

Healthy Congregations

Learning Lab

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Church Health Framework
- Survey and Discussion
- Closing



Personal Health

When someone asks about your personal health, what are the kinds of things you mention?

Church Health

**When someone asks about your
church health, what do you talk
about?**

What makes a healthy church?

Literature review

- Research articles
- White papers
- Thought leaders
- UMC specific

Results

- Limited research showing evidence
- Lots of thought leaders describing characteristics
- Not a lot of specific ways to measure

How can we package these ideas into a **holistic framework** that addresses key characteristics and how they relate to one another?

Identity

The congregation's collective reason for being

Wesleyan
Theology

Empowering
Vision and Mission

Leadership

Providing direction, guiding the congregation

Effective
Clergy Leader

Effective
Lay Leaders

Context

Limitations/opportunities of the physical and social place

Congregation

Church Assets

Community

Mentality

Preparing for resilience and future relevance

Peacebuilding &
Reconciliation

Innovation &
Adaptation

Actions

Being the church, doing the work

Participatory
Worship

Learning and
Transformation

Service and
Solidarity

Expansive
Invitation

Context

Limitations/opportunities of the
physical and social place

Congregation

Engagement What are all the ways that people engage? How many people are there, and how many are new?

Connections Are people connecting across age groups, ethnic and racial groups, social classes? What is the depth of their relationships?

Values What sociocultural and theological convictions does the congregation hold?

Church Assets

Property How is the building being used? Are they using their space well? Is their property aligned with their mission?

Finances Can you afford what you have? Are you using financial resources well?

Community

Who is my neighbor? Who lives in neighborhoods surrounding my church? Who are most marginalized?

What are their needs? What do different groups need? What does the most marginalized need? How do you know what the needs are?

Identity

The congregation's collective reason for being

Wesleyan Theology

About our collective Wesleyan identity

Multiple Wesleyan values like:

- Grace
- Sin
- Three general rules
- Unity

How are they taught? How are they practiced?

Empowering Vision and Mission

About your unique identity as a local church

Strategic The church should know its context and use their mission and vision to create practical ways to live it out through short and long term goals.

Motivational The congregation should be inspired and challenged to become more than they are.

Evolving The mission should adapt to a changing community and needs of the church, with emphasis on staying relevant.

Leadership

Providing direction, guiding the congregation

Effective
Clergy Leader

Multiple and Varied Skills and Abilities How is the pastor equipped with the knowledge and resources to lead well overall, specifically with this local church needs?

Core Competencies Pastors are equipped and able to fulfill key responsibilities, like preaching, teaching, leading worship, administration, resolving conflicts, pastoral care, and engaging missionally.

Effective
Lay Leaders

Identified How are lay people recruited to be part of administrative committees and worship activities?

Developed and Deployed What does training and mentorship look like? What resources are available for different positions?

Evaluated and Monitored How are leaders supported throughout their tenure, ensuring they're doing their jobs well, they feel empowered, and are not burning out?

Actions

Being the church, doing the work

Participatory Worship

Interactive People don't simply show up, but engage.

Gospel Message The Good News is shared

Comfort and Challenge Preaching to everyone listening

Accessible Mindful of how people participate and receive differently

Beyond Sunday Worship happens in many ways

Learning and Transformation

Christian Education, Bible Studies Learning what it means to follow Christ in small groups and studies

Anti-Oppression Education Learning about systems of power, oppression, and justice

Transformation of Spirit How are people examining their own thoughts and actions, being convicted, and coming closer to God.

Service and Solidarity

Engaging with Neighbors How can you best show up for your neighbors?

Charity Offering financial and tangible support for helping immediate needs.

Solidarity Working collaboratively with neighbors to share their burden, advocate for their rights, and transform oppressive systems.

Expansive Invitation

Welcoming new people Invitation into the church community through multiple entry points, not just Sunday worship

Building a congregation Worship, fellowship builds connections

Generosity People graciously receive and graciously give through prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness

Invitation to Live Like Jesus

Mentality

Preparing for resilience and future
relevance

Peacebuilding & Reconciliation

Peacebuilding Conflict is part of being in relationship, but how do we prevent it from turning into problem? How to prevent escalation?

Engaging Well Helping people navigate through the conflict, preventing harm and hearing each other

Reconciliation How can people be reconciled together, and what is that process like? How are people held accountable for harm?

Innovation & Adaptation

Change Keeping pulse on how our communities are changing, how people's needs are changing, especially in our neighborhoods.

