

***The Academy for Spiritual Formation™***  
***An Analysis of the Views of Pastors Who Attended***

*A Report to*  
*The Upper Room® Ministries*

By

Doble Research Associates, Inc.  
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Doble Research Associates  
375 Sylvan Avenue  
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632  
[dobleresearch@aol.com](mailto:dobleresearch@aol.com)

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This report was written by John Doble and Research Associate Andrew Briker, with significant input from Hazel Williams, who also helped oversee the administration of the entire project. Liza Khan, formerly a Research Associate at this organization, played a major role in conceptualizing the research design, writing the interview guides and questionnaire, co-moderating the focus groups, and analyzing the preliminary results.

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# *Executive Summary*

## *Introduction*

Using a list provided by The Upper Room Ministries, Doble Research contacted 356 pastors who graduated from the Academy for Spiritual Formation since 1983-1985. A total of 241 pastors returned a questionnaire, an astonishingly high response rate of 68 percent which indicates the importance of the Academy to these pastors. By way of comparison, a high response rate for a normal survey conducted through the mail is about four percent. A response rate of about 15 to 20 percent would be considered high for a mail survey of the membership of an active service organization such as the Kiwanis.

### *I The Importance of the Academy*

Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1, 2, and 3 mean “not important at all” and 8, 9, and 10 mean “extremely important,” a remarkable 91 percent said the Academy experience had been an extremely important part of their lives. The pastors were then given a list of 13 aspects of their Academy experience and asked to indicate how important each was to them. Perhaps the best gauge of how the pastors feel about their experience at the Academy is demonstrated by the fact that a majority said all 13 aspects were important to them, and 80 percent or more said 8 were *extremely* important. These eight extremely important aspects in rank order were:

1. The rhythm of gathering every three months for two years;
2. Being part of a spiritual community for two years;
3. The rhythm of the day;
4. The daily Eucharist;
5. The periods of silence;
6. Worship three times a day;
7. The emphasis on a holistic spirituality; and
8. The faculty

While a fair number of pastors did not remember enough about any particular course to talk about it at length, many were comfortable talking about the importance or helpfulness of the courses as a whole. As many as 70 percent said the course on Spiritual Disciplines was very helpful while 69 percent felt that way about The Place of Scripture in Spiritual Formation. Majorities also said these courses were very helpful: Discernment and Ways of Prayer, Spirituality in the Psalms, and Orthodox Spirituality.

### *II After the Academy*

The pastors were asked whether being at the Academy led to any changes in their attitudes or behavior. Nearly four in five, 79 percent, said the Academy deepened their hunger for God. More than seven of 10 also said the Academy helped them increase their compassion for themselves and shaped their practice of pastoral ministry.

The pastors were asked to detail any behavioral changes they made in their lives as a result of their Academy experience. Upwards of 80 percent reported these changes: taking more time for prayer, reflection and meditation; reading scripture more meditatively; and more readily seeking spiritual friendships and the counsel of others. About three in four said they go on retreats on a regular or occasional basis. Sizable numbers said they have made other changes as a result of the Academy, including: seeing a spiritual director (52 percent); receiving and celebrating Holy Communion more often (45 percent); journaling regularly (43 percent); improving their diet (42 percent); and exercising more (41 percent).

Huge numbers attributed a host of attitudinal changes to the Academy. About 90 percent said they now have a deeper, richer understanding of themselves, have grown in awareness of different people's spiritual journeys, and gained a much deeper appreciation for Christian spirituality.

### *III Suggestions for Change*

When the pastors were asked what if anything should be changed about the Academy, the pastors most frequently mentioned reducing the costs (40 percent). About three in ten also wanted more emphasis on helping Academy graduates apply what they learned and greater racial and ethnic diversity among participants.

### *IV The Practice of Ministry*

The pastors were asked how if at all the Academy experience changed their pastoral ministry or personal identity. As many as 81 percent said they now focus more on their role as a spiritual guide to their congregation. Large numbers said the Academy influenced their pastoral ministry or personal identity in other ways: 71 percent see more need to offer healing ministries; 65 percent take more risks with their congregation in worship leadership; and 64 percent said they are more open and vulnerable in their preaching. Sizable majorities said the Academy led them to incorporate silence into worship (60 percent) and to add more time for spiritual formation in meetings (58 percent). A number of pastors also said that as a result of their Academy experience they now offer these new ministries: small groups (66 percent); retreats (55 percent); adult classes (51 percent); and healing services (47 percent).

