



CMCA Summit
May 17-18, 2024 | Wheaton, IL

REJOICE!

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!" - Revelation 19:6-7

WELCOME!

Churchgoer Views of Prison Ministry

LifeWay Research

Sponsored by:



**CORRECTIONAL
MINISTRIES INSTITUTE**



PRISON
FELLOWSHIP

 **CMCA** Correctional Ministries and
Chaplains Association



**Kairos Prison Ministry
International**



Why this
research?



Think of your
pathway into
correctional
ministry?



Methodology

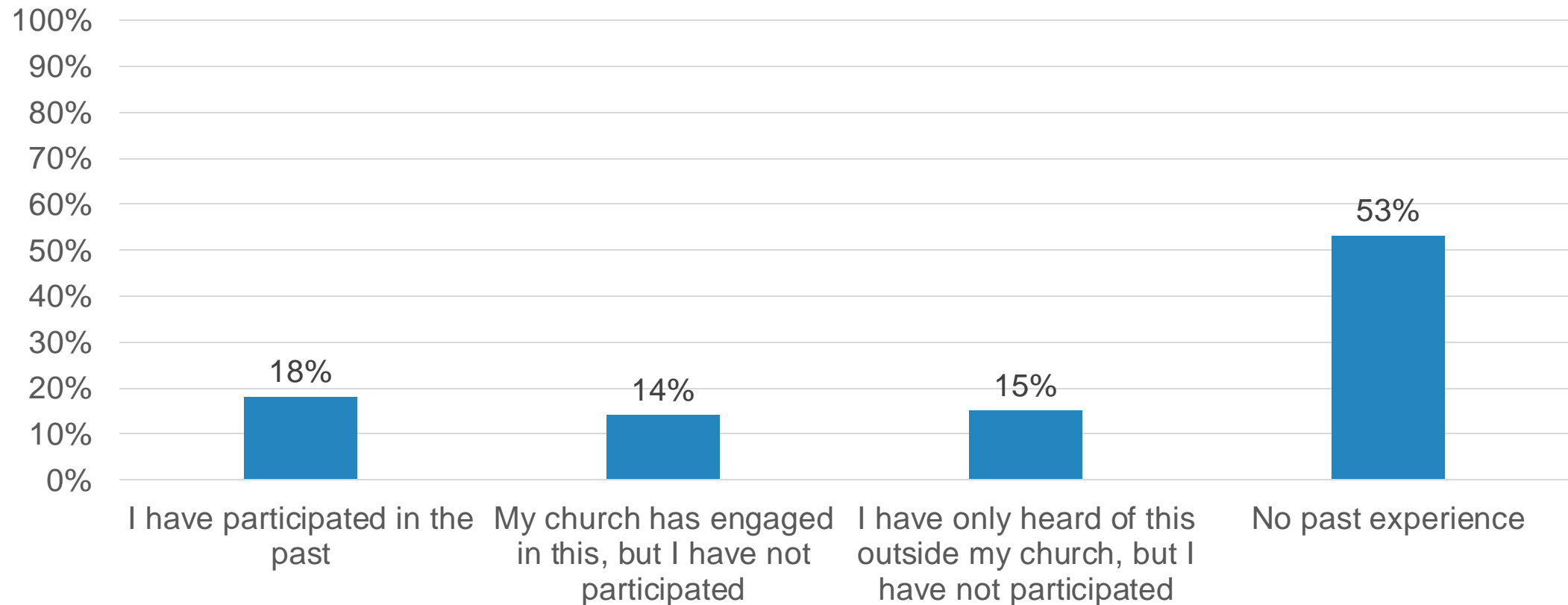
- The study was sponsored by Correctional Ministries Institute at Wheaton College Billy Graham Center, Prison Fellowship, Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association, and Kairos Prison Ministries
- The online survey of 1,006 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted January 8-12, 2024, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attend religious services at least once a month
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and religion to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,006 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups



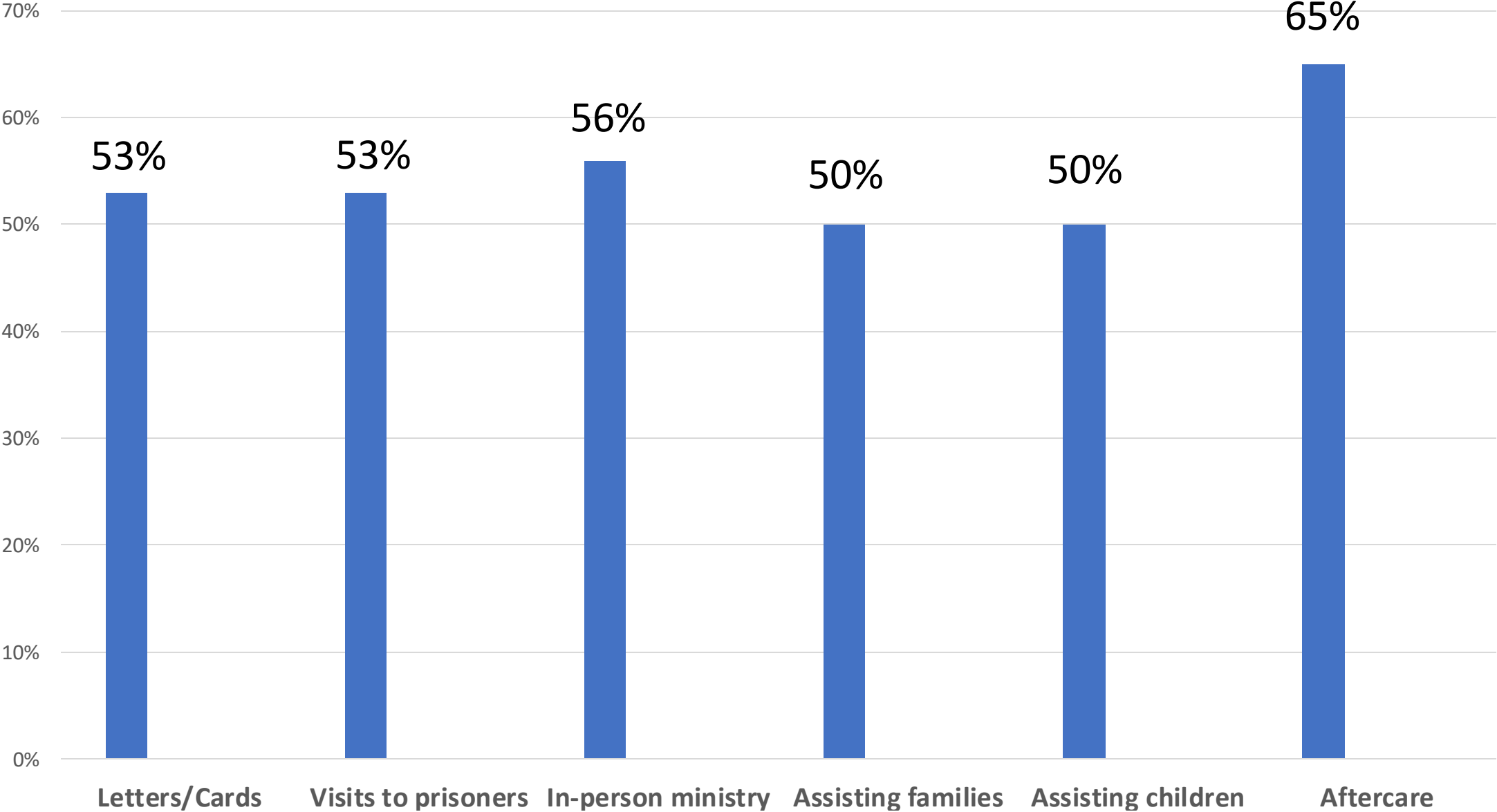
Churchgoer Experience with Prison Ministry



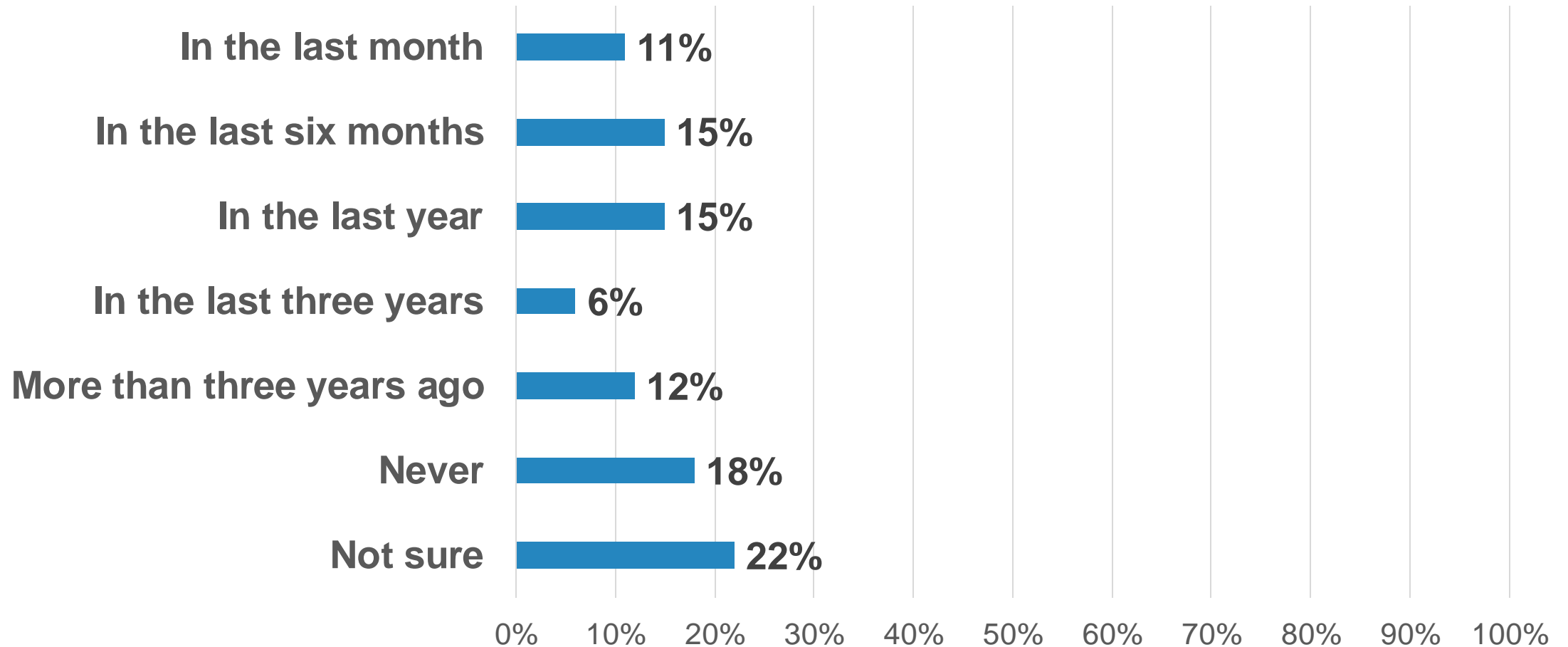
Writing letters or cards to prisoners



No Past Experience



41% have heard a sermon that mentioned the incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, or their families at least once within the last year



Summary and Response

S: There is a lack of experience (personal, church, or heard about) in these correctional ministry areas.



R: Increase the awareness of ministry needs and opportunities with churchgoers.

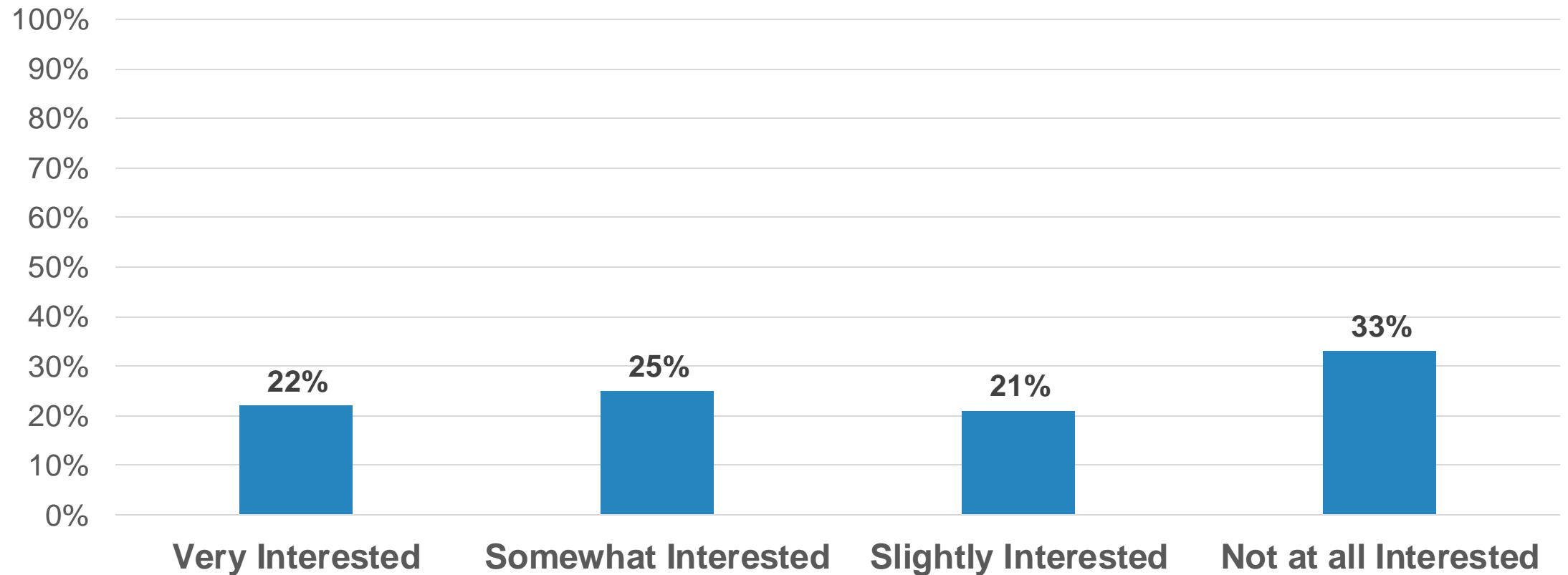


R: Increase pastors mentioning correctional ministry from the pulpit.