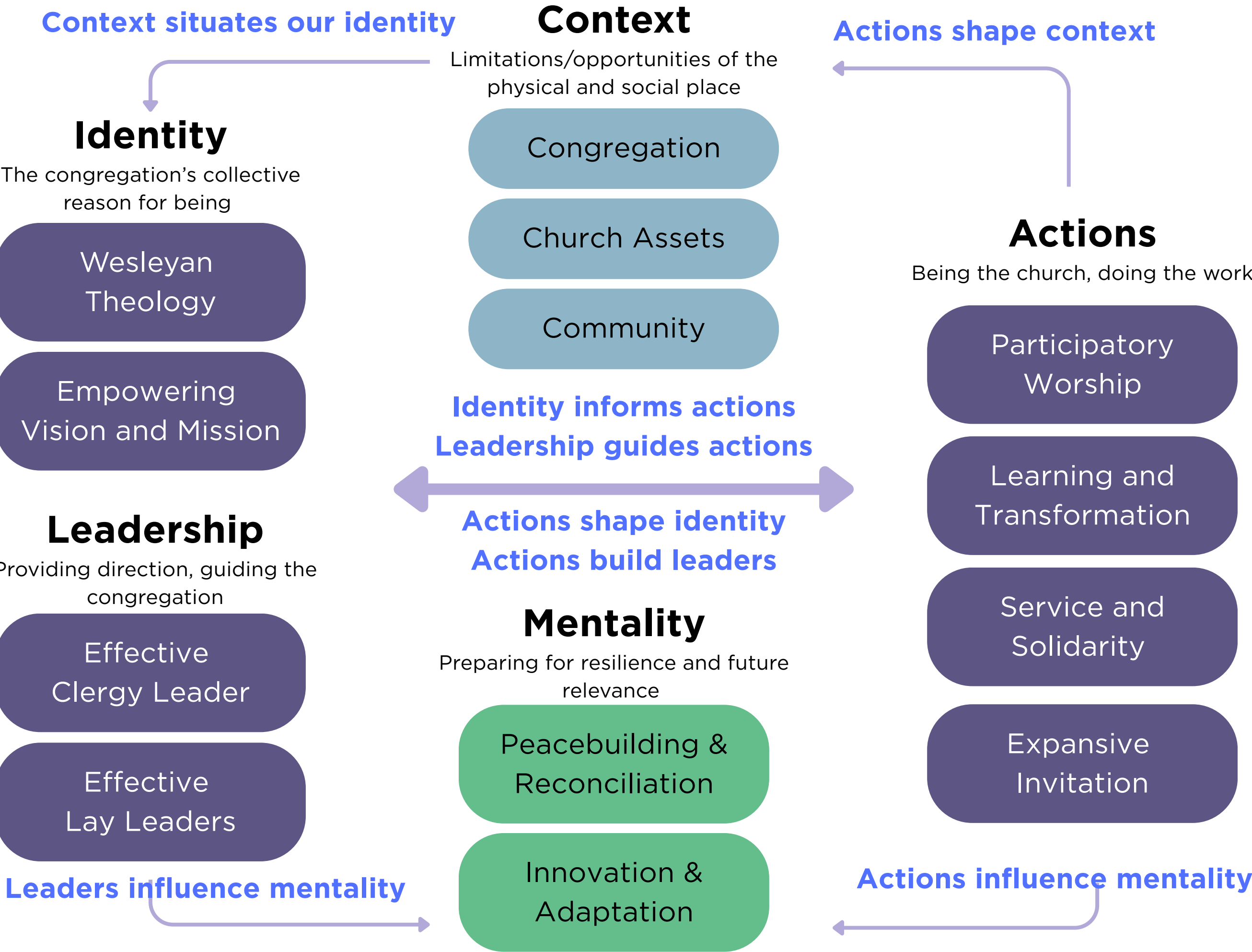
Relevance Be vulnerable to ask hard questions about how necessary we are, about new ways of being church

Resilience-Focused Being proactive to create a church that will exist for today and ready for the future



Dimmer Switches
Brightens or dims
everything

How does this all fit together?





How are we measuring church health?

The new Church Health Report!

- Survey questions, some open-ended
- All leaders at local church invited to take it
- Replaces the State of the Church and Anti-Racism reports
- Local churches given their own results
- Hope you use these results for self-reflection and looking forward, making new plans
- Will you get a health score or rating? Nope! Health is complicated; more useful when local leaders review results and determine for yourselves what your health is

What's in the survey?

