

Edah Member Health White Paper

Using public participation data to justify a practical member-health framework for churches

Data note. This white paper uses real public national data from Pew Research Center and Gallup. It does not contain private church member records. Where workflow examples appear, they are operational models for how a church could apply a member-health system.

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Focus: member-health monitoring, pastoral visibility, and engagement trend detection

Executive Summary

Public U.S. data shows a long-run decline in regular religious participation. Gallup reports that the share of U.S. adults attending religious services every week or nearly every week fell from 42% in 2000–2003 to 30% in 2021–2023. In a separate trend line, Gallup reports that 32% of adults in 2023 said they had attended a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple in the prior seven days, down from 44% in 2000 and 49% in 1958.

Pew Research Center's 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study shows that 25% of U.S. adults report attending religious services in person at least weekly, 33% attend in person at least monthly, and 40% participate in religious services at least monthly in some way when in-person and online participation are combined.

For a church platform, these patterns support the need for something stronger than raw attendance logs. A member-health system should track change over time, compare recent participation to prior normal behavior, distinguish between risk and recovery, and preserve room for pastoral context.

The practical implication for Edah is straightforward: member health should be presented as a ministry-support layer, not as a replacement for shepherding. The system should surface trend changes, explain why a signal fired, support statuses such as monitor or reached out, and positively recognize re-engagement rather than only flagging decline.

Selected Public Indicators

Indicator	Value	Why it matters	Source
Regular attendance (weekly or nearly weekly), 2021–23	30%	Shows lower baseline for “healthy” religious participation in the wider U.S. environment	Gallup, 2024
Weekly in-person attendance, 2023–24	25%	Useful benchmark for high-frequency engagement	Pew Research Center, 2025
Monthly participation by any mode, 2023–24	40%	Supports hybrid engagement measurement, not just on-site attendance	Pew Research Center, 2025
Personal membership in a congregation, 2023–24	37%	Shows belonging and participation are related but not identical	Pew Research Center, 2025

What the Public Data Shows

1) Regular attendance is down over time. Gallup's cross-period analysis reports that the average share of U.S. adults attending religious services every week or nearly every week fell from 42% in 2000–2003 to 38% about a decade later and then to 30% in 2021–2023.

