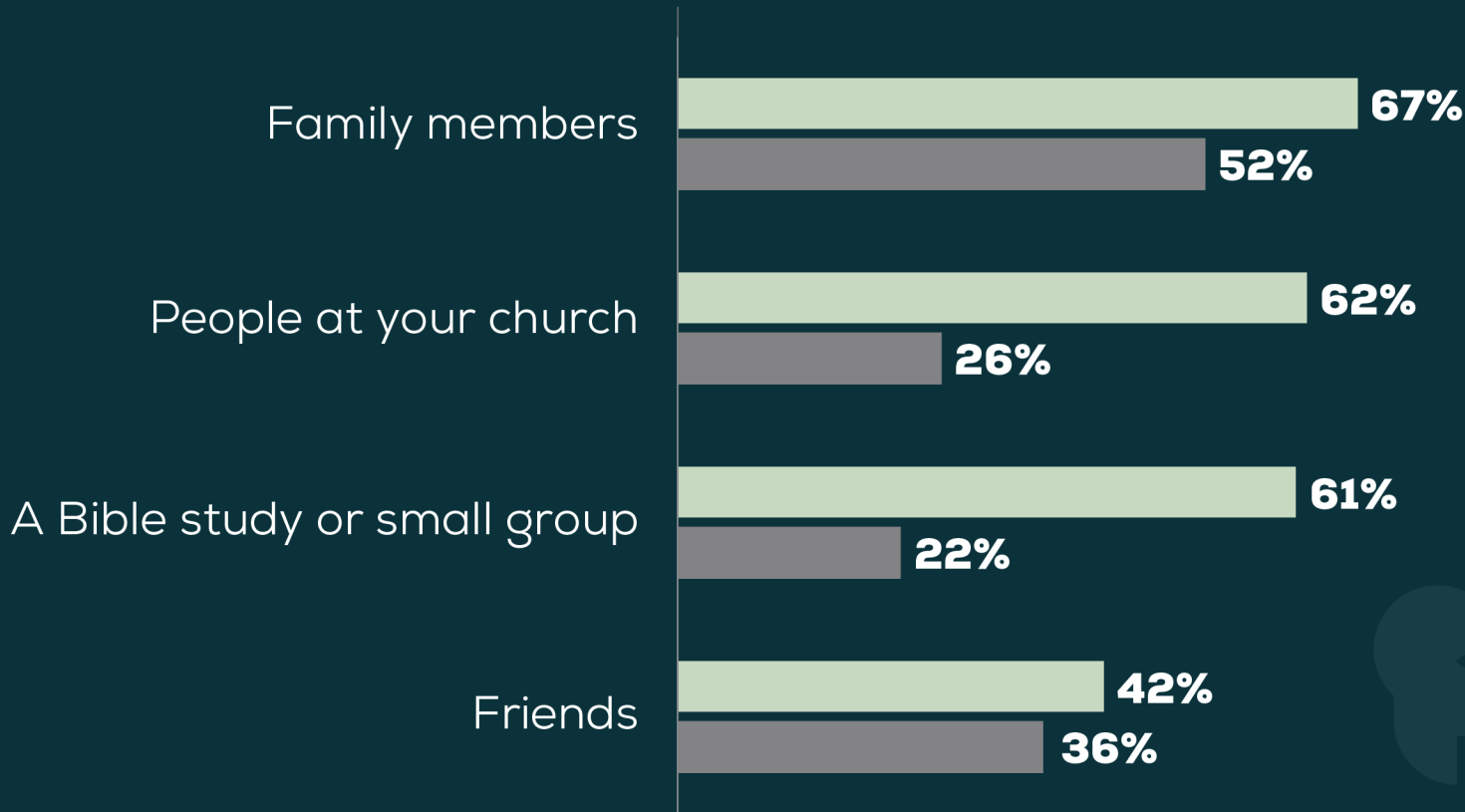


# MOST VALUABLE RELATIONSHIPS TO CHRISTIANS' SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS

% among Christians who say spiritual growth is at least somewhat important

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● Non-practicing Christians ● Practicing Christians