- Based on the Church Health Framework
- Multiple-choice for quick answers, easy analysis
- Open-ended questions (couple sentences) trying to understand **transformation**
- Questions can be:
 - Descriptive - simply what does your church do
 - Thought-provoking - new ideas, different perspectives
- Less about “right and wrong” answers, more about “revealing” ideas for self-reflection

Exercise: Selected Questions

- 10 minutes
- Answer about your church
- Welcome to turn them in at the end
- Reconvene afterward to discuss how you feel, answer your questions. (Not about discussing your specific answers.)

Reflections

- General questions?
- How did this make you feel?
 - Anything worrying, exciting, interesting?
- How did this make you think about your health?

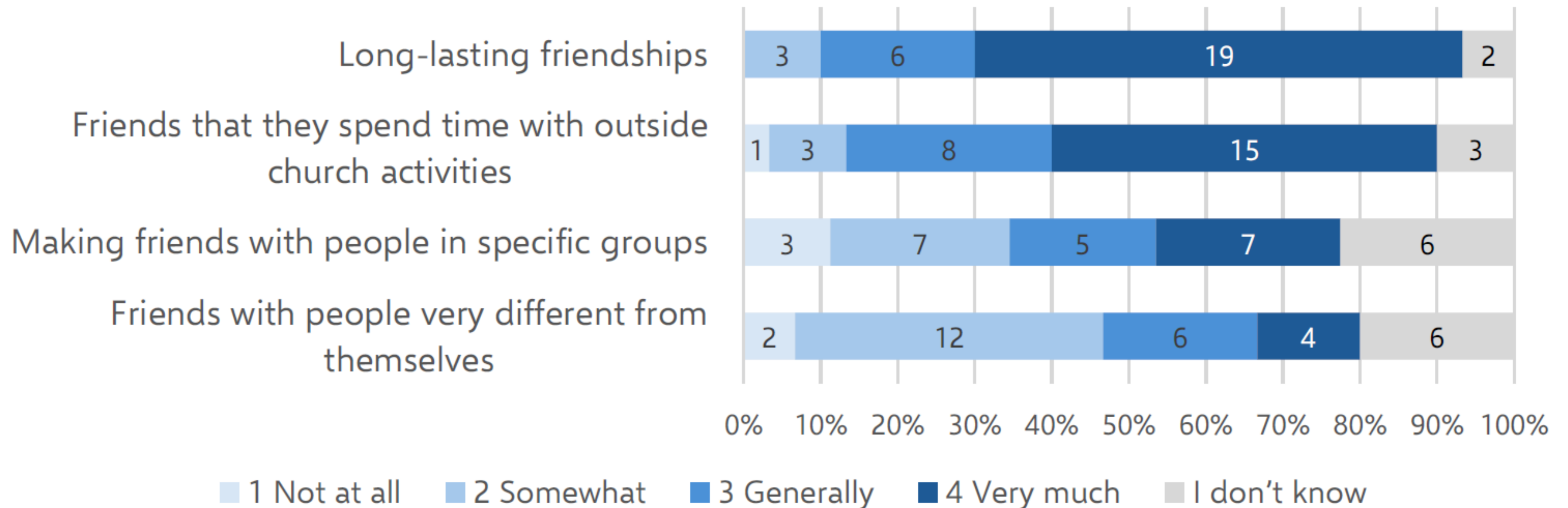
Church Health Report

- All churches will get their answers summarized in charts and graphs for their Charge Conference
- The results are not analyzed, but ideas are provided to prompt your leaders to think critically about the information.
- The report is the **start** to the conversation, not the end.
- Let's take a look at some examples