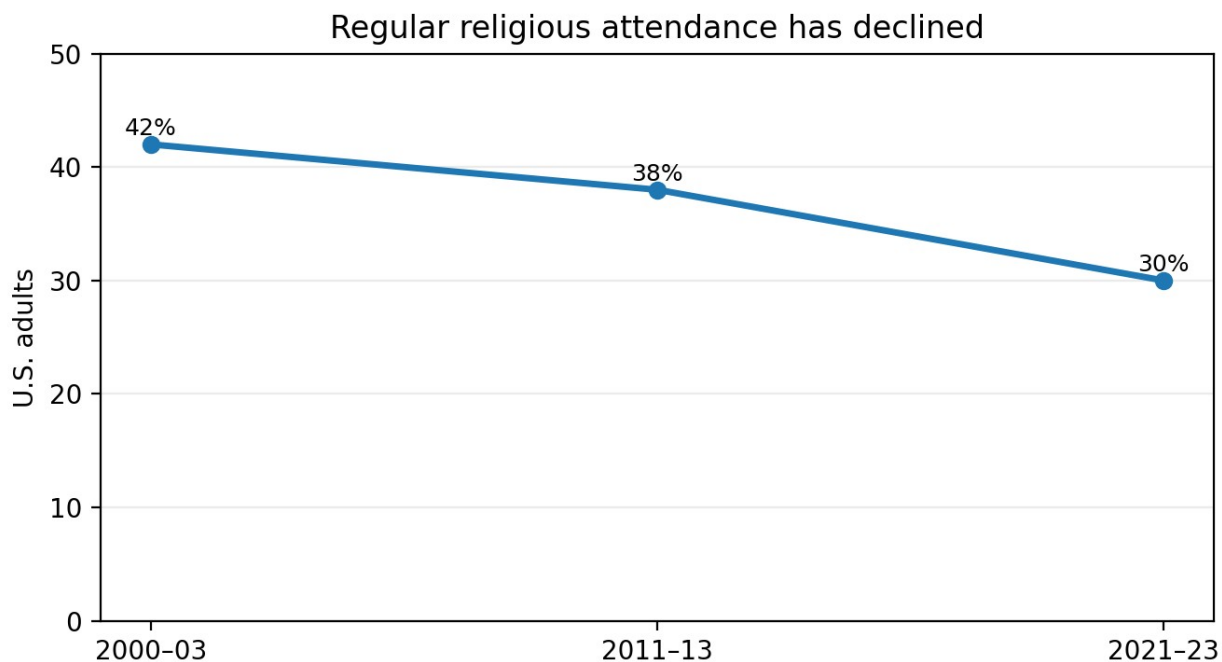


Figure 1. Gallup regular attendance trend (weekly or nearly weekly).

2) Participation should be measured in more than one mode. Pew's 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study finds that 33% of U.S. adults attend religious services in person at least monthly, but 40% participate at least monthly when online/TV participation is added. This matters for churches that stream services, host digital follow-up, or use apps as part of congregational life.

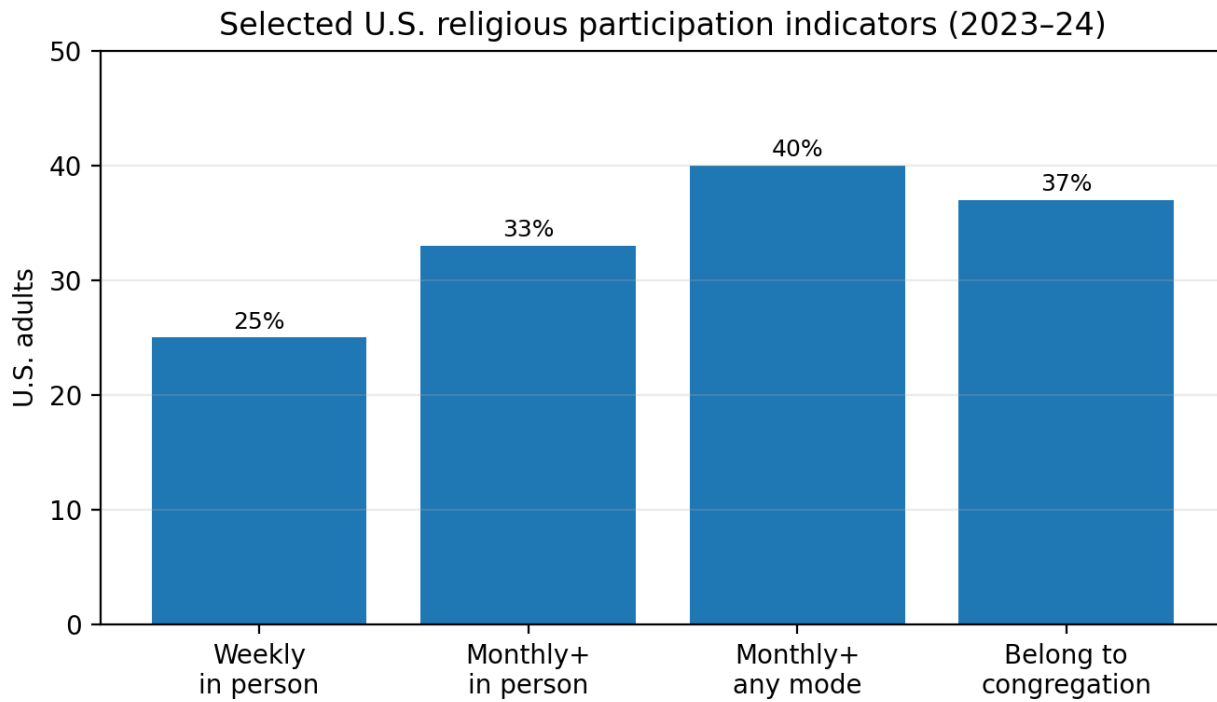


Figure 2. Pew 2023–24 public indicators for weekly, monthly, hybrid, and belonging measures.