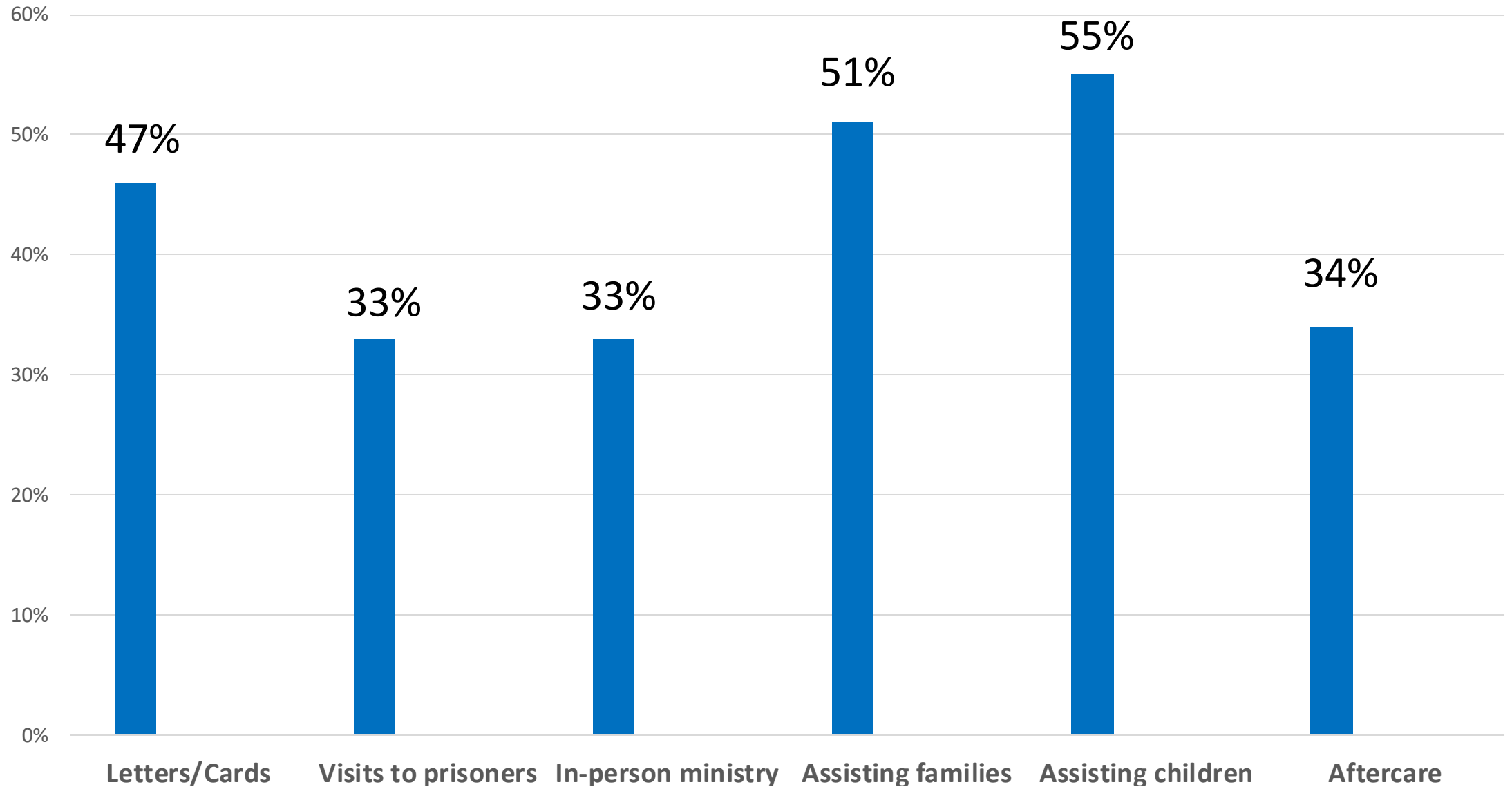


Churchgoer Interest in Prison Ministry

47% are at least somewhat interested in participating in writing letters to cards to prisoners



At least somewhat interested in



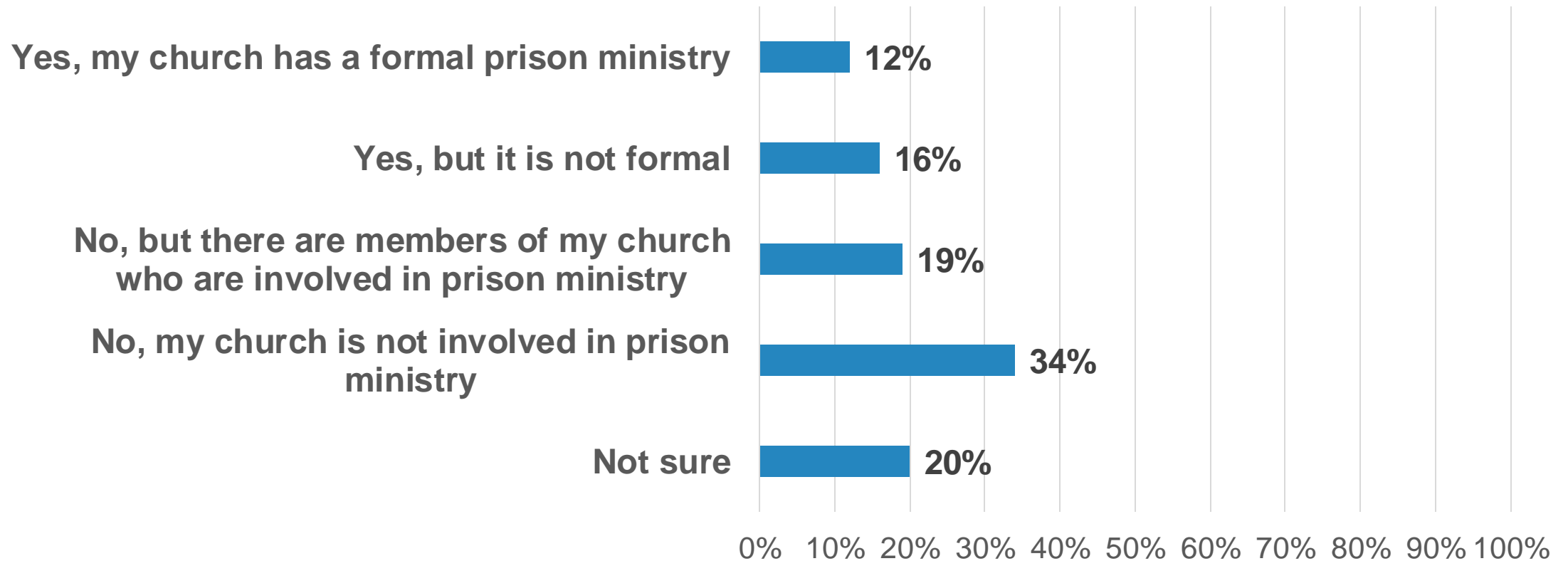
Summary and Response

S: This is encouraging to see the numbers of people very or somewhat interested in serving in the different correctional ministry areas.

R: Connecting churchgoers with ministry opportunities.

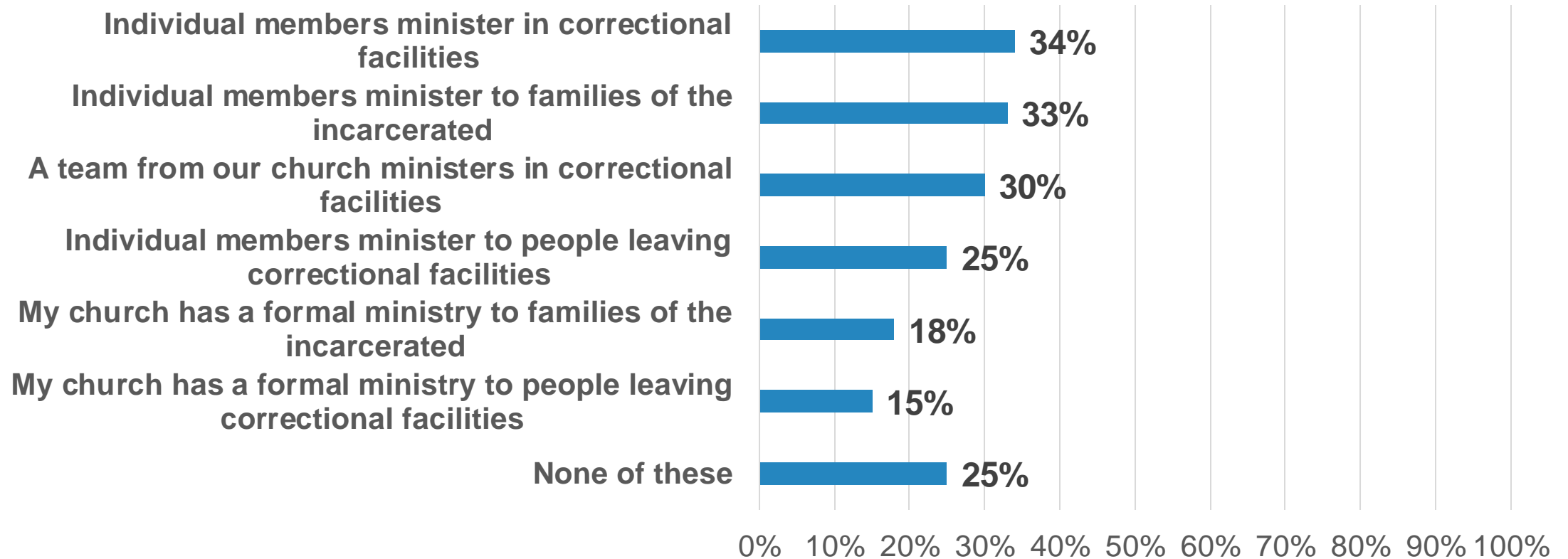
Engagement of Churches in Prison Ministry

47% of Protestant churchgoers report individuals or a ministry at their church conducts prison ministry



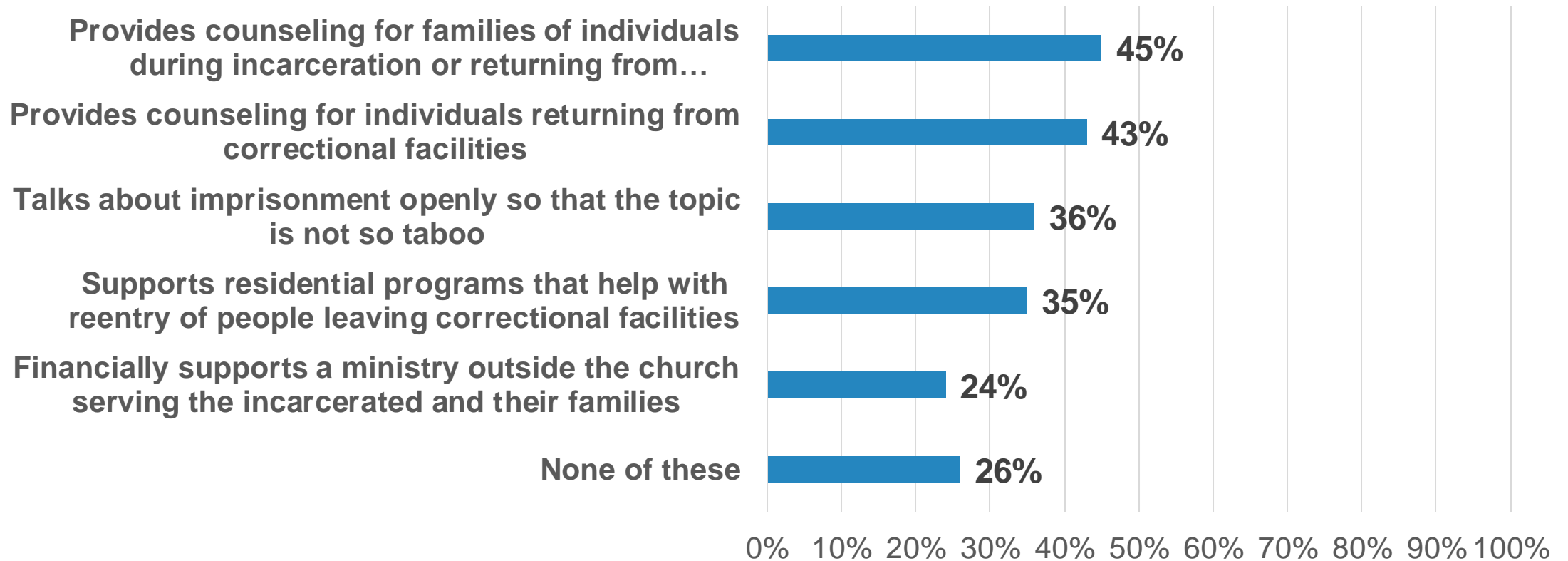
“How does your church engage in prison ministry?” (among churchgoers in a church with someone doing prison ministry)