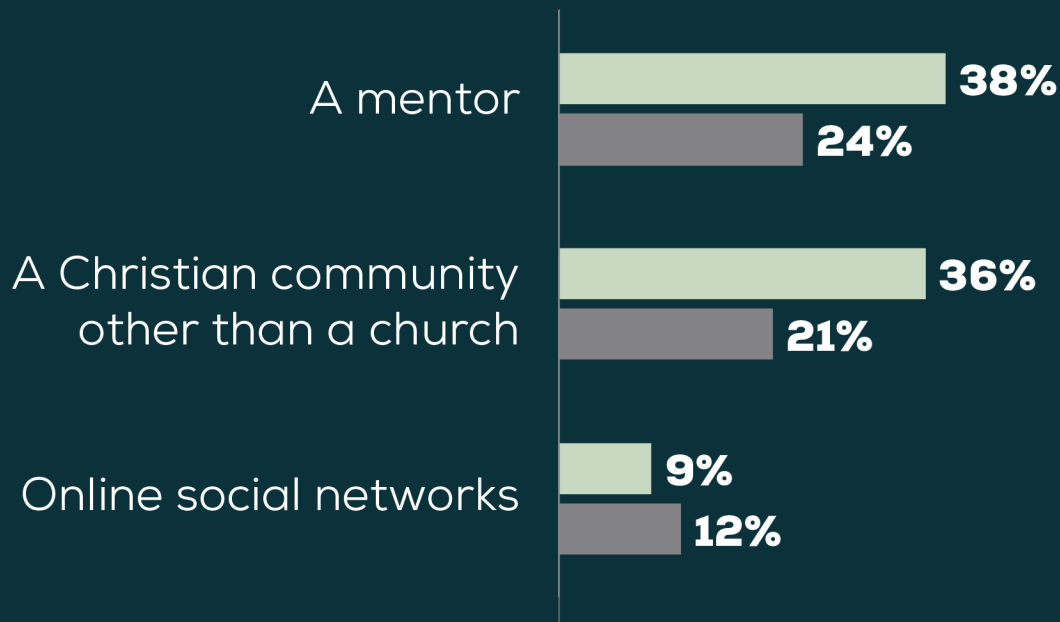


# MOST VALUABLE RELATIONSHIPS TO CHRISTIANS' SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS

% among Christians who say spiritual growth is at least somewhat important

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- Non-practicing Christians
- Practicing Christians



# CHURCHES & DISCIPLESHIP



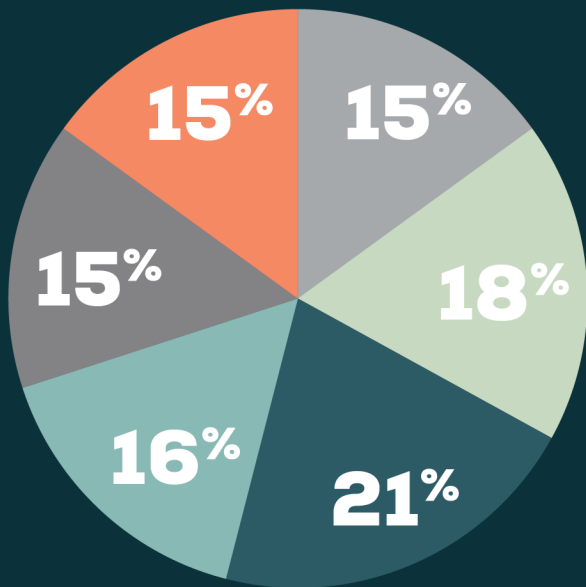


# ESTIMATES OF MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

% among church leaders

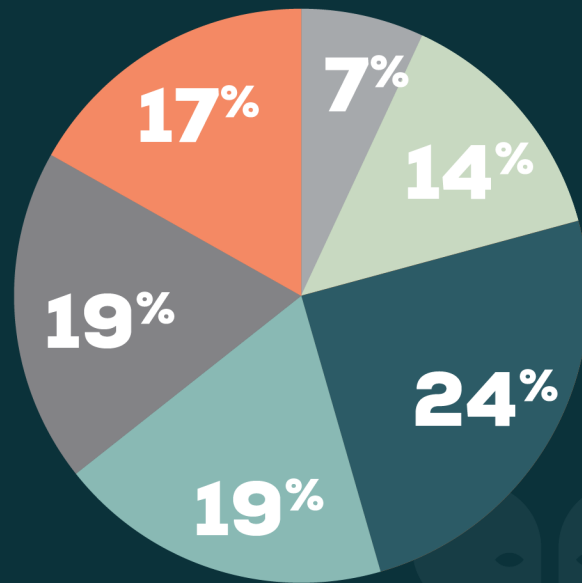
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## Senior Pastors