3) Belonging and participation are not the same thing. Pew reports that 37% of adults say they personally belong to a church, synagogue, mosque, or other house of worship. In product terms, a member-health model should not assume that directory presence alone equals active engagement.

Why a Member-Health Layer Matters

Attendance alone is too thin. A church may record whether someone was present on a given Sunday, but that single data point says little about meaningful change. A member-health layer becomes valuable when it aggregates attendance, event involvement, serving, groups, and app activity into a longitudinal picture.

The system should compare people to their own prior normal, not to a universal ideal. A healthy monthly attender should not be scored as though they were a weekly attender who has suddenly disappeared. Likewise, a long-quiet member who begins returning should be recognized as positive movement.

Pastoral context must remain first-class. Signals should allow statuses such as monitor, reached out, health issue, schedule change, member moved, and deceased. This prevents the system from becoming a simplistic red-flag engine detached from reality.

Recommended Signal Model for Edah

Green	Yellow	Pink	Red
Stable or improving engagement; also appropriate for clear positive return.	Moderate shift that merits awareness but not immediate concern.	Meaningful change that may deserve review and possible follow-up.	Strong unexplained disengagement pattern across one or more important signals.

Direction matters. The system should explicitly track movement such as pink to green, red to yellow, or yellow to green. A ministry dashboard that only highlights decline will miss a large part of the pastoral story.

Minimum Data Inputs

Input family	Example fields	Reason to include
Attendance	service date, ministry, frequency pattern	Baseline for in-person participation
Events & registration	event signups, check-in, recurring involvement	Detects drop-off outside weekend services
Serving	team, role, service cadence	Shows commitment and hidden disengagement
Groups & classes	small group attendance, class completion	Captures discipleship rhythms
App & digital engagement	app opens, sermon follow-along, prayer/giving interactions	Extends visibility beyond physical attendance

Illustrative Scoring Workflow

1. Build a rolling baseline for each member using their own prior 8–16 weeks of normal participation.
2. Measure recent change by comparing the latest 2–6 weeks against that baseline across attendance, serving, groups, events, and app engagement.
3. Apply business rules that lower or suppress concern when pastoral context is known.
4. Produce a signal, a reason summary, and a next-step status rather than a raw opaque score alone.

Dashboard Design Principles

- Show counts by current signal color plus trend arrows for movement over the last 30, 60, and 90 days.
- Explain every signal with plain-language reasons, such as “attendance down for 4 weeks, serving stopped, app engagement quiet.”
- Support status tracking: monitor, reached out, health issue, schedule change, moved, deceased, resolved.
- Include a positive-movement queue so pastors can see who is returning, not just who is drifting.

Conclusion

Real public data supports the core need behind Edah’s member-health concept: participation is lower and more variable than many church leaders intuitively assume, and hybrid forms of engagement now matter enough that a single attendance column is not sufficient.

The strongest implementation path is not to market member health as predictive certainty. It should be presented as structured pastoral visibility: pattern change plus contextual explanation plus humane follow-up workflow.

That framing fits the product direction already established for Edah: signals should be understandable, explainable, and capable of showing recovery as clearly as decline.

References

- Gallup. 2024. “Church Attendance Has Declined in Most U.S. Religious Groups.” Reports 42% of U.S. adults attended every week or nearly every week in 2000–2003, 38% about a decade later, and 30% in 2021–2023.
- Gallup. 2024. “How Religious Are Americans?” Reports 32% of U.S. adults attended a house of worship in the prior seven days in 2023, down from 44% in 2000 and 49% in 1958; 45% belonged to a formal house of worship in 2023.
- Pew Research Center. 2025. “Religious Attendance and Congregational Involvement.” Reports 25% weekly in-person attendance, 33% monthly in-person attendance, 40% monthly participation by any mode, and 37% personal membership in a congregation in the 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study.
- Pew Research Center. 2025. “2023–24 Religious Landscape Study: Executive Summary.” Reports that key measures of attendance and prayer have stabilized at lower levels in recent years.