

FIRST BAPTIST **ARLINGTON**



**FLOURISHING & THE CHURCH  
PILOT REPORT**

*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

The First Baptist Church Arlington (FBCA) Pilot Report, a collaboration between the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, Baylor University, and Regent University, provides a comprehensive evaluation of the congregation's spiritual and communal health. **Based on survey data from 1,287\* congregants collected in October 2025**, the findings characterize FBCA as a healthy and vibrant congregation shaped by long-term spiritual discipleship. Leader well-being is strong, and congregational health is consistent.

## CRITICAL TAKEAWAYS

- **High Flourishing Scores:** The congregation's Secure Flourishing Index (SFI) score of 7.45 exceeds U.S. (7.20), Texas (7.17), and California (7.14) averages, with the highest marks recorded in Meaning and Purpose.
- **Strong Religious Identity:** 95% of the congregation identifies as practicing Christians, with 79% having practiced their Christian faith for more than 20 years.
- **Leadership Excellence:** Congregational leadership received the highest marks around communal well-being in the survey (8.93 out of 10) for their skills and understanding.
- **Scripture Engagement:** While prayer is a daily habit for 80% of respondents, daily Bible engagement is notably lower at 36%, and 49% reporting weekly or more Bible reading.
- **Outreach (In)Effectiveness:** 80% of those who took the survey said they share their faith, but only 2% of respondents identified as "New Christians" and only 2% have been at the church for less than 2 years, suggesting the need for improved training in outreach and evangelism.
- **Areas of Concern:** Approximately 20% of respondents report high levels of loneliness, and one-third report some form of suffering. There is also a distinct contrast between relatively high financial stability and lower reported scores for stewardship (ICF).

## ANALYSIS OF FLOURISHING METRICS

The report utilizes two primary scales to measure well-being: the Secure Flourishing Index (SFI) and the Individual Christian Flourishing (ICF) index.

## SECURE FLOURISHING INDEX (SFI)

With an overall mean of 7.45, FBCA congregants score higher than the US average (7.2), Texas average (7.17), and California average (7.14).

## SFI DOMAIN SCORE (OUT OF 10)

- **Meaning and Purpose:** 7.77
- **Financial and Material Stability:** 7.68
- **Character and Virtue:** 7.50
- **Happiness and Life Satisfaction:** 7.46
- **Mental and Physical Health:** 7.29
- **Close Social Relationships:** 7.04

## INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN FLOURISHING (ICF)

The ICF index, which measures flourishing through a Christian lens, yielded an overall mean of 7.63.

## ICF DOMAIN SCORE (OUT OF 10)

- **Meaning:** 8.71  
(Trust in God's revelation/purposes)
- **Happiness:** 7.94  
(Love for God over earthly desires)
- **Health:** 7.69  
(Body as a gift; trust during suffering)
- **Relationships:** 7.44  
(Loving neighbors/enemies)
- **Character:** 7.41  
(Prayer for God's kingdom; eternal perspective)
- **Stewardship:** 6.83  
(Using resources to please God)

## DEMOGRAPHIC AND BEHAVIORAL VARIATIONS

- **Age:** Flourishing scores generally increase with age. Congregants aged 65+ report the highest levels of SFI (7.97) and ICF (8.14), while those aged 18-39 report the lowest (SFI: 7.07; ICF: 7.32). This follows a similar trend found in the Global Flourishing Study.
- **Attendance:** Weekly in-person attendance is strongly correlated with higher general and Christian flourishing. For example, weekly attenders score 7.79 on the ICF, compared to 6.65 for those who attend rarely or never.

## SPIRITUAL LIFE AND DISCIPLESHIP

The congregation is characterized by deep-rooted faith and consistent religious practice, though some discrepancies exist in personal disciplines.

## RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND LONGEVITY

- **Practicing Christians:** 95% of respondents identify as practicing Christians.
- **Faith Duration:** 79% have been practicing Christians for more than 20 years.
- **Membership Tenure:** 55% of the congregation has been with FBCA for more than 10 years.

