

Religious Practice and Crime Rates*

“And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

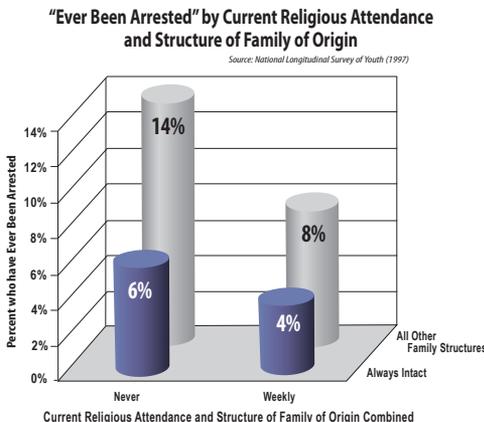
Colossians 3:14-17

Social science research demonstrates that religious practice protects society from crime:

- Metropolitan areas with high rates of congregational membership and areas with high levels of religious homogeneity tend to have lower homicide and suicide rates than other metropolitan areas.
- States with more religious populations tend to have fewer homicides and fewer suicides.
- Religious attendance is associated with decreases in both major and minor forms of crime and deviance, to an extent unrivalled by any government social programs.
- Religious involvement significantly increases self-control while decreasing drug use and delinquency.
- Religious service attendance and adherence to moral beliefs were correlated with fewer status offenses among adolescents.

Worship of God yields benefits government programs cannot match. How can you spread this word? Who among your friends and colleagues would be intrigued to hear this information?

The following chart illustrates that church attenders and those from intact families are less likely than those who do not worship and who are from non-intact families to engage in illegal behavior. Church attendance helps young people develop a strong moral compass and also encourages them to live accordingly in their public life.



For links to the research behind these statements, please visit www.marri.us/churchbulletins

*It bears emphasizing that these patterns hold for the groups involved, not for all the individuals who make up each group. There is naturally a wide variation among individuals.



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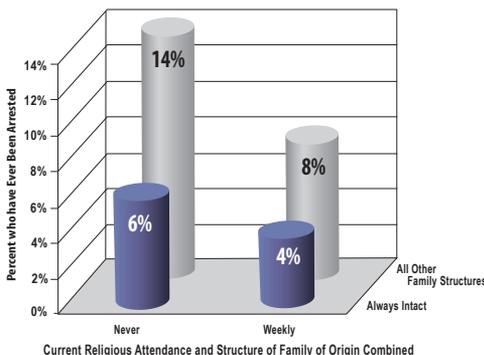
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“Ever Been Arrested” by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



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