The pastors were asked what they found about their Academy experience to be most helpful in their ministry. Sabbath time/having a break from pastoral responsibilities, named by 49 percent, was mentioned most often. Sizable minorities also named having a safe place to explore my spiritual journey (38 percent) and participating in worship rather than leading it (28 percent). When they were asked what was not helpful in the Academy, one pastor in four mentioned the lack of support afterwards.

The pastors were given some ideas for improving the capacity of the Academy to resource pastors for ministry and were asked whether they thought each was needed. Majorities called for two resources after the Academy: more retreats (64 percent), and more small group resources (57 percent) to help pastors serve as spiritual guides to their congregations. Majorities also wanted two resources *during* the Academy: more talk about how to bring about what one has learned (58 percent) and improving the course, Spiritual Formation and the Local Church (52 percent).

### *V Further Resources for Pastoral Formation*

Graduates were asked what beyond the Academy helped them most in their pastoral ministry. By far the most frequently mentioned resource, named by 55 percent, was a supportive spouse, family, or friends. The central importance of relationships is underscored by the fact that each of the following was said to be most helpful in terms of pastoral ministry: colleagues in ministry, named by 40 percent; a spiritual director, 35 percent; a wise pastor or mentor(s), 33 percent; and a small group with other pastors, 24 percent.

Far smaller percentages said that instruction or training were most helpful. For example, only 14 percent said seminary classes were most helpful while 11 percent named the Alban Institute or similar training and 9 percent said denominational resources or training.

Pastors were asked to indicate how helpful various resources other than the Academy had been in terms of their work in pastoral ministry. *Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*, edited by Rueben Job and Jacob Shawchuck, was very highly rated, with as many as 50 percent calling it “extremely helpful.” *Companions in Christ* by Job, Thompson, Hinson, Gonzalez, Scott Dawson, and Wright was also quite well regarded, with 41 percent calling it extremely helpful. Indeed, this volume actually had the highest mean or average score of any resource, with graduates giving it an exceptionally high overall rating of 8.5 on a scale of 1 to 10.

When asked which programs and events had been most helpful in their work in pastoral ministry, graduates were most inclined to cite the Five Day Academy, with 51 percent calling it “extremely helpful.” Large numbers also said several other programs and events had been helpful in their work in ministry, especially *Walk to Emmaus*, which was named as extremely helpful by 32 percent.

When asked which periodicals had been most helpful, Academy graduates were most inclined to name *Weavings*, with a majority, 52 percent, calling it extremely helpful. Compared to *Weavings*, *Alive Now!* and the *Upper Room Daily Devotional* were said to be helpful by significant but somewhat smaller numbers.

The pastors were asked what issues the Upper Room Ministries should keep in mind as it develops new resources for pastors committed to spiritual formation. Solid

majorities singled out two issues as particularly important: how to integrate spirituality into the systems of the local church, and how to help the congregation learn to pray and practice the presence of God in their daily lives.

Significant numbers named three other issues as being among the most important: “How to receive the nourishment I need;” how to develop intervention strategies for bringing about changes in unhealthy churches; and how to strengthen the connection between spiritual formation and worship and preaching.

## *VI Companions in Ministry*

No matter how it was presented, it was difficult to briefly explain the original conception of Companions in Ministry. We provided the pastors with several different encapsulated summaries of the new program; in each case, their initial reactions were marked by questions and confusion. We therefore conclude that The Upper Room may find it a real challenge to briefly explain what Companions in Ministry or any similar program is and is not, and we strongly recommend that inordinate care be taken in developing a written description of any new program like Companions and that a broad range of reactions to any draft be solicited and carefully considered before a final version is decided on.

Regardless of their initial reactions, however, the pastors’ reactions to the overall concept were overwhelmingly positive *after they learned more about Companions and had a chance to consider or deliberate about it*. That is, the more the pastors learned about Companions and the more they talked about it, the more favorable their views became. In addition to responding favorably to the overall concept, the pastors responded positively to many of Companions’ elements when they learned more about them.

However, while the pastors’ overall reactions to the concept of Companions and its components were positive, some voiced concerns about certain specifics or wanted to tweak or adjust certain aspects of the program.

In sum, it would be a serious mistake for The Upper Room to conclude that the pastors’ initial reactions to the descriptions of Companions, which were often marked by doubts and confusion, represent their true, deeper feelings about the idea. When they learned more about Companions and had a chance to think and talk about the idea, they became increasingly enthusiastic about it and saw a real need for the program.