N=668

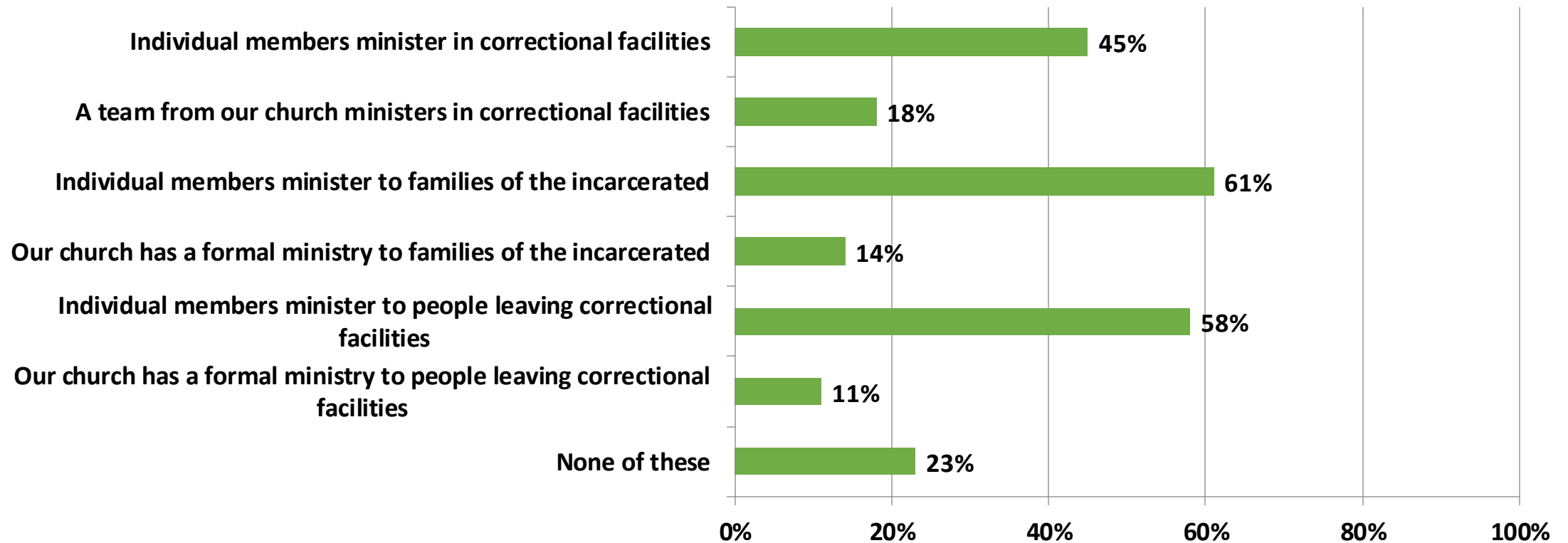


“In which of the following activities is your church currently involved?”
(among churchgoers with someone doing prison ministry)

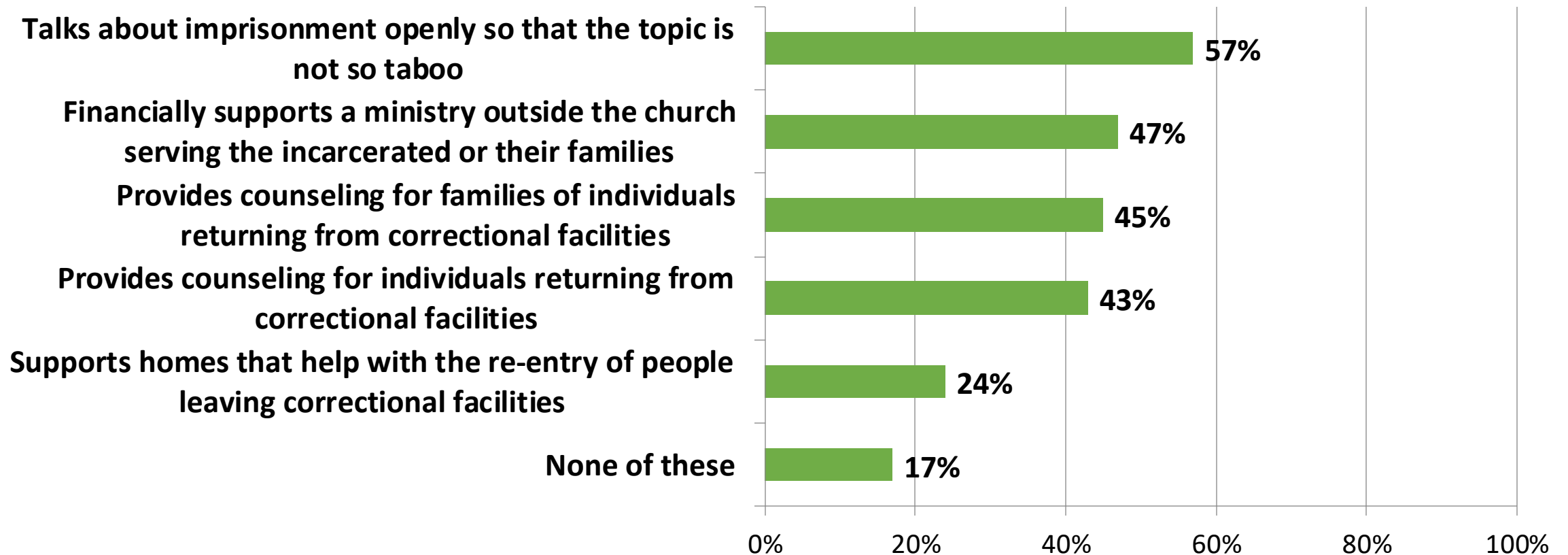
N=668



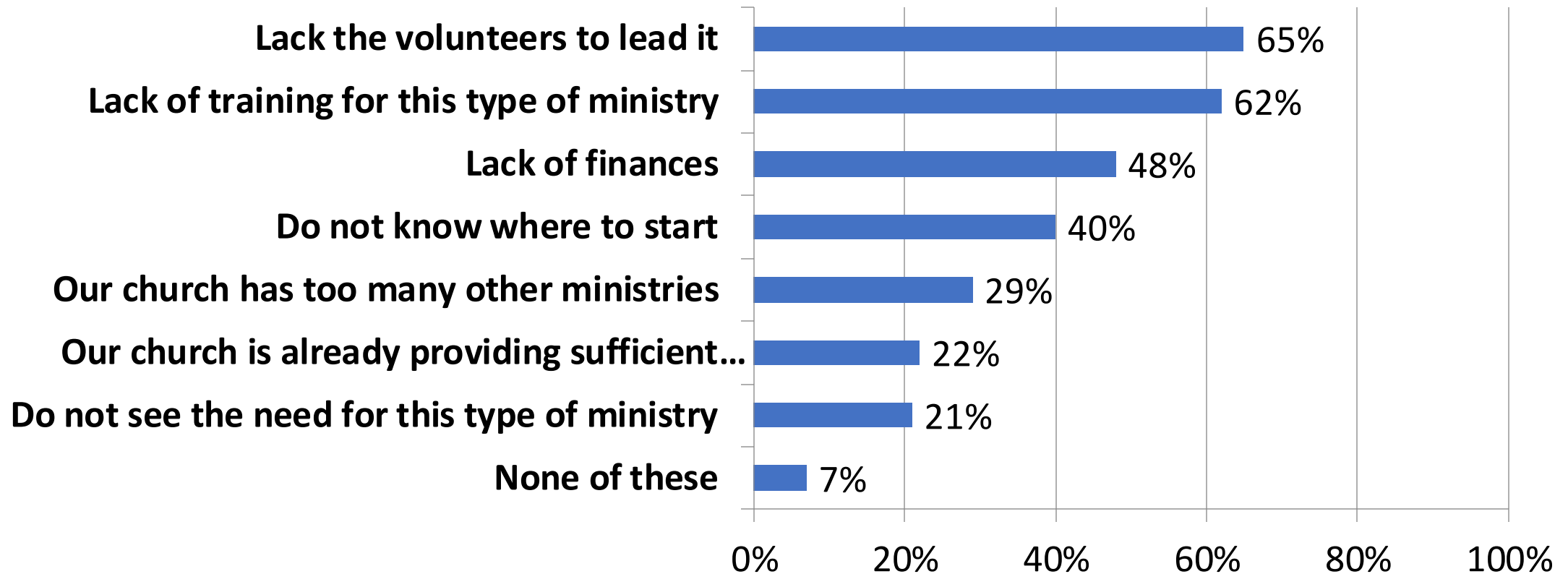
“Which, if any, of the following ongoing activities does your church have?” (Pastor views)



“In which, if any, of the following activities is your church currently involved?” Pastor views



“Which of the following are barriers to your church helping the incarcerated and their families more?” (Pastor Views)



Summary and Response

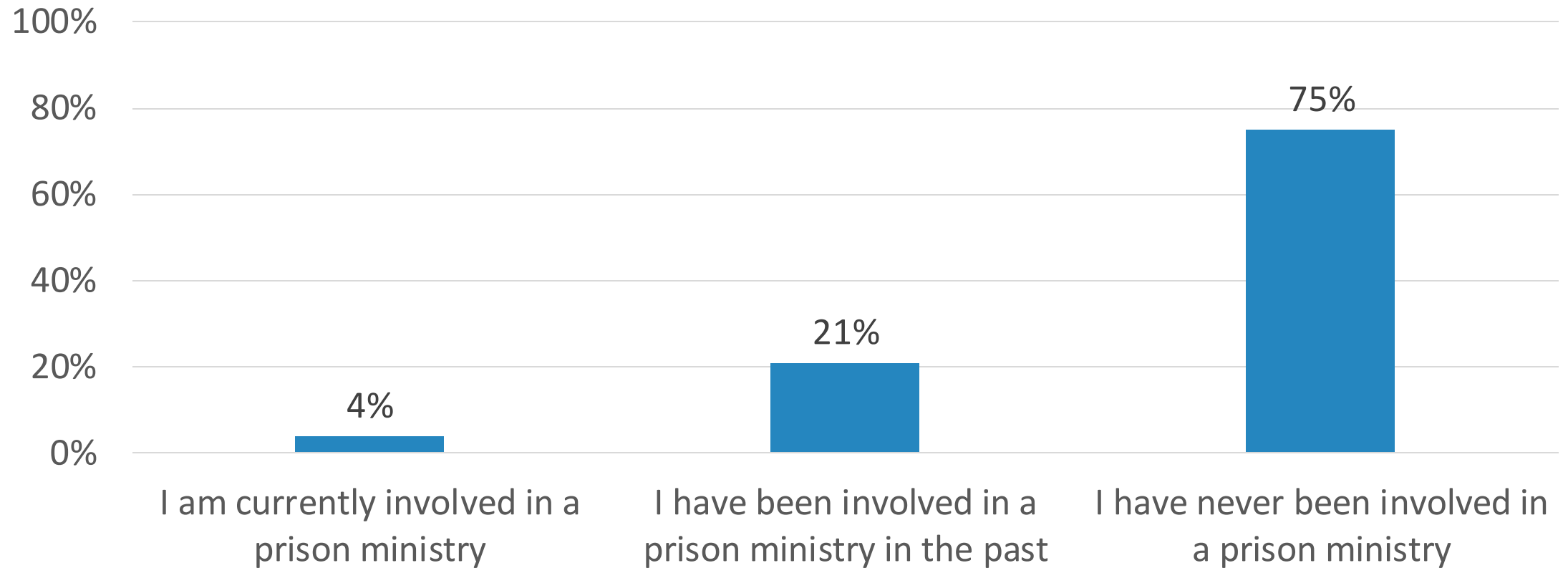
S: Mostly individuals engage in correctional ministry from the church and it is not a formal ministry.

S: Pastors – halo effect - overestimate what their church is doing or how often imprisonment is talked about (36% churchgoers, 57% pastors), financially support ministries outside the church, etc.

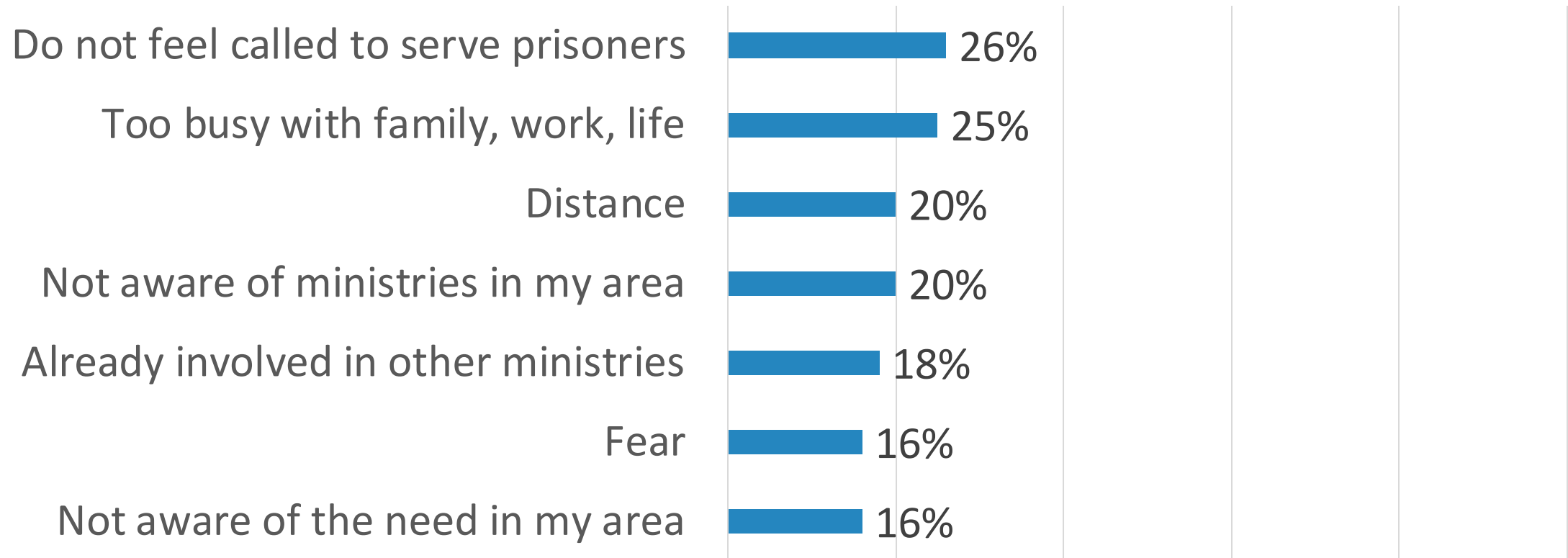
R: Address the barriers pastors identified.

