

# Top 7 Research Findings on Pastor Finances

With the help of NAE denominations, a national financial research study was conducted among 4,249 senior pastors and 19 denominational leaders and who shared the following data.

## 1 - Many dedicated pastors serve in small churches with financial challenges.

- 60 percent of pastors have been serving at their current church 6+ years.
- 82 percent serve in rural areas and small towns/cities.
- 80 percent serve churches under 200 people (55 percent under 100).
- Median budget for over 4,000 churches surveyed was only \$125,000.
- Nearly half of the pastors said only a “small number of people” provide most of the budget, implying that the majority of the people in congregation are not faithful or generous givers.

## 2 - There is a large need that the Lilly Grant matching funds and project can help fill.

- 8 percent said they could turn to their denomination for help with their financial concerns.
- 5 percent said their denomination has “many resources” to help them with personal finances.
- 9 percent said their denomination has “many resources” to help them with church finances.
- 17 percent of denominational leaders said they had “many resources” to help their pastors and churches in financial matters.

## 3- Pastors realize they need help.

- 18 percent of pastors have a strong confidence they will be financially okay in 10 years.
- 23 percent of pastors are completely confident in managing the church’s finances.
- 22 percent of pastors felt their church finances were on very solid ground.
- 29 percent of pastors felt their personal finances were on very solid ground.
- 14 percent of pastors received personal or church financial training from their seminary.

## 4 - Pastors have two very strong allies that can help address financial concerns.

- 82 percent have a positive working relationship with the leaders who decide their compensation.
- 93 percent indicated they and their spouse are in agreement when it comes to finances.

## 5- Pastors have genuine financial challenges.

- 90 percent of pastors feel some financial stress.
- 50 percent have salary/housing packages under \$50,000.
- 59 percent do not receive family health insurance from their church.
- 62 percent do not receive pension/retirement funds from their church.
- 66 percent of bi-vocational pastors received no benefits beyond salary/housing.
- 63 percent of spouses work outside the home, and 31 percent of pastors work a second job.
- 30 percent have student loan debt averaging \$36,039.
- 21 percent have \$0 retirement savings. 12 percent under \$10K. 25 percent \$10K-\$50K.
- 20 percent opted out of social security.
- 29 percent have \$0 in personal savings. 22 percent have under \$5K.
- 25 percent have medical debt averaging \$7,253.
- 74 percent have non-mortgage debt averaging \$31,593, median of \$14,000.

## 6 - Pastors understand that financial challenges can cause them to leave the ministry.

- 36 percent have considered leaving the ministry due to financial pressures.
- 76 percent know other pastors who left the ministry due to financial pressures.

## 7- Pastors understand their biggest financial stress factors.

- 92 percent Retirement savings; 84 percent Emergencies/larger purchases; 60 percent Medical bills/insurance; 59 percent Low salary; 54 percent College savings for children; 35 percent Student loan payments.

Source: [National Association of Evangelicals/Grey Matter Research](#)