1.4. Depth of Connections*

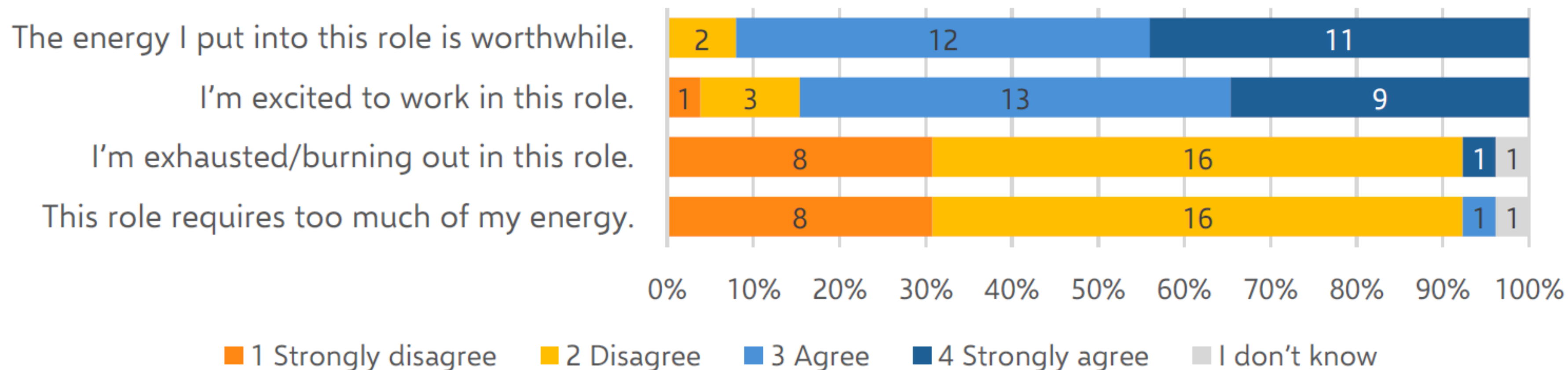
Healthy churches create room for deep connections between people, especially between different kinds of people. Leaders reported their impressions of the congregations' friendships for these answers.

When you review these answers, what do you think are the reasons for their responses? What ideas could help people create deeper connections across the congregation? (Note that “Making friends with people in specific groups” is an average of five different groups.)



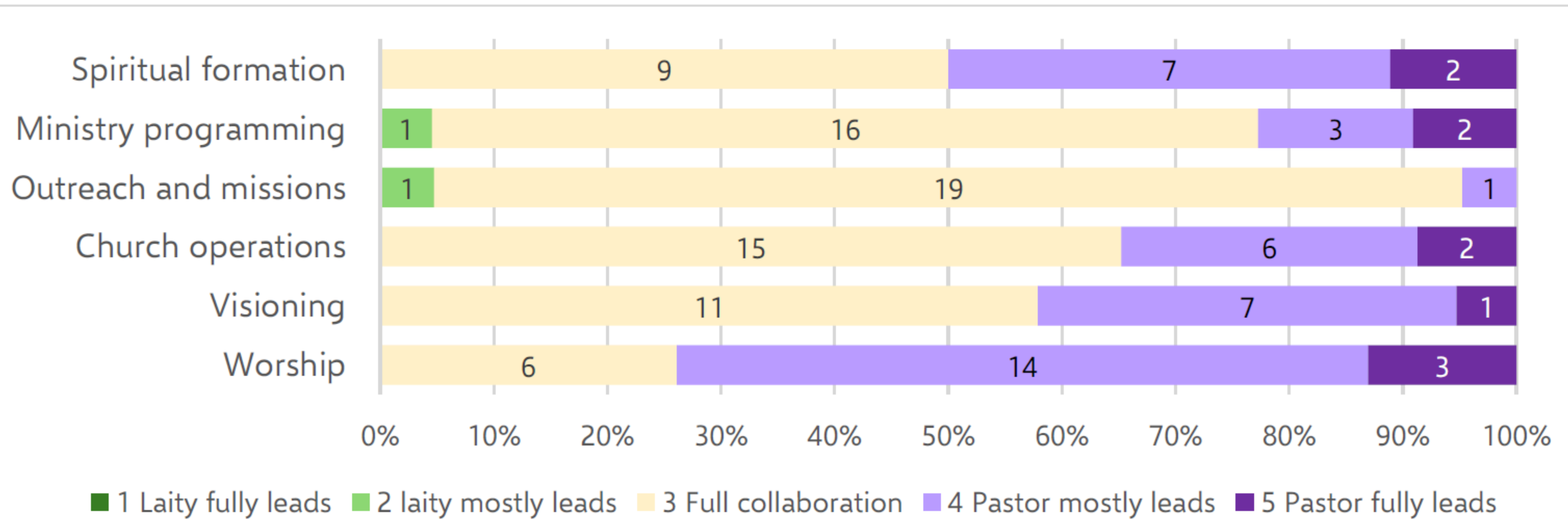
10.4. Energy put into leadership role

When laity put in too much energy into their role, they may begin to burn out or not perform their role well. Leaders were asked to reflect on questions about their energy for their role. Are your leaders excited about the work or are they burning out? What options do you have to support leaders?



10.8. Lay-Clergy Leaders Working Together

Both lay and clergy leadership working well together is a great sign of health. Leaders were asked to describe how well their lay leadership and ministry team/pastor lead together in the following ways. Does the chart below show a balance that makes sense for your church?



**What are you taking away
from this session?**