Individual Participation in Prison Ministry

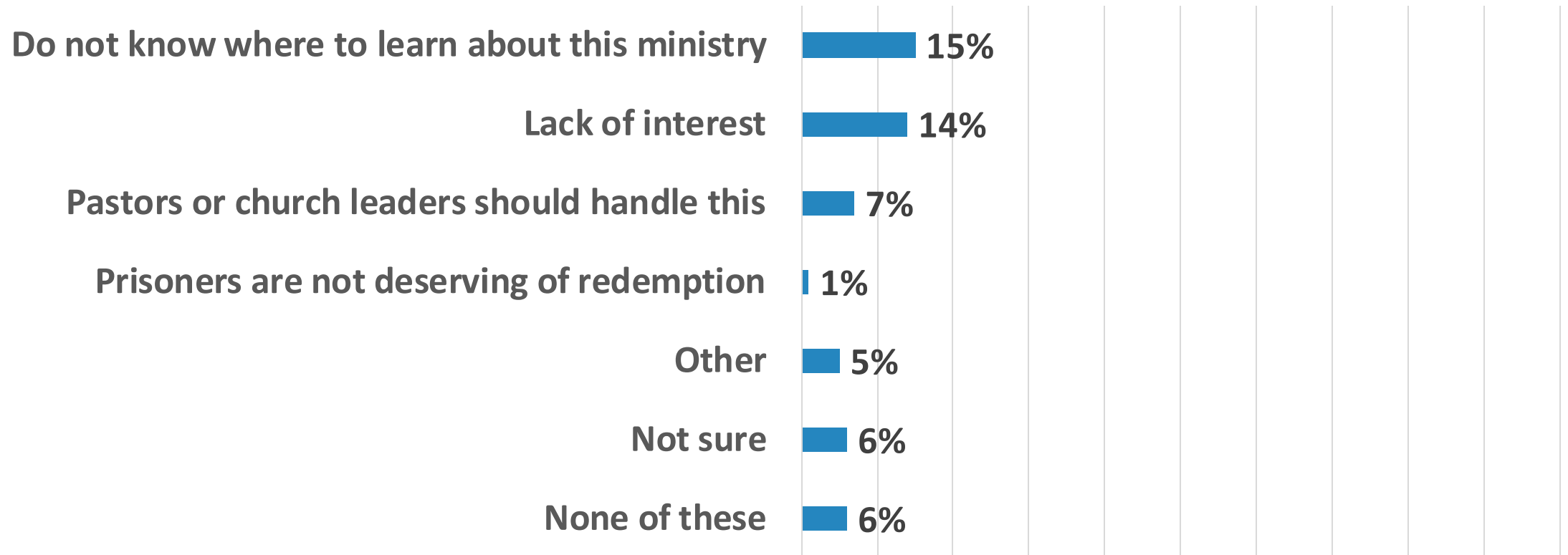
A quarter of churchgoers (25%) report having been involved in prison ministry in the past or present



Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry? (not currently involved)



Which of the following hinders your ability to serve in prison ministry? (continued)

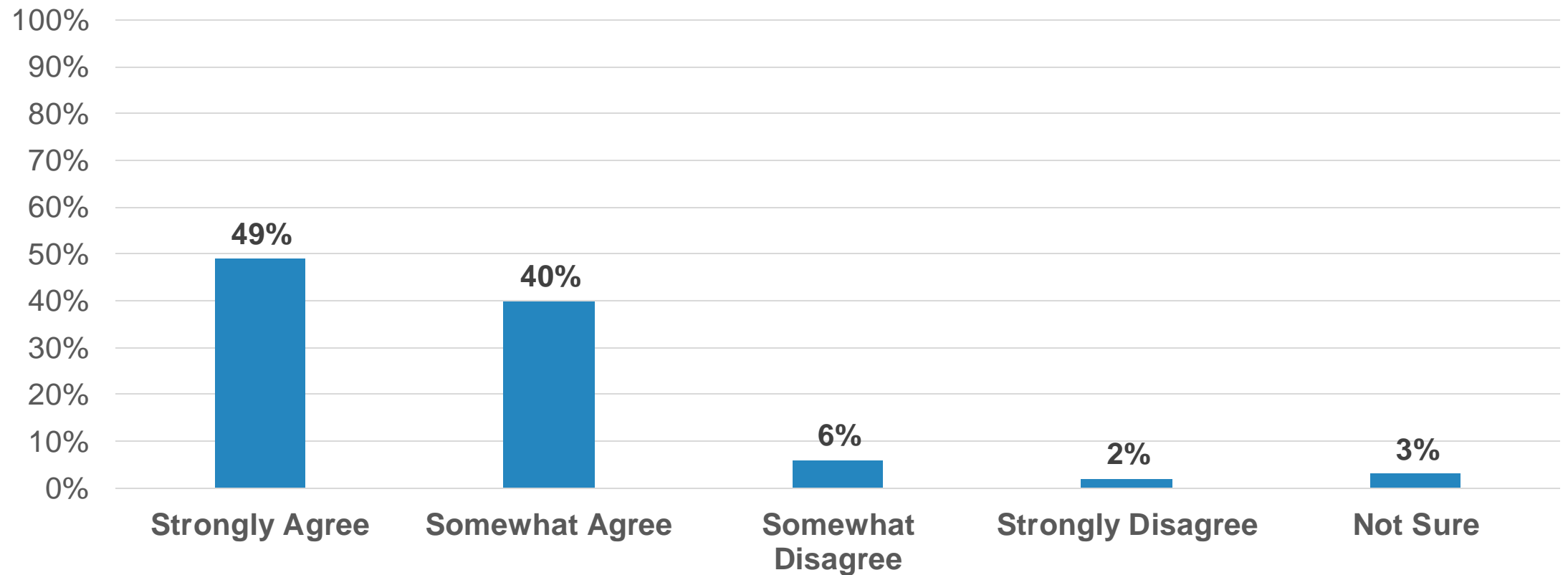


Response

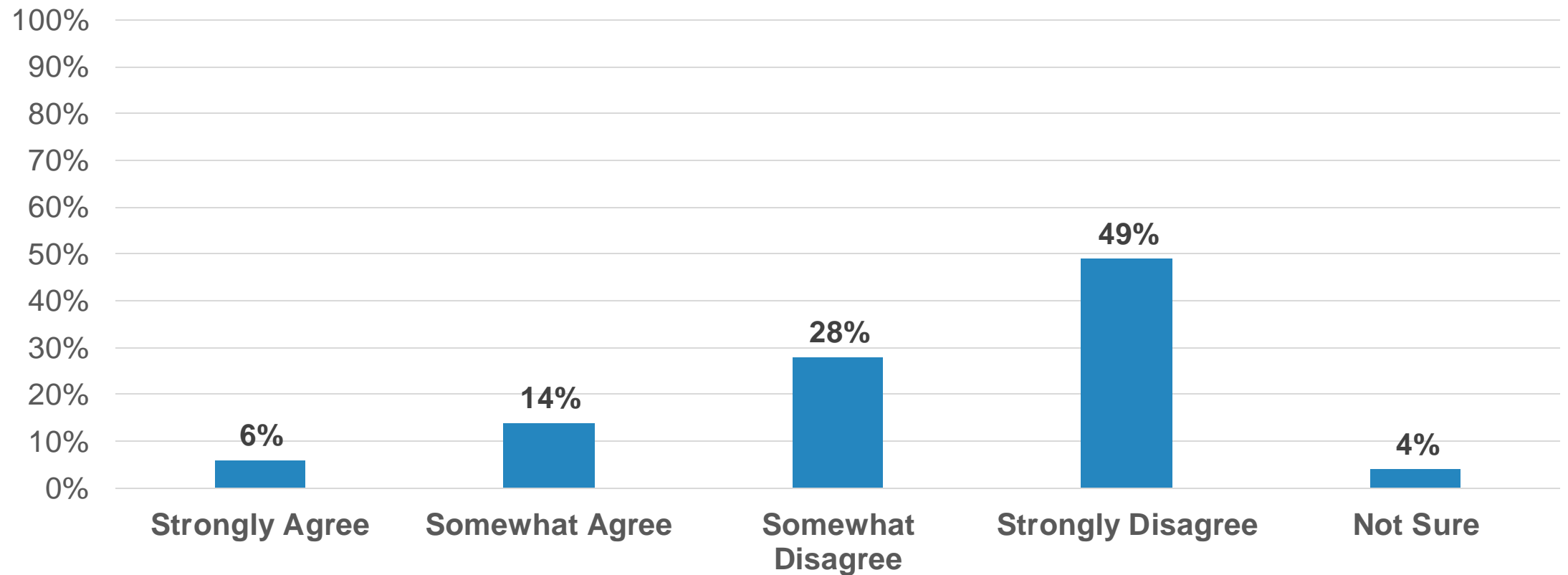
Raise	Raise Awareness - share what you do in ministry
Invite	Invite people to volunteer in ministry opportunities – low levels of commitment and risk
Educate	Educate on who is behind bars and needs

Beliefs of Churchgoers

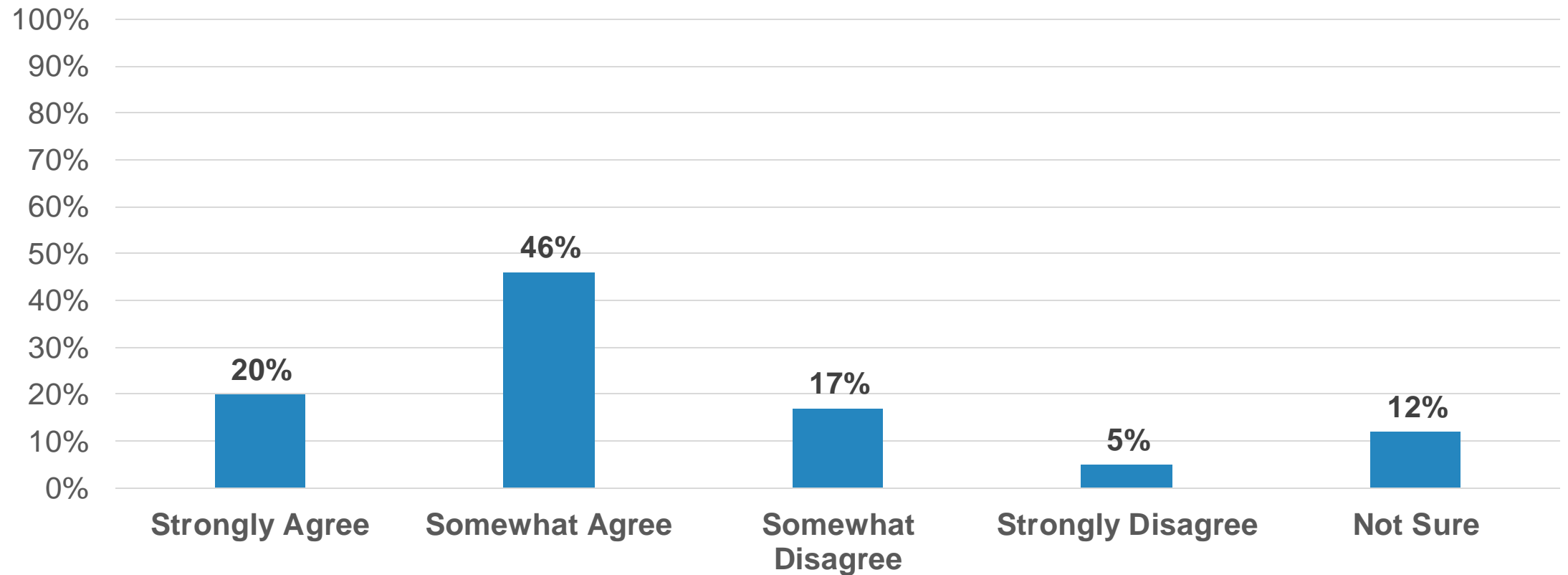
89% agree that most people with a felony can go on to lead productive lives with help and hard work



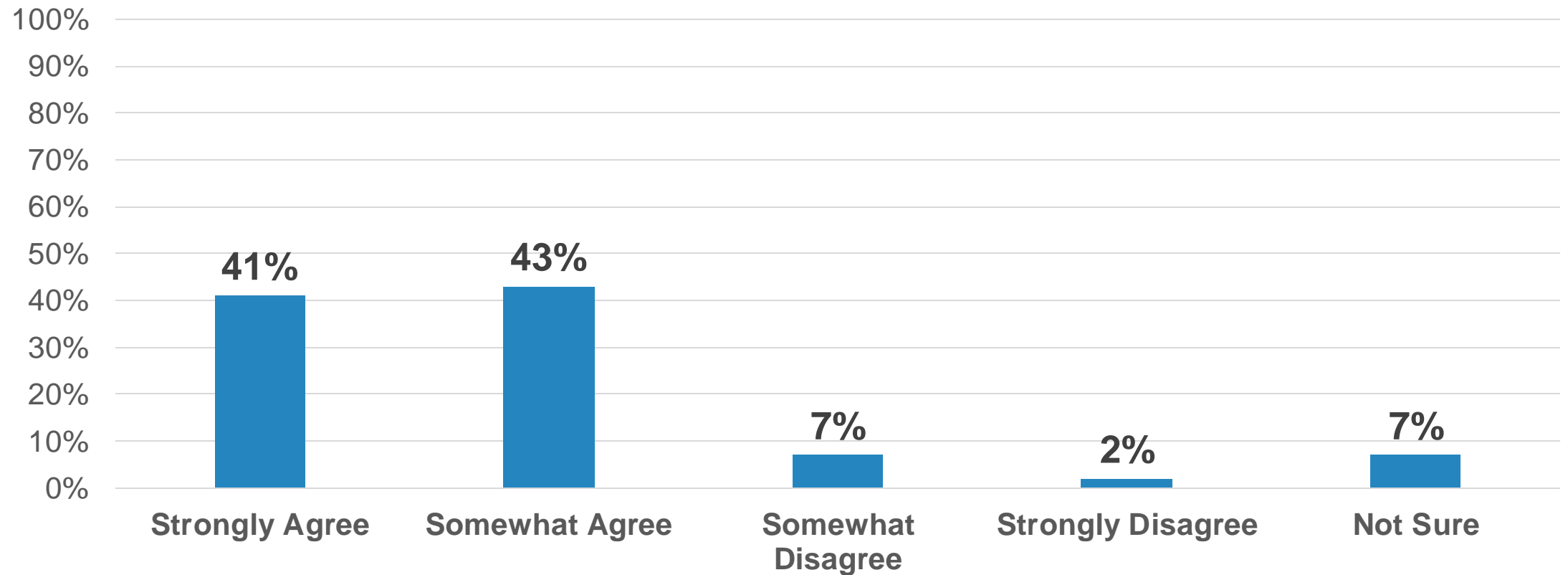
77% do not believe that most people who commit crimes have little hope of changing for the better



