

**Executive Summary**  
Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton, GA

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There were 362 surveys completed representing 214 separate family units.

**Who They Are.** Over two-thirds (67.13%) of the families in this congregation are married couples and their children, with 52% consisting of first-time marriages, and another 15% in blending families (Table 1). Around one-quarter (25.81%) are single adult families—never married, divorced, or widowed. Like most American congregations, married families are overrepresented and single adult families are underrepresented when compared with the general U.S. population in which almost 48% of adults are single. The age of families of this congregation (Table 4) shows a significant number of families who have been married or remarried more than 30 years (49.66%). The remaining families are fairly evenly distributed across the family age span. The 55-69 year old age group predominate (34.23%), but there is a fairly significant number of younger adults, with 20% of those surveyed aged 35-49 (Table 8). Youth make up 3.6% of the respondents.

Almost two-thirds (64%) of the 214 households responding (n=138) do not have children living in the home (Table 13). Of the families with children, 14 have preschoolers, 30 have elementary school-age children, 30 have teenagers, and 12 have young adult children living at home (Table 13). Although most of these children are biologically related to their parents, 2 are adoptive relationships, 4 are in blending families, and 7 are grandchildren living with grandparents (those families also have the children's parents in the same household as well) (Table 14).

Most of the families in this congregation are White/Euro-American (90.61%). In addition, 1.88% are Native-American/American Indian, 0.94% are Black/African-American, 0.94% are White and Hispanic, 0.94% identified as other, and 4.69% did not answer this question (Table 3). This is a well-educated congregation, with over one-quarter (29%) having earned graduate degrees (Table 5). Additionally, over one-quarter (26%) have a highest education level of college graduate. Over one-quarter (29%) of the congregation have a fairly "normal" distribution of incomes from \$30,000 to \$74,999 (Table 12). A slightly smaller percentage (24%) of respondents have incomes between \$75,000-\$149,999. A significant portion (22%) either did not report or did not know household income. Like most American congregations, there are more women (55%) than men (35%) with 10% not answering (Table 7).

**Families' Connection to the Congregation.** Almost one-half (47%) of respondents have been attending for over 20 years. However, the congregation consists of a significant number of persons who have been attending for less than 10 years (31%). This suggests significant new growth in the church body alongside of a long-term, stable membership (Table 10). Over one-tenth (16%) reported that they have been attending this church for 11-19 years. This congregation appears to be a community congregation, with most families (81%) living within a 15-minute travel distance (13% travel between 16 and 30 minutes and 1% travel over 30 minutes). This has implications for continued programming within the church's neighborhood (Table 11). This congregation is very connected to its immediate neighborhood, which may be the target area for growth. However, it should be kept in mind as programming develops that

around 14% of congregants do travel over 15 minutes to the church. Although most families attend this congregation together (n=134), 15 families reported that they have a family member attending another church, and 19 families report that they have family members not connected to any congregation (Table 15). 41 respondents reported that they live alone (Table 15).

**Time Together.** Most families with children report that they have significant amounts of time together on a daily basis, with 83% reporting 3 or more hours a day, and 47% more than 5 hours a day (Table 17).

**Strengths and Challenges: *Life Together at Home.*** The families in this congregation are strong— most feel they are committed to one another, can depend on one another, and feel well connected to their community (i.e., “if we moved, we’d be missed”). Many feel strengthened as a result of crises they have experienced and compromise as needed. They feel challenged, though, to seek outside help when needed and to find ways to serve their communities together as families. Other challenges include family participation with household chores, blaming each other, and finding time to spend with friends and neighbors (Section B).

**Strengths and Challenges: *Life Together in this Congregation.*** Similar results were found for this “church family” (Section C). They are committed to one another as a congregation, can depend on one another, and make time for intentional fellowship. In addition, the congregation helps others outside their congregation and they feel connected to one another as a congregation (i.e., “if we moved, we’d be missed”). Connected to what families said about their life together, the congregation also finds it a challenge to seek outside help when needed. Other challenges identified include trying new solutions. Furthermore, the congregation is challenged by blaming each other, compromising as needed, and protecting one another’s well being.

**Interpersonal Relationship Stress.** The most common stressors for individuals in this congregation include:

- Serious illness or disability
- Financial strain
- Death of family or close friend
- Prioritizing money use
- Caring for sick/disabled family
- Depression/emotional problems
- Problems balancing work & family
- Job difficulty or stressors
- Too much parent-child conflict
- Unemployment

These are generally the most commonly mentioned in other congregations as well, although sometimes in somewhat different order (Table 28). Consistent with the current economic condition, financial and work stressors are ranked more highly than with some other churches that have completed the survey in the past.

**Living Our Faith.** *Of the faith practices individuals reported, the ones reported in greatest frequency are: attending weekly workshop services, praying, take time to rest, volunteering to help the less fortunate, participating in Bible study, and giving money to church/causes. Least frequent faith practices include encouraging others after failure, promoting social justice, discussing responses to issues, forgiving others, and caring for the created world. Of the faith practices individuals reported they do as a family, the ones reported in greatest frequency are: attending weekly worship, giving money to church/causes, providing hospitality for others, volunteering to help the less fortunate, and taking time to rest. Least frequent faith practices include studying church teachings, promoting social justice, sharing the Christian faith, participating in Bible studies, forgiving others, and accepting gifts/care gratefully. When talking about family faith practices, over two-fifths (42%) of the families in this congregation report eating together on at least an almost daily basis.*

**How the Church Can Help.** Families most often asked for help in *knowing what we can do together to make a difference for others and finding ways we can include all ages in community service.* They also would like help with:

- Retirement
- Caring for sick, disabled, or aging family members
- Developing healthy habits—eating, exercising, resting & recreation
- Connecting community service to what we know about our faith
- Managing money
- Coping with crises
- Sharing service opportunities with other families in the congregation
- Family Bible study

These responses do differ somewhat across the age span of the congregation. Attention to those differences would be helpful in planning the church's response to these felt needs.

**Our Church in the World:** Consistent with what respondents have said in earlier sections, they do believe this congregation cares about the needs of its community and the larger world, however, there may be some difference between care and actual response to these needs. Families still want to have help to fulfill that mission together as a congregation and as individuals and family units. This congregation feels and seems to demonstrate a similar response to its immediate community and to perceived needs around the world.

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