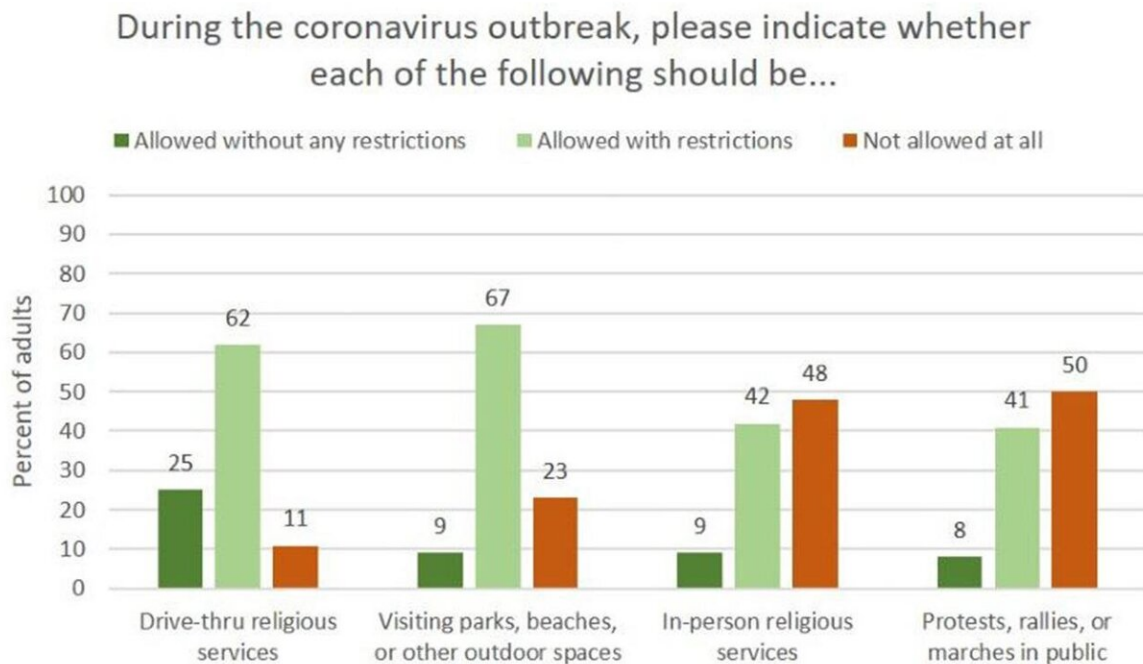


How are Americans practicing religion during the pandemic?

May 13 2020



The results of the UChicago Divinity School and the Associated Press-NORC poll show that a majority of Americans believe outdoor activities should be allowed with restrictions. Credit: Divinity School/AP-NORC

An overwhelming majority of people in the United States support restricting or suspending in-person religious services during the COVID-19 outbreak, according to a new poll from the University of Chicago Divinity School and the Associated Press-NORC Center for

Public Affairs.

Conducted April 30-May 4, the poll finds that only 9% of Americans think in-person [religious services](#) should continue without any restrictions. The poll also finds that 42% of Americans think those services should be allowed with restrictions, while 48% are in favor of disallowing such services entirely during the pandemic.

By comparison, 67% say people should be allowed to visit outdoor spaces like parks or beaches with restrictions. Democrats and independents are more skeptical than Republicans of opening up each of these things to the public without restrictions during the outbreak.

Those with a [religious affiliation](#) are more likely to say in-person services should be allowed without restrictions (10% vs. 3%), while those who do not have a religious affiliation are more likely to say they should not be allowed at all (57% vs. 45%). However, these groups do not differ in their attitudes on whether drive-through religious services, visiting outdoor spaces, or protests and rallies should be allowed.

Those with a religious affiliation also report changes in behavior, with only 7% being part of a congregation that is currently open. More are watching live-streaming services weekly (33% now vs. 19% in 2019). Fewer are attending in-person services (7% vs. 27%). Private prayer has remained relatively constant at 56%.

Just over a third of Americans think that prohibiting in-person services in response to COVID-19 violates freedom of religion. That number was higher among those with a religious affiliation (36%) than those without (24%), even when accounting for other demographic factors like partisanship.

Overall, 47% of Americans are very or extremely worried that they or

someone in their family will be infected with the coronavirus, a number that has increased since February and early March. Eighteen percent are worried about being infected with the flu.

While nearly half the public is very or extremely worried about infection, even more are taking steps to limit their exposure to, and slow the spread of, the virus. More than 80% are limiting trips outside the house and keeping a 6-foot radius when interacting with others. Roughly three-fourths are limiting their interactions with others to groups of 10 or less, avoiding other people as much as possible, and wearing a mask when leaving the home.

Many remain in favor of measures put in place in response to the coronavirus outbreak, but support has declined since April. Notably, although 71% support requiring Americans to stay at home except for essential errands, 85% are practicing this behavior anyway.

The nationwide poll was conducted April 30-May 4, 2020, using the AmeriSpeak Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,002 adults. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 4.2 percentage points.

Provided by University of Chicago

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