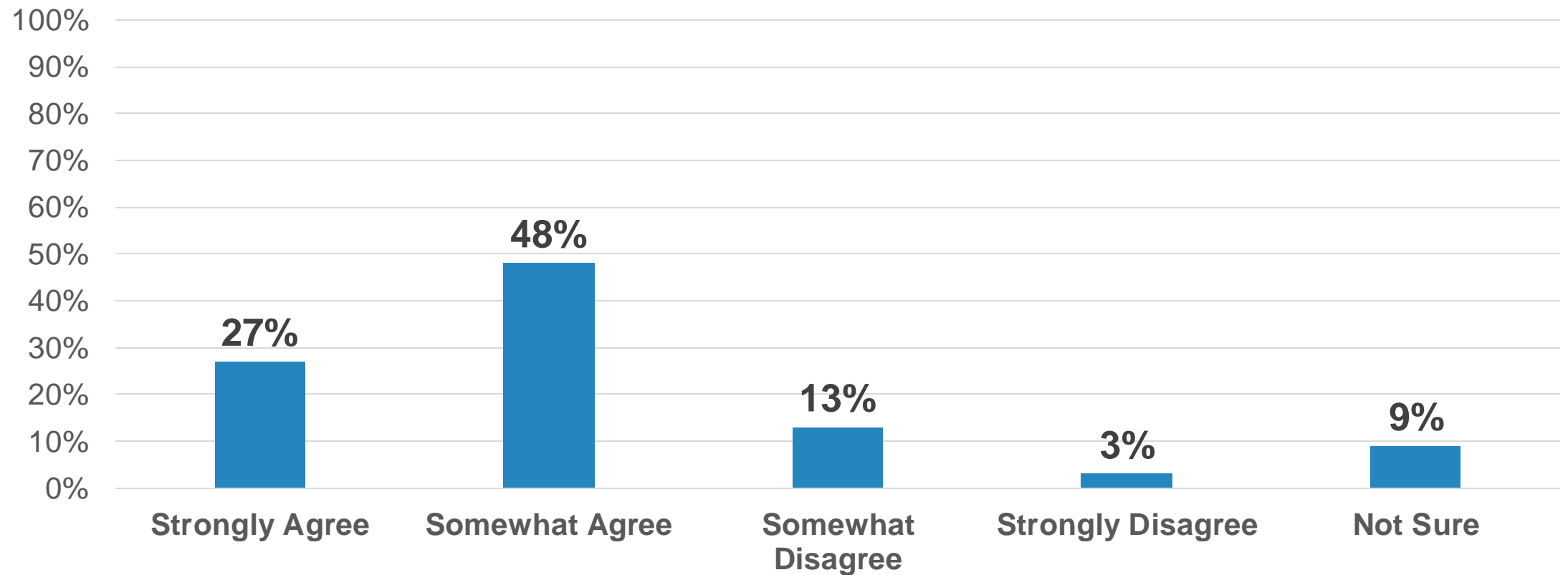
66% agree that local churches have a responsibility to care for the incarcerated in their community



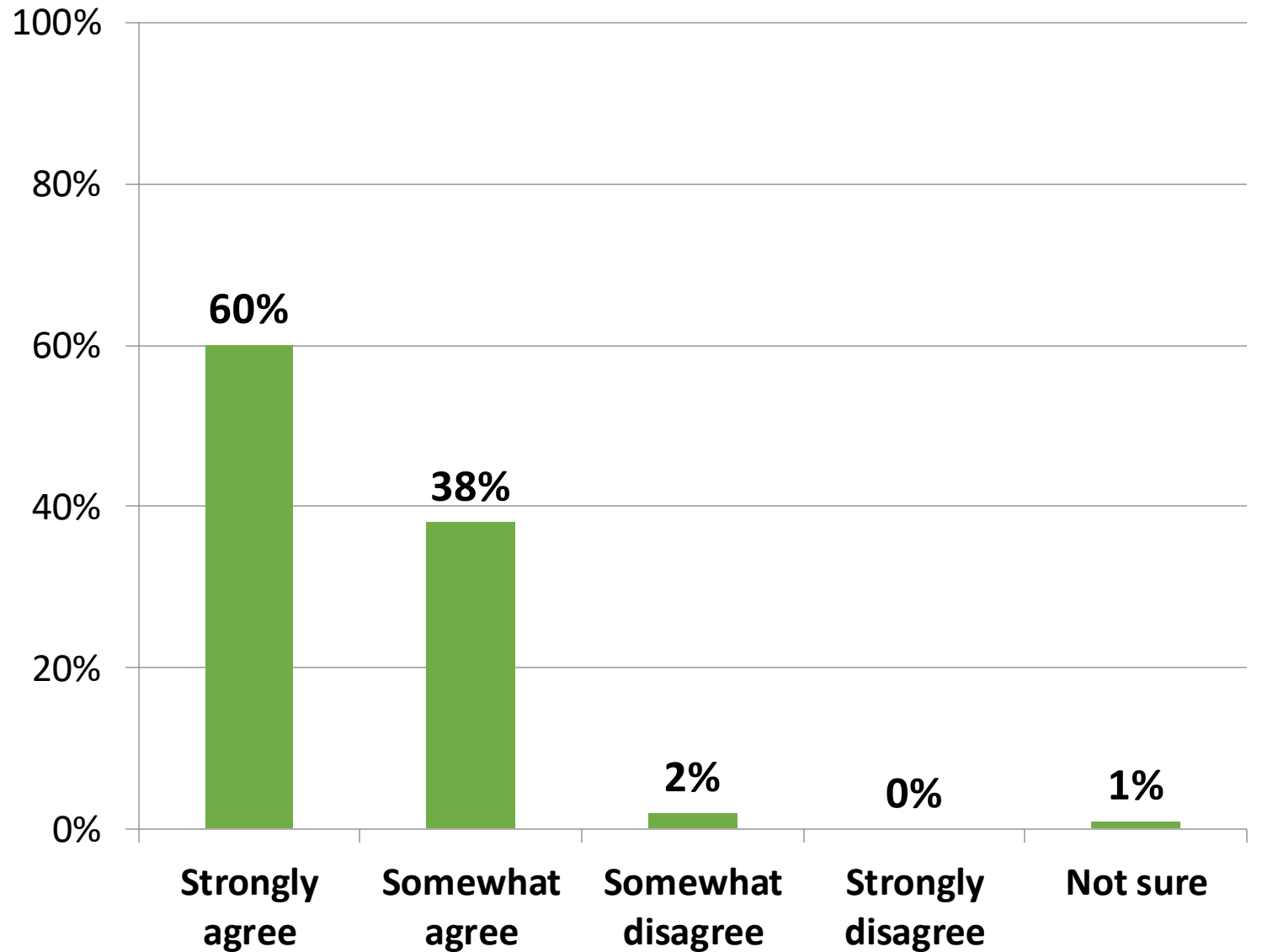
84% agree that Christians have a responsibility to minister to the incarcerated



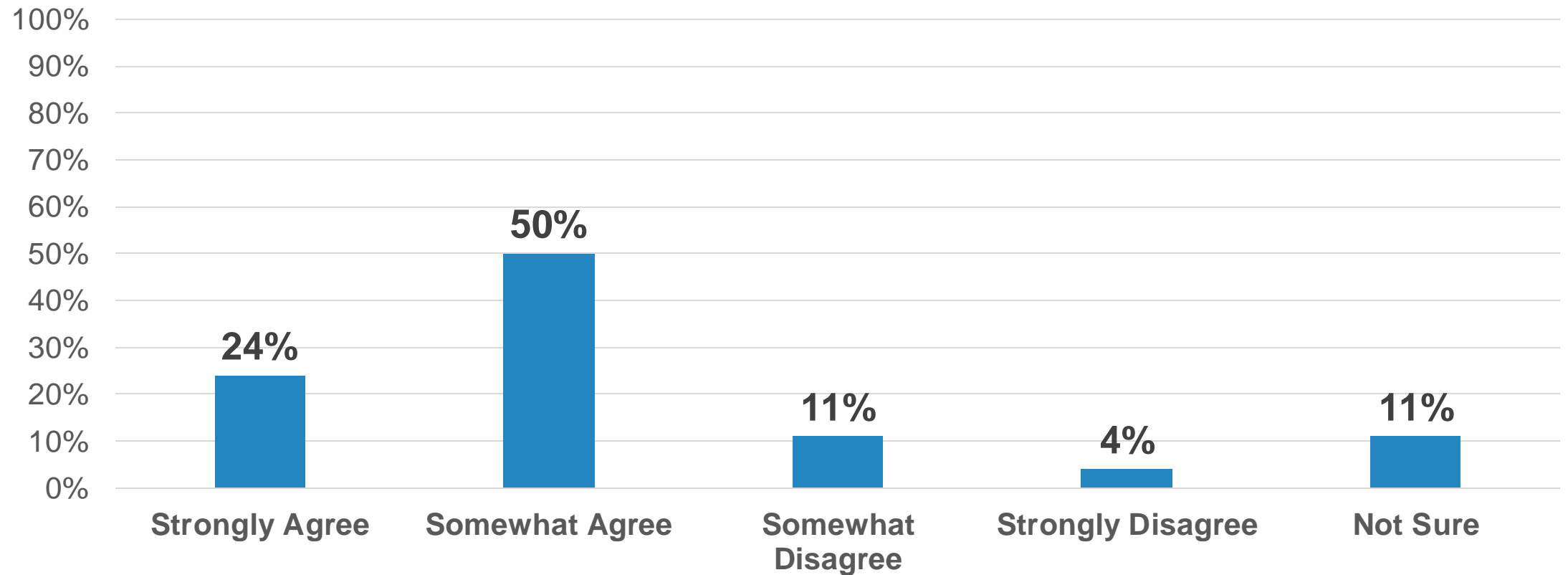
75% agree local churches have a responsibility to care for families and children of the incarcerated



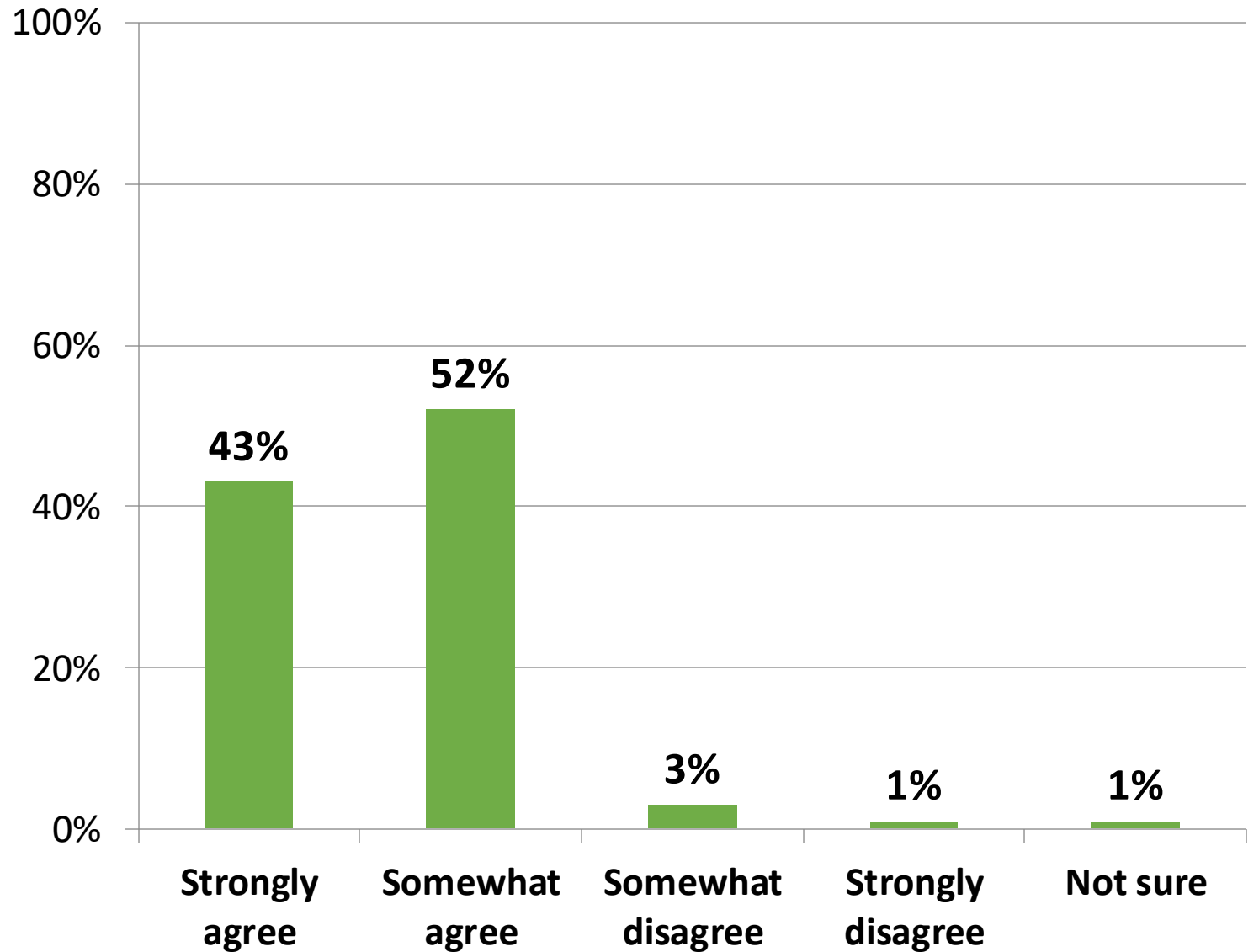
97% agree that churches should care for families of the incarcerated (Among Pastors)



74% agree local churches have a responsibility to provide resources and support for youth and adults leaving correctional facilities.