- less than 15%
- 15 to 29%
- 30 to 44%
- 45 to 59%
- 60 to 74%
- 75 to 100%

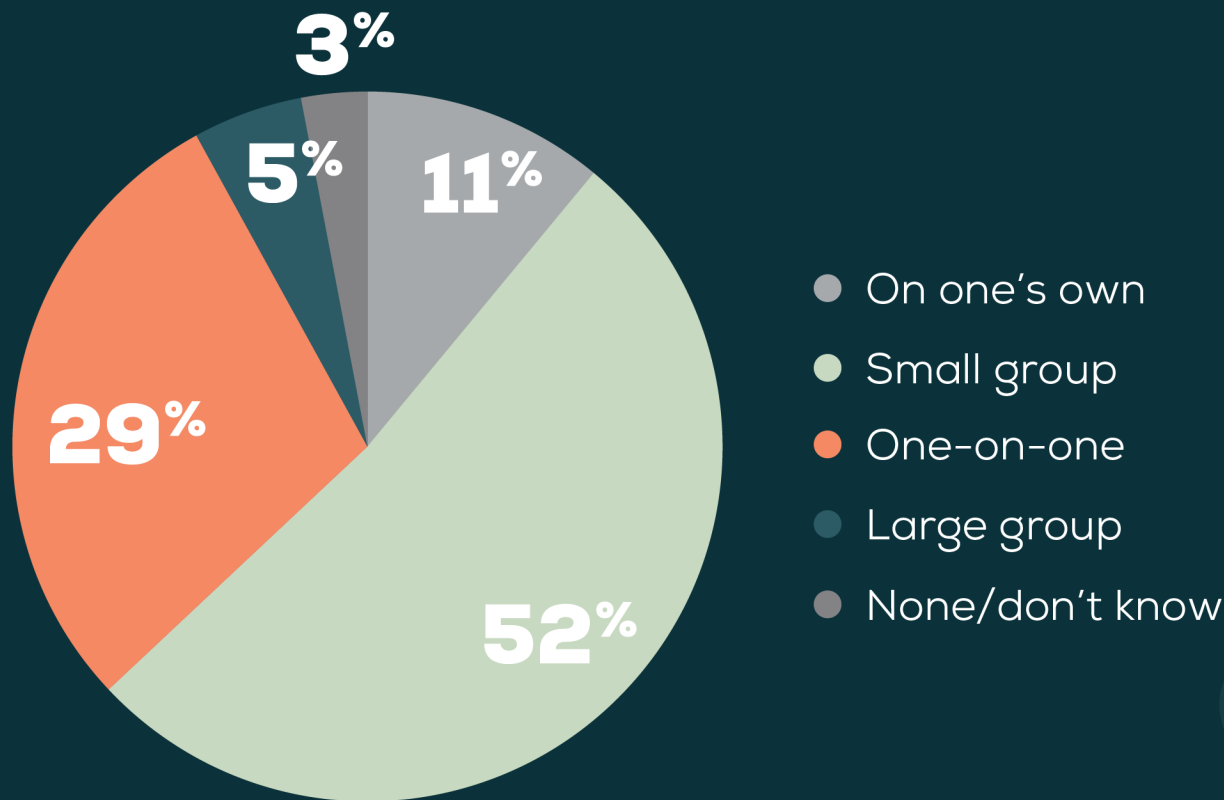
## Discipleship Leaders



# MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD OF DISCIPLESHIP

% among church leaders

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# ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

