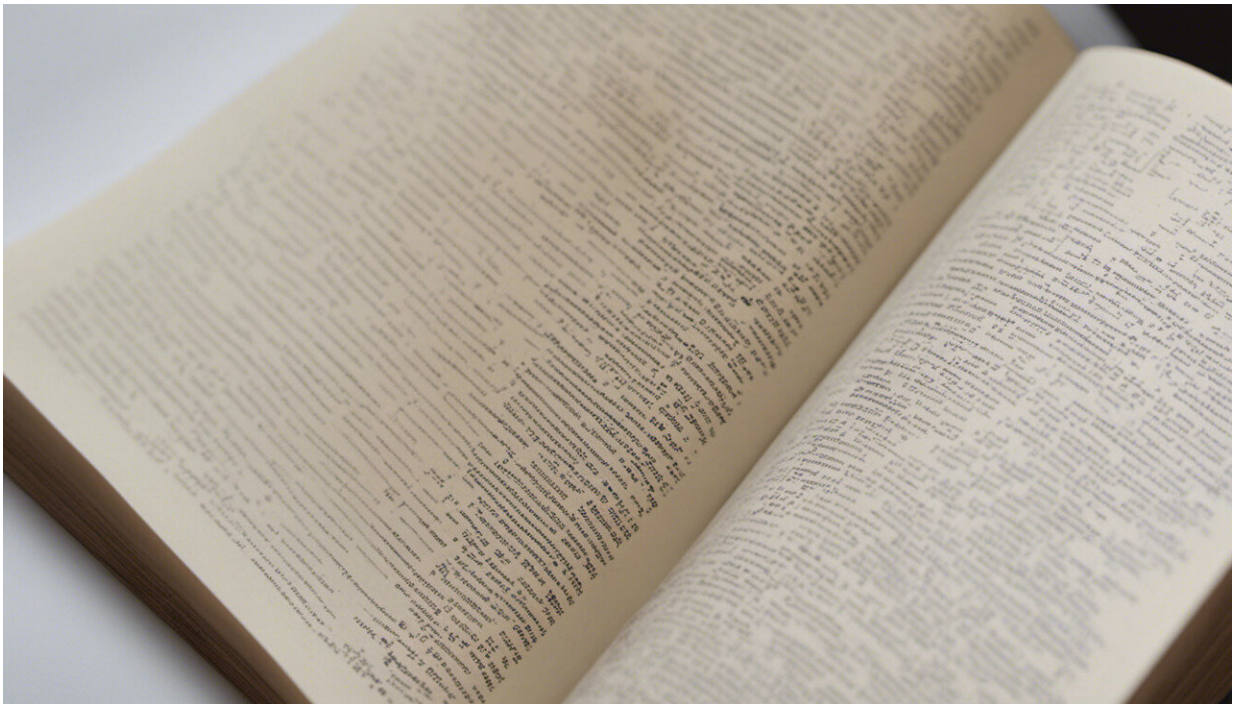


Church-going is not enough to affect job satisfaction and commitment, study finds

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A congregation's beliefs about work attitudes and practices affect a churchgoer on the job—but how much depends in part on how involved that person is in the congregation, according to a Baylor University study funded by the National Science Foundation.

"We already knew that about 60 percent of American adults are affiliated with congregations, but we wanted to delve into whether that carries over from weekend worship services to the work day," said Jerry Z. Park, Ph.D., associate professor of sociology in Baylor's College of Arts & Sciences. "It turns out it does make some difference in their attitudes at work. That means it has a potential 'payoff' not only for employers, but for employees themselves."

Researchers asked a random sample of full-time employees if they attended a place of worship, and if so, they were then asked whether their congregation emphasized integrating their faith in the workplace through "sacrificial love" to their co-workers, sensing God's presence at work among others. What seemed to make the difference, researchers found, was frequent attendance at a church that stressed a merge of faith and work. Simply being at such a congregation – or just attending any church – did not result in greater work satisfaction or dedication.

The analysis of data—"Workplace-Bridging Religious Capital: Connecting Congregations to Work Outcomes"—is published in the journal *Sociology of Religion*.

Researchers' analysis was based on the National Survey of Work, Entrepreneurship and Religion, a 2010 Web-based survey of 1,022 fulltime workers. Their findings concentrated on three areas:

- Job satisfaction: Full-time workers who regularly attend a congregation that emphasizes integrating their faith at work report higher [job satisfaction](#).
- Job commitment: Full-time workers who regularly attend a congregation that emphasizes integrating their faith at work report higher commitment to their place of employment.
- Entrepreneurship: People who are actively involved in in congregations that promote integration of faith with work are

more likely to describe themselves as entrepreneurial, Park said. However, attendance seems to impede [entrepreneurship](#)—perhaps because time and energy spent in entrepreneurial endeavors leaves less time for church attendance.

How religion affects job satisfaction, commitment to one's job and entrepreneurship was measured by researchers using a 15-item Congregational Faith at Work Scale, Park said. That scale includes such items as whether respondents sense God's presence while they work, whether they view their work as having eternal significance, whether they view co-workers as being made in the image of God, whether they believe they should demonstrate "sacrificial love" toward co-workers and whether they believe God wants them to develop their abilities and talents at [work](#).

Workplace attitudes such as job commitment also were evaluated by a variety of items that asked how much participants felt like "part of the family" at their organization, how efficiently they get proposed actions through "bureaucratic red tape" and whether they "went to bat" for good ideas of co-workers.

Max Weber, an early social theorist, argued that Protestants who lived strict, simple lives—such as the Calvinists of the 16th and 17th centuries—viewed their worldly employment as service to God, so religion added significance to labor. Success in business was viewed as confirmation of salvation.

"Religious participation is an active part of life for millions of Americans, and it is relevant in other domains," the study concluded.

Provided by Baylor University

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