95% agree that churches should provide resources and support for youth and adults leaving correctional facilities (Among Pastors)



Summary

Believe people can change (redeemable).

66% (churchgoers) agree the **Church** has a responsibility to care for the incarcerated; **85%** (churchgoers) agree that **Christians** have a responsibility to minister to the incarcerated.

75% (churchgoers) 97% (pastors) agree that churches should care for families of the incarcerated.

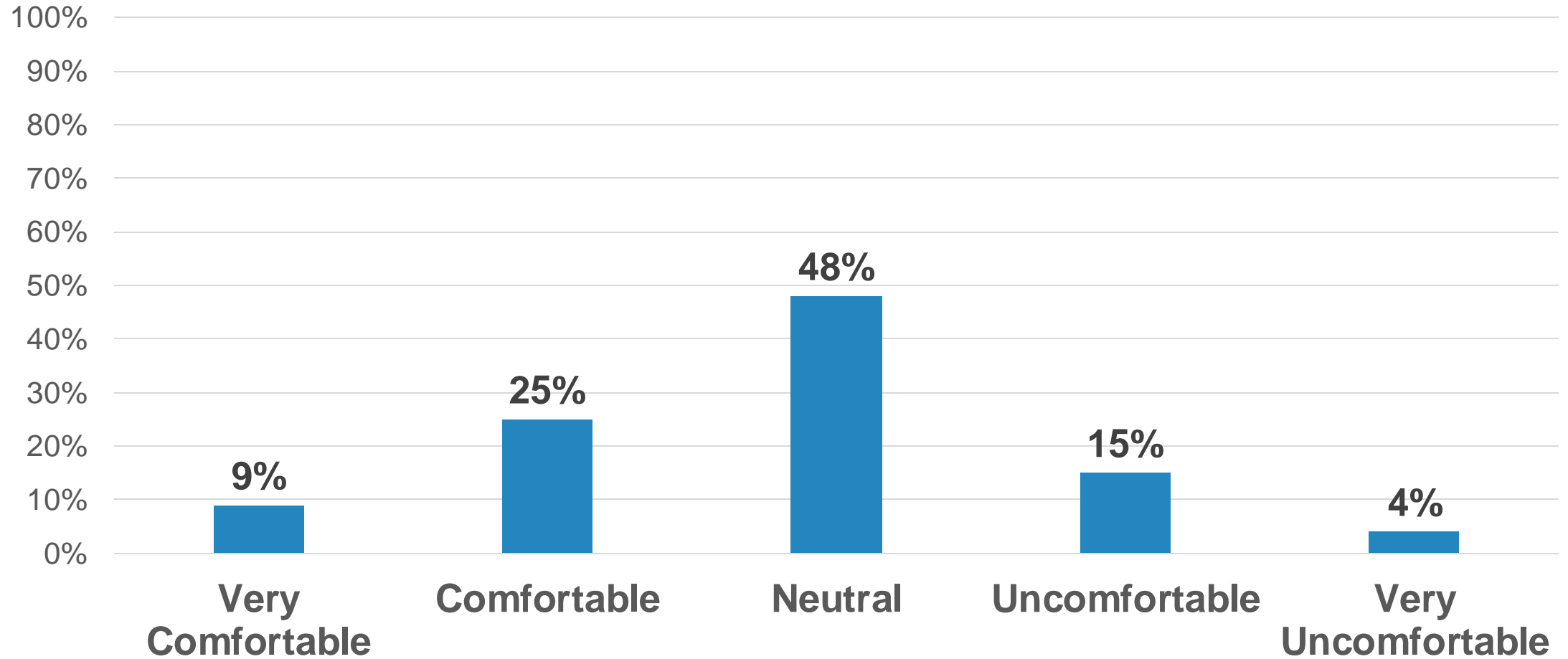
Summary

74% (churchgoers)
95% (pastors) agree
that churches
should provide
resources and
support for youth
and adults leaving
correctional
facilities

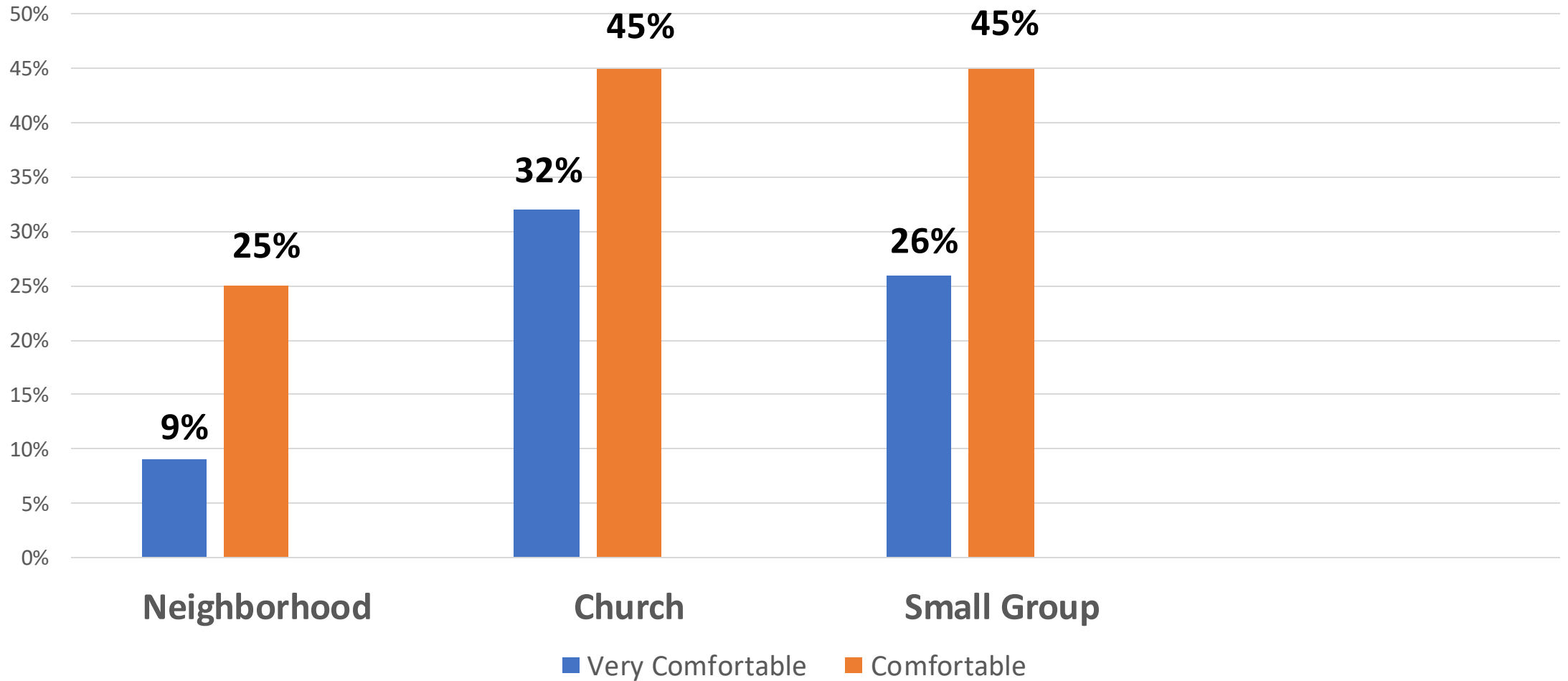
A GAP between what
Pastors believe and
what Churchgoers
believe.

Lack of church prison
ministry

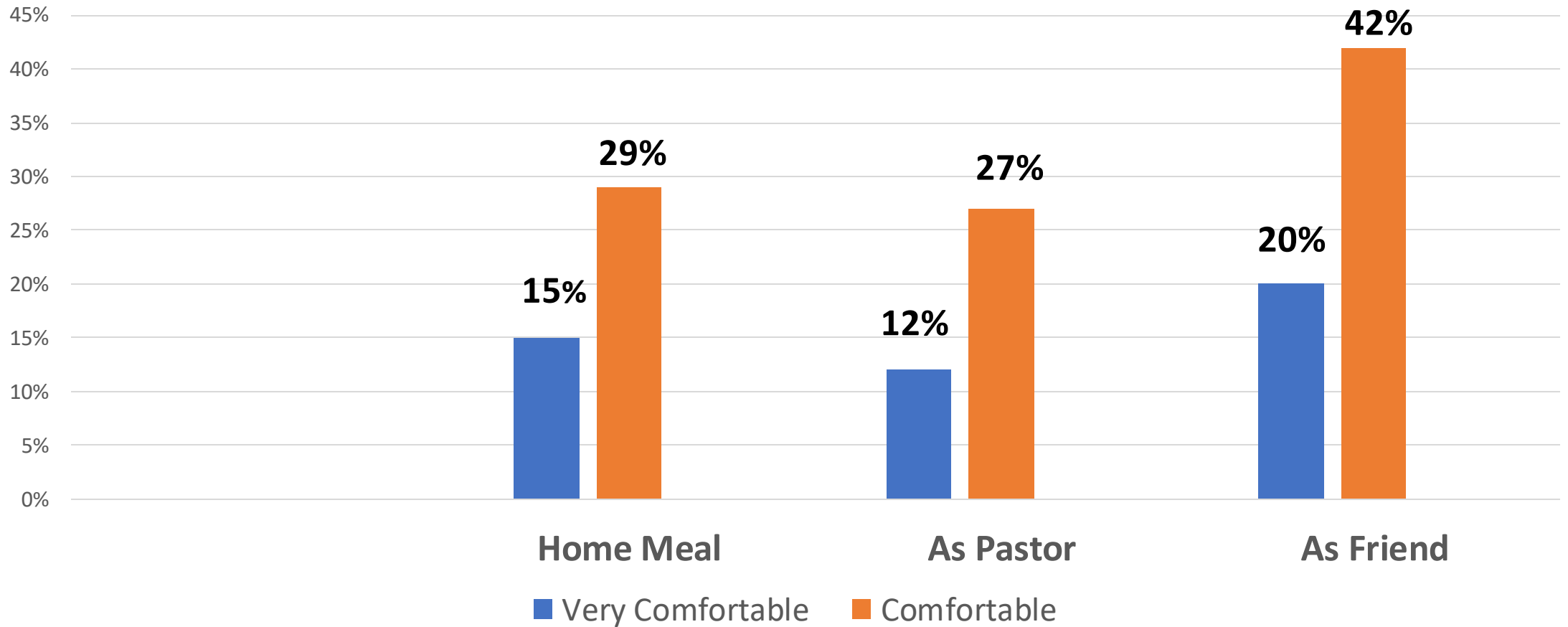
Having someone who has been incarcerated... Move into my neighborhood



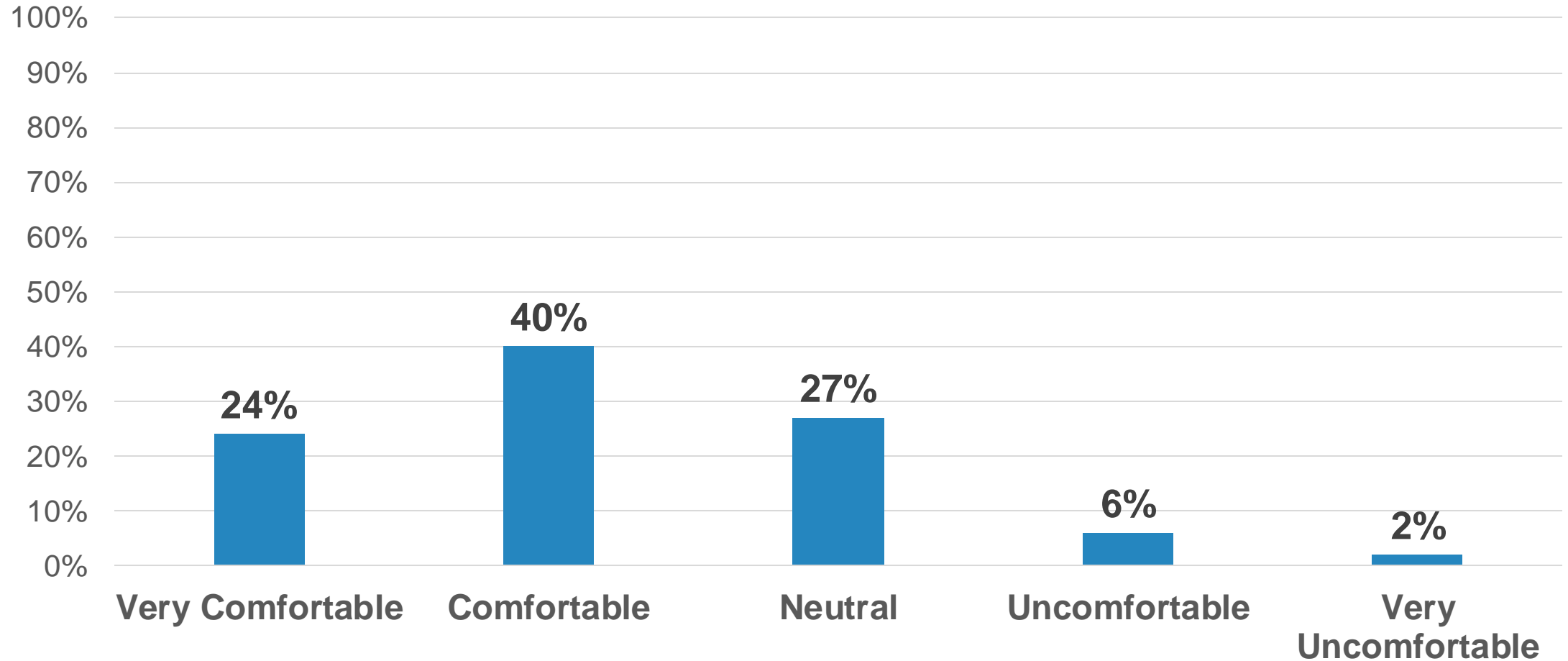
Having someone who is incarcerated...