% among church leaders

Barna

● Senior pastors

● Discipleship leaders



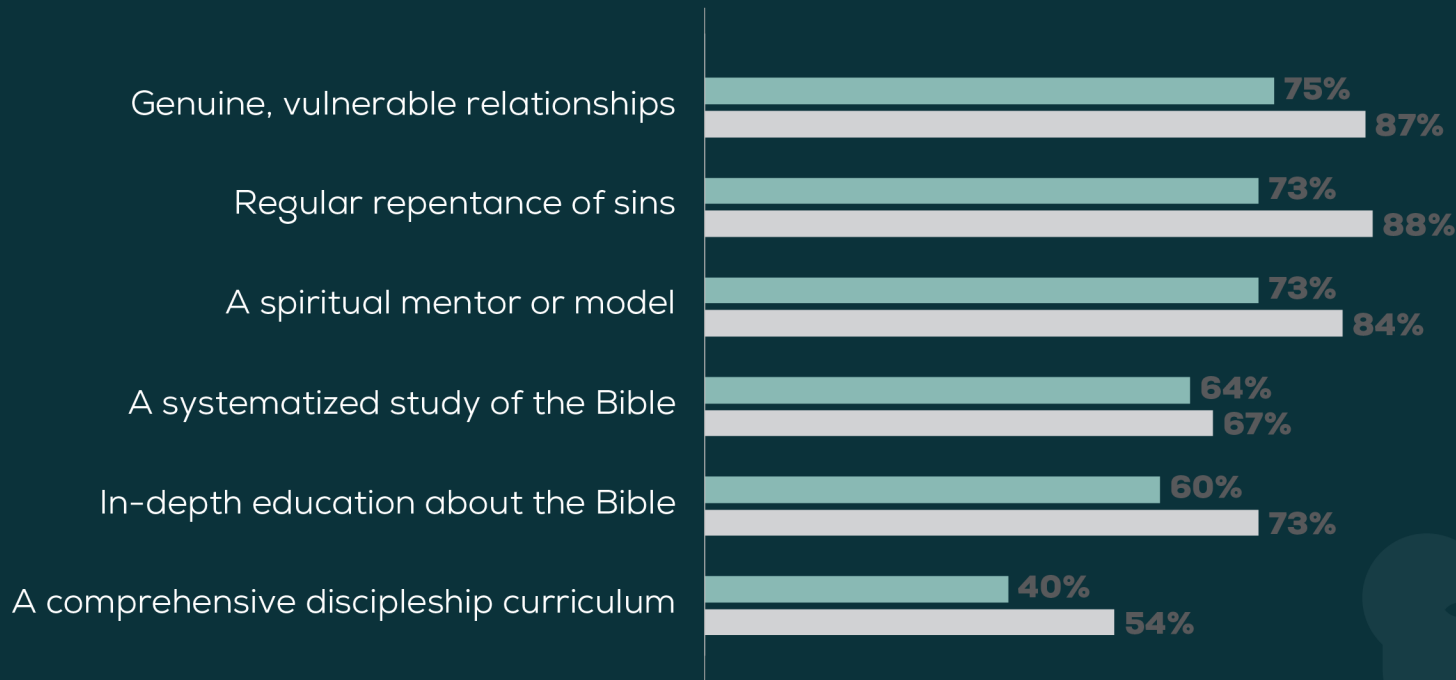
# ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

% among church leaders

Barna

● Senior pastors

● Discipleship leaders



# MILLENNIALS & DISCIPLESHIP



# MILLENNIALS & DISCIPLESHIP

---

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## MORE LIKELY TO SAY:

I have been through a lot, growing will help me  
Inspired by others and want to be more like them

## LESS LIKELY TO SAY:

I want to know God more  
My church encourages spiritual growth



# CONCLUSIONS



# FIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCIPLESHIP

---

1. Life-shaping relationships
2. Cultural discernment
3. Reverse mentoring
4. Vocational discipleship
5. First-hand experience of Jesus





