

# Poll Finds No Boost in Church Attendance during Economic Crisis

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While tens of thousands of Americans have been laid off in recent months and religious leaders have blamed corporate greed for the **economic crisis**, churches have not seen a jump in attendance numbers as many might have expected, according to a new poll.

By Audrey Barrick  
Christian Post Reporter  
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Over the last three months, about 42 percent of Americans reported that they attended church, synagogue, or mosque weekly or almost every week, which the Gallup Poll found to be the same percentage reported earlier in the year.

History has shown that a significant crisis usually results in fuller pews, as was seen after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. During this latest crisis of economic challenges, some reports have indicated that houses of worship have drawn larger crowds.

But while some churches have seen higher numbers, the recent Gallup Poll found "absolutely no change" in church attendance after reviewing almost 300,000 interviews Gallup conducted throughout this year.

Since mid-February, the percentage for church attendance has remained the same – around 42 percent. And the latest poll, conducted Dec. 4-7, showed that only 39 percent said they attended church or synagogue in the last seven days.

"It is also possible that certain specific churches or even types of churches ... have seen an increase in attendance but that on a percentage basis, these represent such a tiny part of the universe of all churches that this increase is not reflected in broad, national church attendance percentages," the Gallup report stated.

The report speculated that the magnitude of the economic crisis might not have been big enough to alter church attendance patterns across the country.

At the same time, Gallup pointed out that church attendance within any given week may be different from the self-reports it collected in 2008 since the Gallup Poll does not ask respondents to specify attendance in a recent period or for a generalized average.

And while it is possible that short-term worship service attendance could increase while Gallup's self-reports of attendance remain constant, the Gallup report stressed that "if real-world church attendance had gone up this fall in some type of meaningful way, this increase would be reflected in the response patterns to the church attendance question."

Gallup has been interviewing no fewer than 1,000 U.S. adults nationwide each day during 2008 on how often they attend church for its Daily tracking survey.

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20081218/poll-finds-no-boost-in-church-attendance-during-economic-crisis.htm>