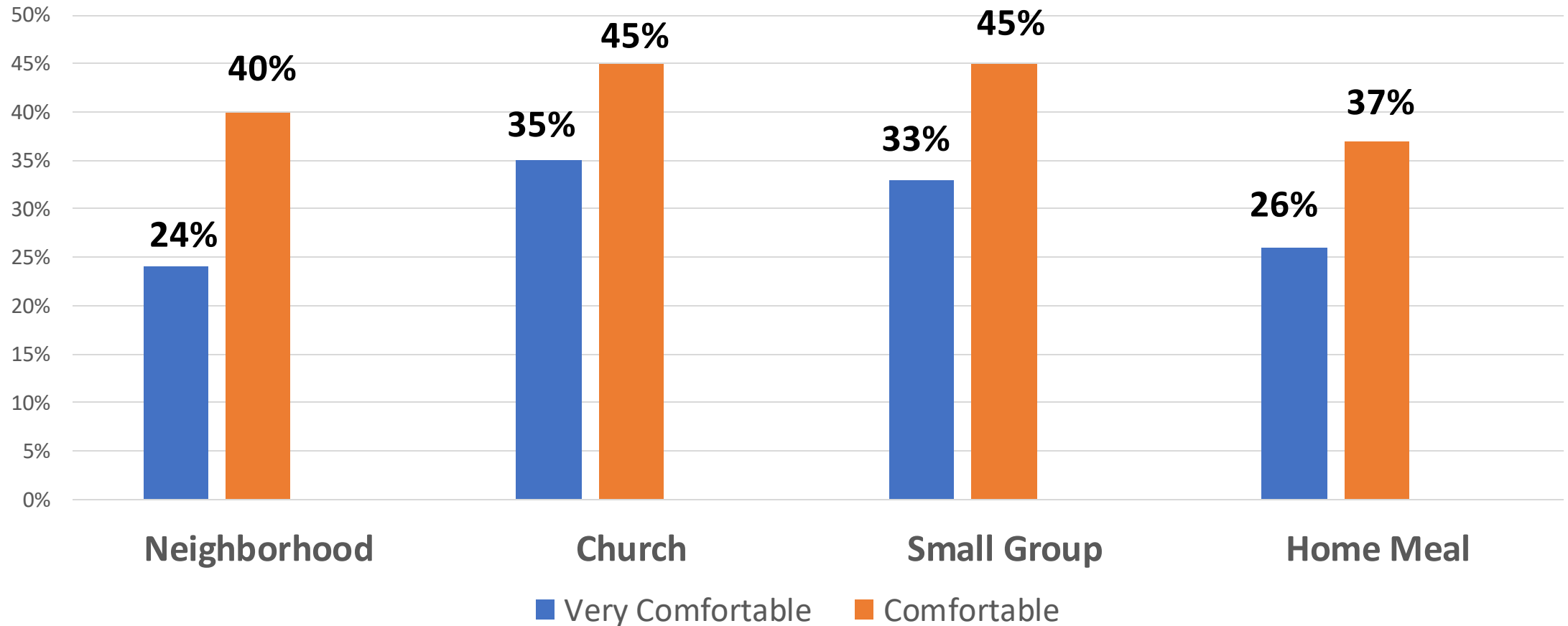
Having someone who is incarcerated...



Having an individual with an incarcerated family member...Move into my neighborhood



Having an individual with an incarcerated family member...



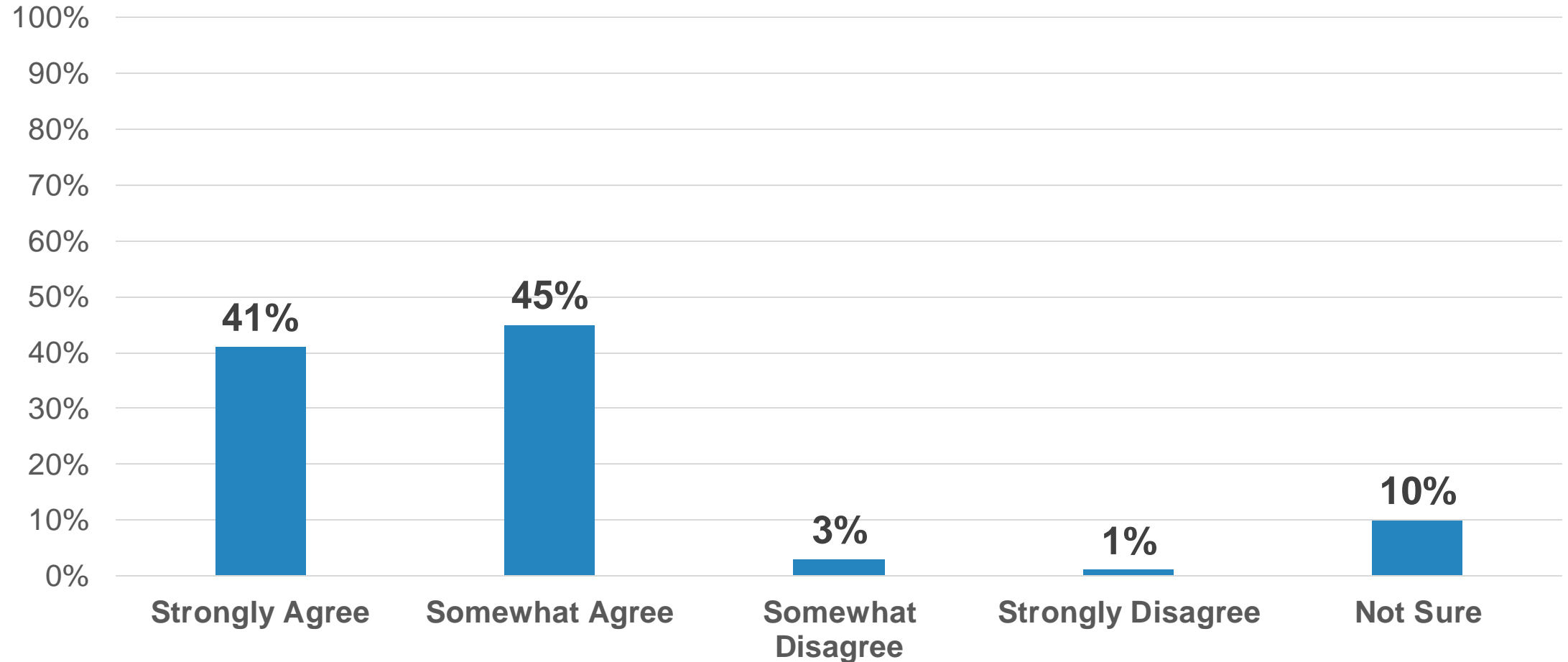
Summary and Response

S: Churchgoers believe in rehabilitation and redemption. They want them to come to church and small group.

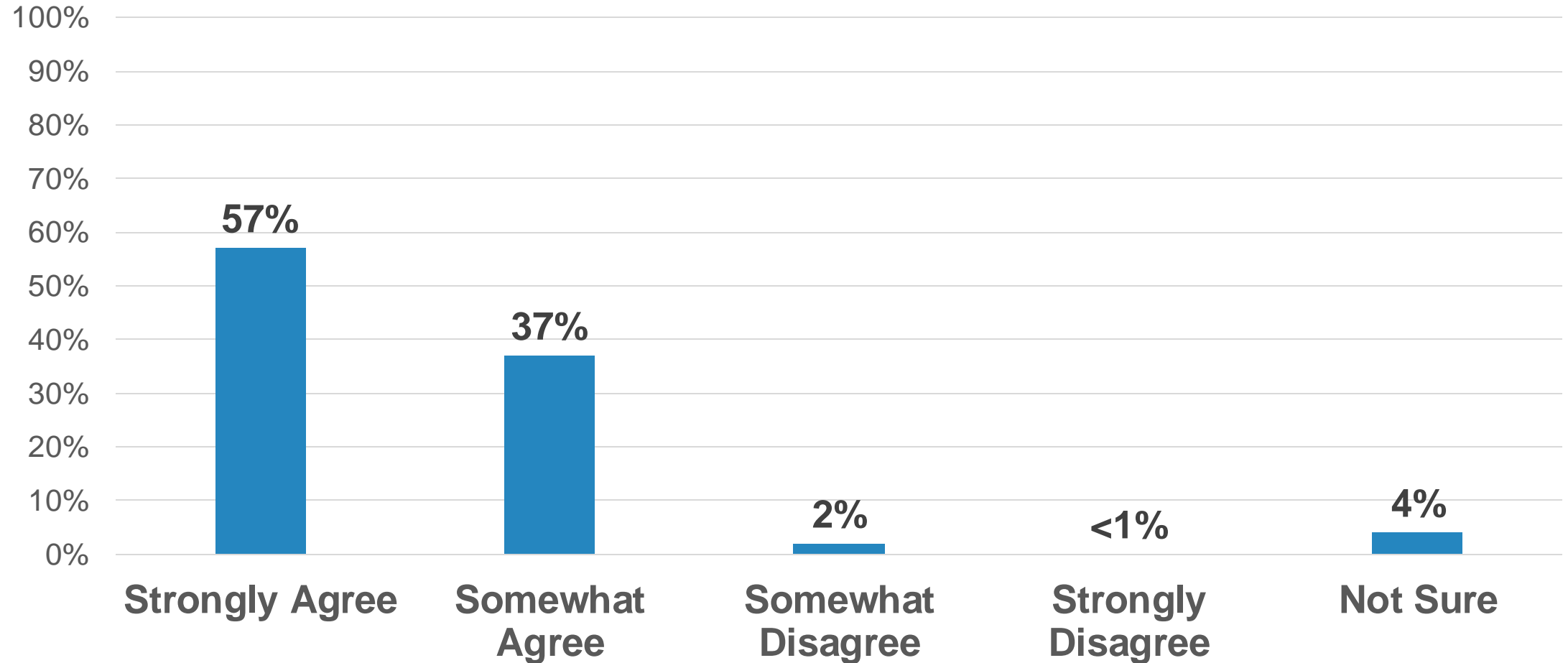
S: NIMBY - Churchgoers are not comfortable with the formerly incarcerated and their families coming into their home or neighborhood. Fear Factor – Reentry challenges

R: Be patient, gradually expand comfort zone through increased proximity, address myths

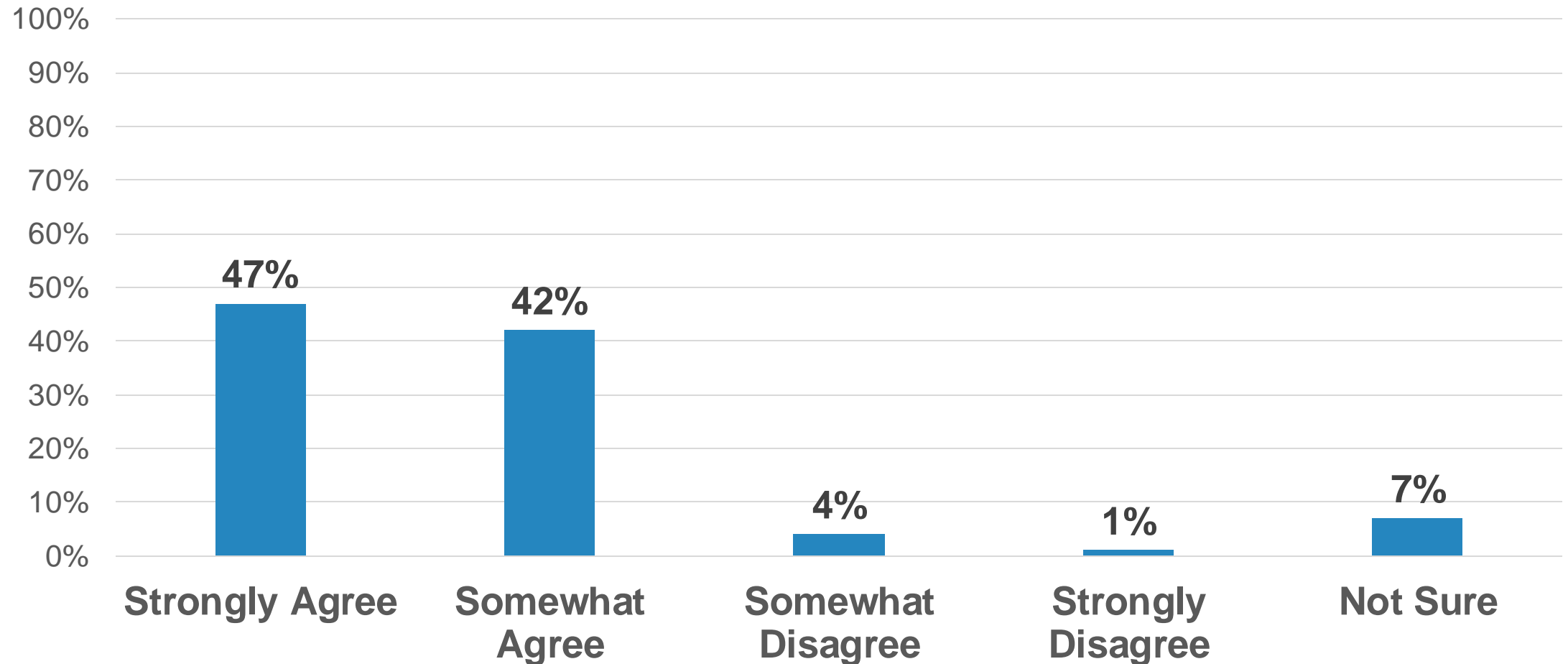
86% agree that prison ministry contributes positively to public safety