# DISCUSSION:

## *WHAT DO YOU THINK?*

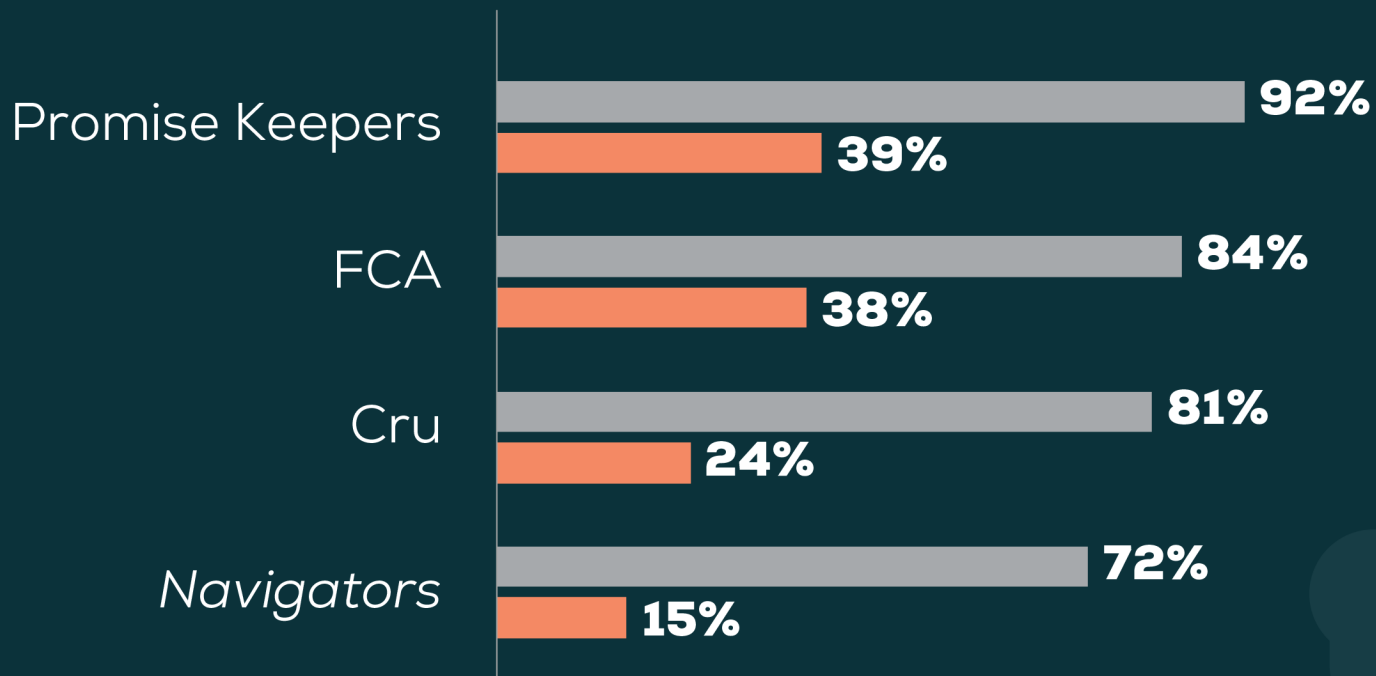


# FAMILIARITY WITH DISCIPLESHIP ORGANIZATIONS

% among Christian adults and church leaders

Barna

● All church leaders ● All Christian adults

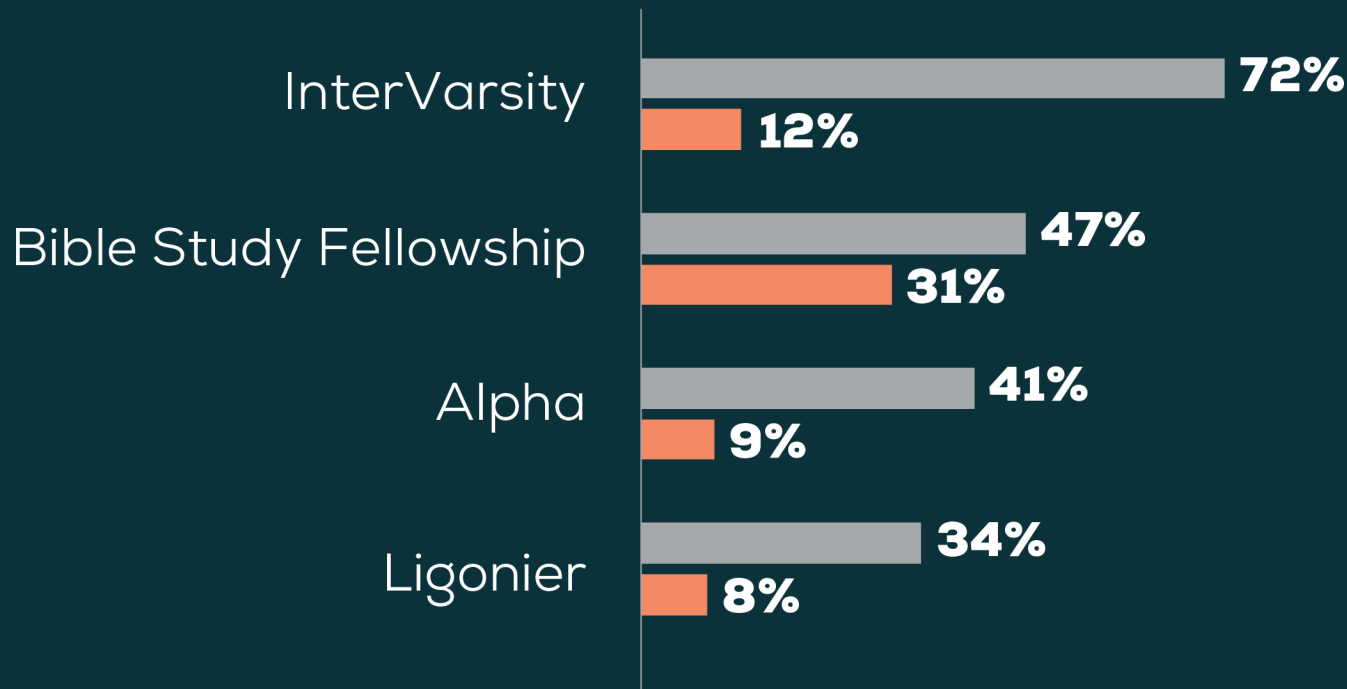


# FAMILIARITY WITH DISCIPLESHIP ORGANIZATIONS

% among Christian adults and church leaders

Barna

● All church leaders ● All Christian adults



# ABOUT THE PROJECT PARTNERS

**BARNA GROUP** is a research firm dedicated to providing actionable insights on faith and culture, with a particular focus on the Christian church.

[www.Barna.com](http://www.Barna.com)