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

- **Prayer:** 80% of congregants pray daily or more.
- **Scripture Engagement:** Only 36% read the Bible daily, while 49% read Scripture weekly or more.
- **Spiritual Texts:** 29% engage with resources other than Scripture (devotions, podcasts, teaching) at least daily, while 51% do so at least weekly.
- **Service Attendance:** 82% attend religious services in person at least once a week (27% more than once a week; 55% once a week). Online attendance is less frequent, with 55% attending online only a few times a year.

## FAITH TRANSMISSION AND EVANGELISM

- **Parental Influence:** 42% of respondents noted that their mothers were the primary source of faith encouragement during childhood, with 39% receiving faith instruction from both parents.
- **Current Practice:** Daily discipleship in the home is a more common practice than it was in people's childhoods. Among parents in the congregation, 31% have open conversations with their children about faith daily (compared to 17% who had daily conversations about faith with their own parents), while 22% do so more than once a week (compared to 6% with their own parents).
- **Evangelism:** 80% of respondents agree with the statement: "I tell other people about my faith even when they have different beliefs," while only 9% disagreed.

## CONGREGATIONAL WELL-BEING AND HEALTH

The congregation perceives the church as a highly functional and well-led organization, though interpersonal satisfaction scores are slightly lower. The questions framed to reflect personal experience (me) scored higher. The questions framed to invite speculation on behalf of the congregation (we) scored lower.

## INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH SCORES

- **Leadership Skills:** 8.93  
(High confidence in leadership ability)
- **Healthy Practices:** 8.68  
(The church has structures to accomplish goals)
- **Strong Mission:** 8.63  
(Shared mission is clear to everyone)
- **Relationships:** 7.23  
(Trust among members)
- **Satisfying Community:** 6.96  
(General satisfaction with the state of the congregation)

## SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERING

- **Financial Giving:** 72% report giving to the congregation on a regular basis.
- **Community Support:** 71% often see their daily work as an opportunity to serve God. 67% often or always use the gifts God has given them to support the community.
- **Volunteering:**
  - 44% of respondents volunteer for the congregation 5-10 hours monthly; 38% volunteer 11+ hours each month for the church.
  - 25% volunteer for the community independently for 11+ hours monthly; 23% volunteer independently in the community for 5-10 hours each month.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The survey captured data from a diverse age range, but a largely homogeneous racial and marital demographic.

- **Age Distribution:**
  - 18-39 years: 31%
  - 40-64 years: 33%
  - 65+ years: 37%
- **Generations:** Boomers (34%) and Gen X (20%) make up the largest cohorts, followed by Millennial (19%), Gen Z (19%), and Silent (8%).
- **Gender:** 57% Female; 43% Male.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** 85% White; 6% Hispanic/Latino; 6% Asian; 4% Black/African American.
- **Marital Status:** 63% Married; 17% Single/Never married; 8% Widowed; 7% Divorced.
- **Education:** 42% are college graduates; 28% have attended graduate or vocational school; 20% have some college.
- **Employment:** 42% are employed by an employer; 33% are retired; 9% are students; 6% are self-employed
- **Children at Home:** 21% of respondents care for children 18 or younger.

## CHALLENGES AND DISCERNMENT AREAS

The report identifies the following areas for prayerful discernment and potential ministry focus:

- **Suffering and Loneliness:** Despite high overall flourishing scores, one-third of the congregation reports some type of suffering, and 20% experience significant loneliness.
- **Stewardship Disparity:** There is a notable contrast between the stated financial stability of congregants (7.68 on SFI) and their self-reported stewardship (6.83 on ICF), suggesting a gap in how resources are used to serve God.
- **Biblical Literacy:** The disparity between high prayer frequency (80%) and lower daily Bible reading (36%) may indicate a need for greater focused discipleship in Scripture.
- **Interpersonal Trust:** The “Satisfying Community” and “Relationships” scores (6.96 and 7.23) are lower than the organizational and leadership scores, pointing to a possible need for deeper relationship building within the church.
- **Evangelism Capacity:** 80% of those who took the survey said they share their faith, but only 2% of respondents identified as “New Christians” and only 2% have been at the church for less than 2 years, suggesting the need for more training and emphasis in outreach and evangelism.

*\* The total number of FBCA survey respondents was 1,287. However, not every participant answered every question. As such, the number of responses for each item (n=) varied from a typical range of 1,000 to 1,100.*