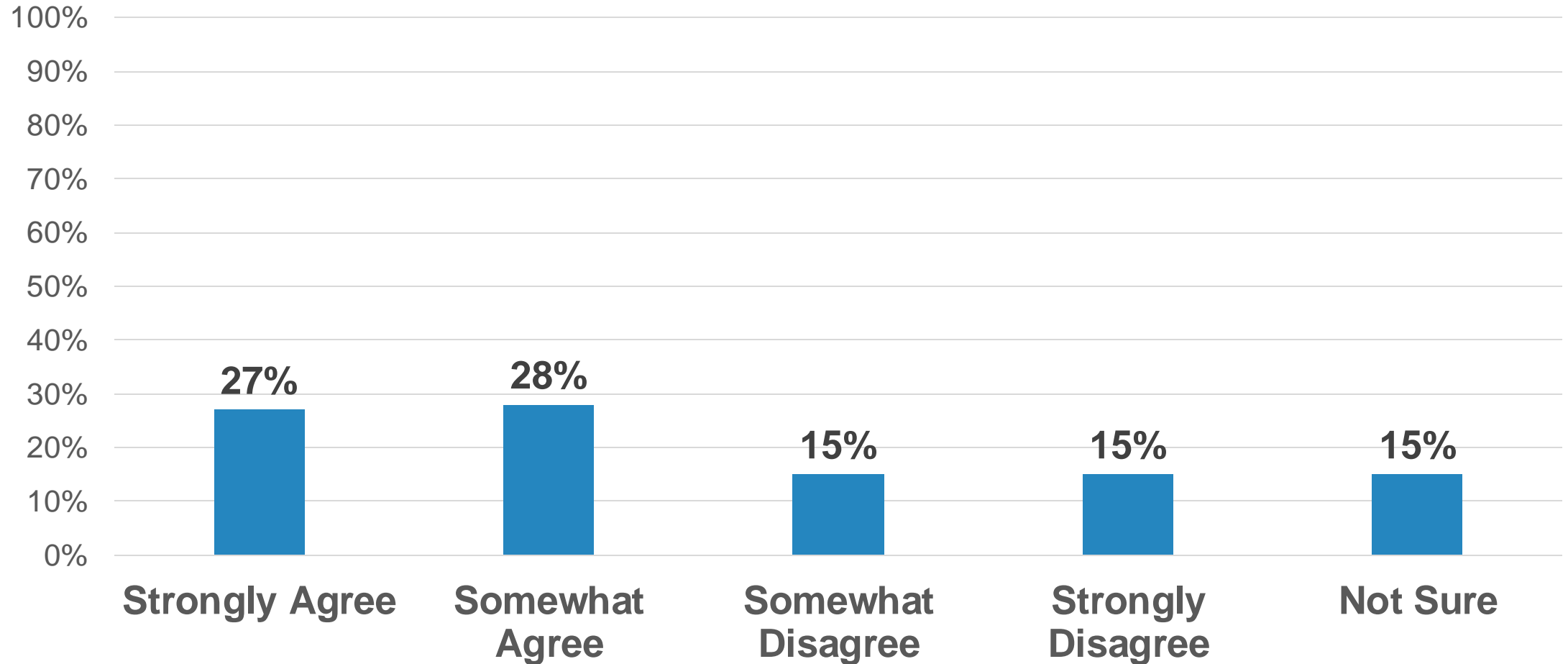
94% agree that formerly incarcerated people can contribute to understanding the Gospel message



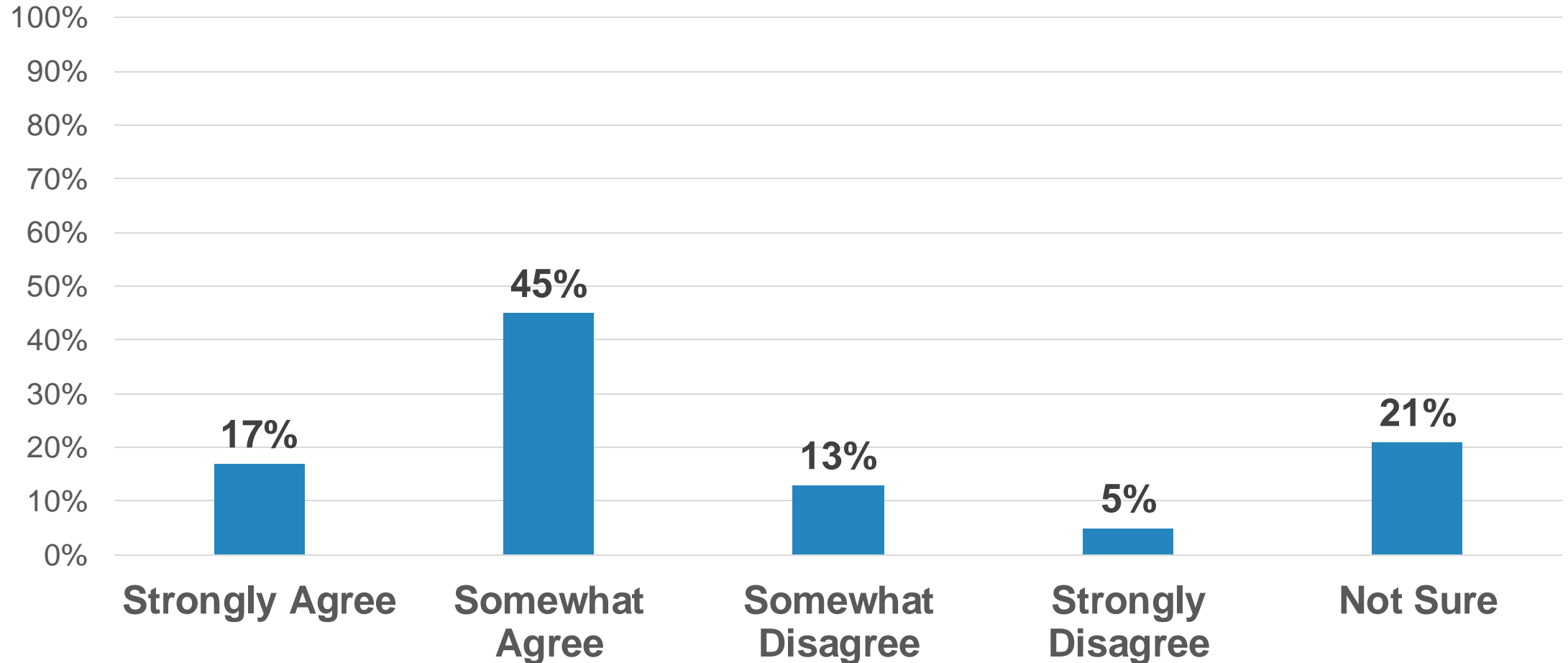
89% agree that formerly incarcerated people can be leaders in the broader Christian community



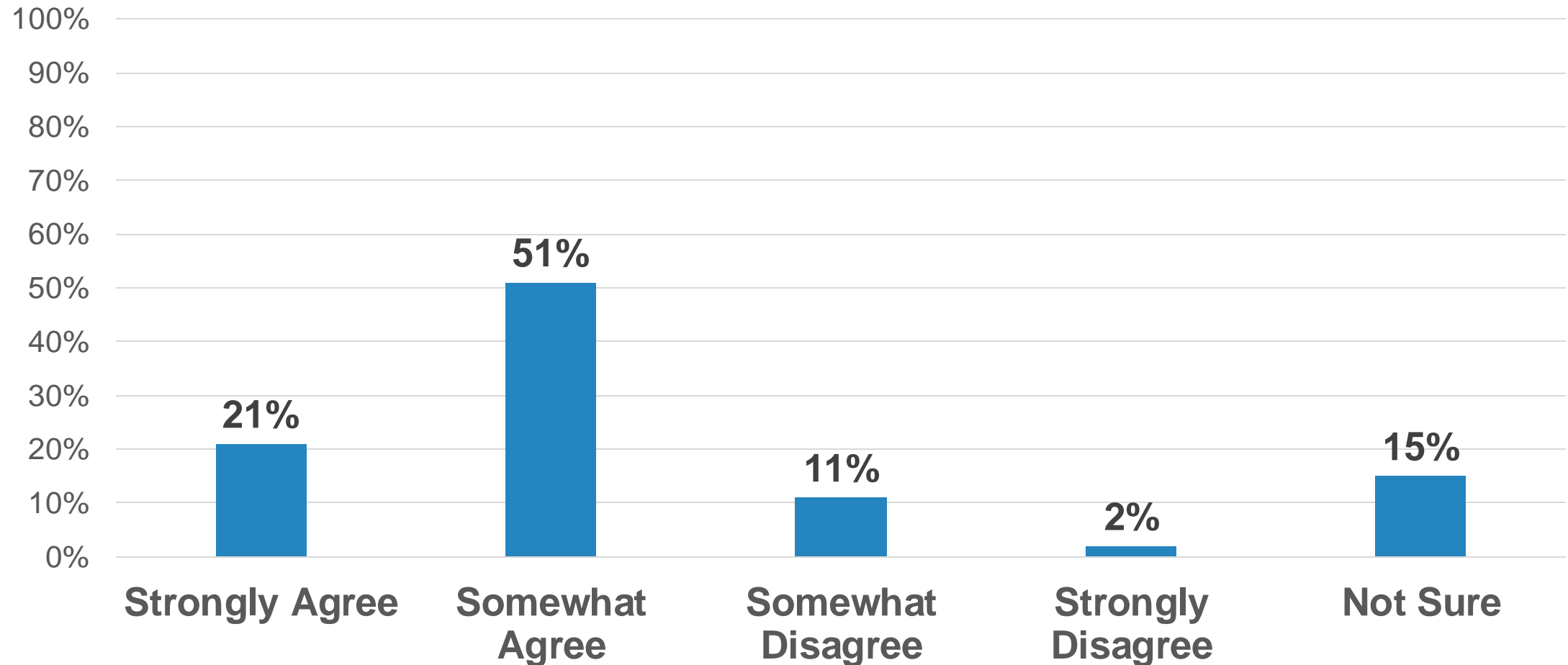
54% agree that difficulty reentering society from jail and prison is an issue in their community



62% agree that many jails and prisons offer rehabilitation programs for those in custody



72% agree that prisoners participating in rehabilitation programs in prisons are less likely to commit another offense



Summary and Response

S: Lack awareness of reentry challenges and collateral consequences of having a felony

S: Believe in the power of redemptive testimonies of the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated.

S: Believe jails and prisons offer rehabilitation programs.

S: Believe rehabilitation works.

R: Educate – Fact Sheets – Myth Busters

Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Region

Ethnicity

Education
Level

Worship
Service
Attendance

Church Size

Evangelical
Beliefs

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, region, ethnicity, and education.

GENDER	AGE	REGION	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION
Male	18-29	Northeast	White	High School graduate or less
Female	30-49	Midwest	African American	Some college
	50-64	South	Hispanic	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	West	Other Ethnicities	Graduate Degree

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among worship service attendance, church size, and evangelical beliefs.

WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE	CHURCH SIZE	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Once a month	Less than 50	Yes
Twice a month	50-99	No
Three times a month	100-249	
4 or more times a month	250-499	
	500+	

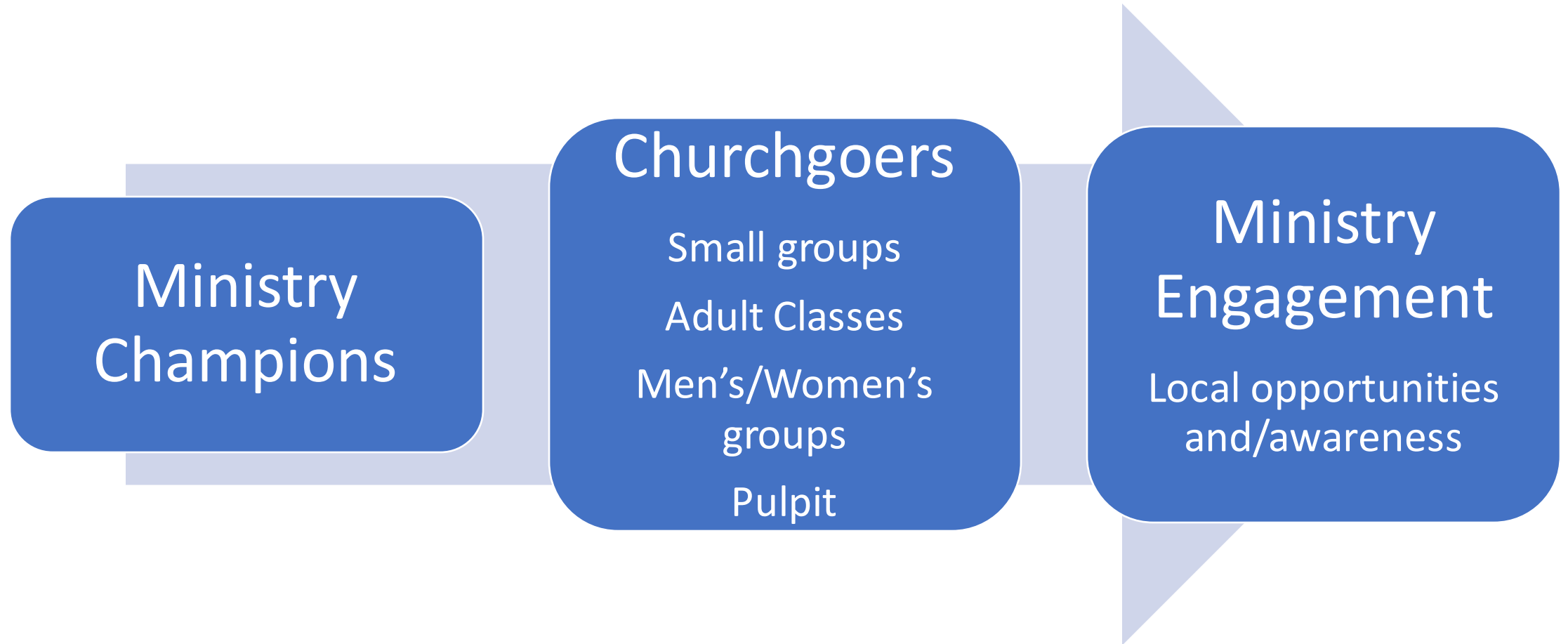
CMCA Goals

Churches partner in ministry (continuum of levels)

CMCA members be ministry champions

- Educate the church on ministry needs
- Address ministry myths
- Invite churchgoers to serve in ministry
- Connect with pastor on ministry needs and opportunities

Communication Process



Communication Tools

Video

Infographic

Myth
Busters

Ministry
directory

Ministry
consulting