**THE NAVIGATORS** is a ministry that shares the gospel of Jesus and helps people grow in their relationship with Him through Life-to-Life™ discipleship, creating spiritual generations of believers.

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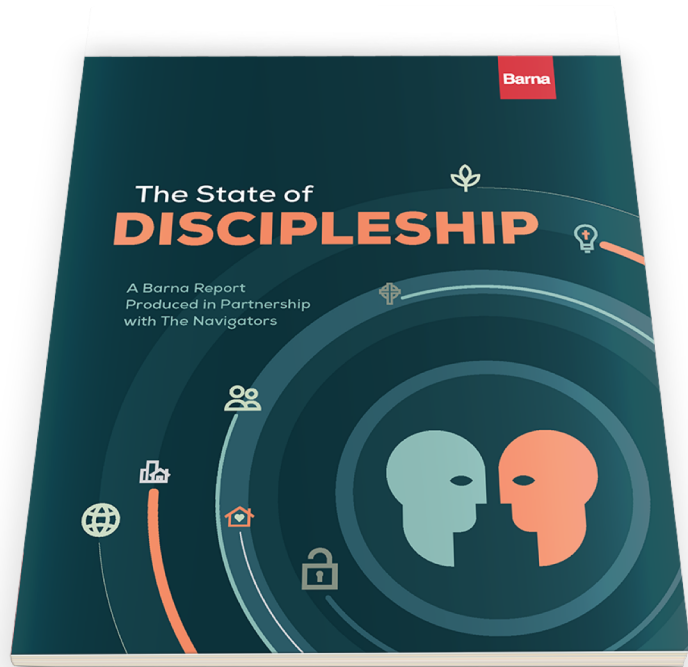
[Read More](#)

#### The Mercy Journey

A critical element is missing in how we relate to one another today: mercy. In embarking on The Mercy Journey, the presence of Christians and the work of



**Barna**



For more information about this study and to see the complete findings, check out our 2015 report:

### ***The State of Discipleship***

The full report is available at [\*\*shop.barna.com\*\*](https://shop.barna.com) or through Barna Access membership.