## ***Part I: Overall Assessment of the Academy***

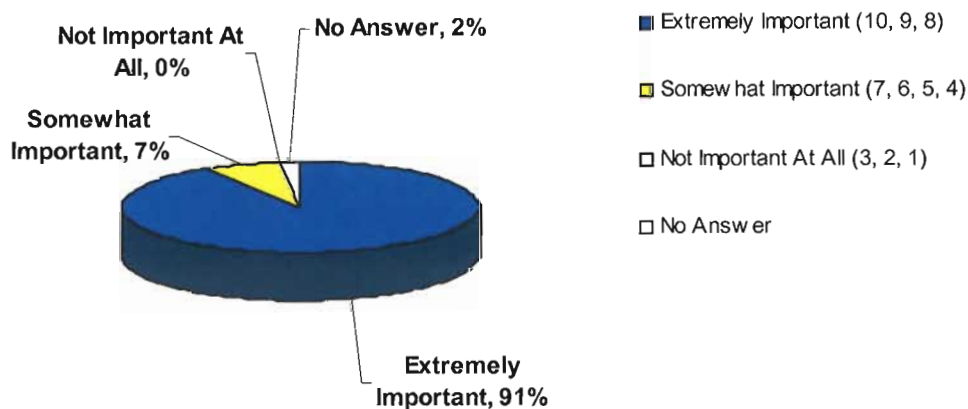
**Of the 356 pastors who attended the Academy for Spiritual Formation since 1983-85, a total of 241 responded to a survey asking about their Academy experience.**

Using a list provided by The Upper Room Ministries, Doble Research contacted 356 pastors who graduated from the Academy for Spiritual Formation since the first group attended in 1983-1985. A total of 241 pastors returned a questionnaire, an astonishingly high response rate of 68 percent which indicates the importance of the Academy to the pastors who went there. By way of comparison, a high response rate for a normal survey conducted through the mail is about four percent. A response rate of about 15 to 20 percent would be considered high for a mail survey of the membership of an active service organization such as the Kiwanis.

**The Academy is held in esteem by the pastors who attended. A remarkable 91 percent said the Academy experience had been an extremely important part of their lives. (See Table 1.)**

Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1, 2, and 3 mean “not important at all” and 8, 9, and 10 mean “extremely important,” as many as 91 percent of the 241 pastors said the Academy had been extremely important to them. (See Table 1.)

**Table 1: Overall, Academy Experience Was Extremely Important**





**The esteem in which the Academy is held is further evidenced by the fact that when the pastors were asked to rate the importance of 13 aspects of their Academy experience, a majority said each of the 13 was extremely important, with upwards of 80 percent calling 8 of them extremely important. (See Tables 2 & 3.)**

The pastors were given a list of 13 aspects of their Academy experience and asked to indicate how important each was to them. The best gauge of how the pastors feel about their experience at the Academy and the esteem in which they hold it is demonstrated by the fact that a majority of the pastors said all 13 aspects were extremely important to them, and 80 percent or more said 8 were extremely important. These eight aspects in rank order were:

1. The rhythm of gathering every three months for two years;
2. Being part of a spiritual community for two years;
3. The rhythm of the day;
4. The daily Eucharist;
5. The periods of silence;
6. Worship three times a day;
7. The emphasis on a holistic spirituality; and
8. The faculty.

Below we detail how the pastors felt about these eight aspects as well as the other five.

**Large numbers singled out the Academy's rhythmic patterns. As many as 88 percent of the pastors said the rhythm of gathering every three months for two years was extremely important while 86 percent felt this way about the rhythm of each day. (See Table 2.)**

The pastors deeply appreciated the Academy's rhythmic pattern with some saying it changed their lives long after they left the Academy.

"The rhythm of the day, the rhythm of the cycle during the year kept me grounded and rooted." *Man, telephone interview.*

"Over the years what has stayed with me more consistently has been the appreciation for pattern. The pattern of the week, the pattern of the day, the rhythm – [that's] what might have been the most shaping aspect [of my Academy experience]." *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“I think the [permanent] change [in my life] was I’m either establishing or discovering a rhythm in my own personal life. Better understanding of the need for rhythm and ritual personally came out of the Academy for me.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

Others specifically praised the rhythmic pattern of worship.

“[The rhythm of the] worship was a real highlight. And I found that that is something that lingered with me after I left each session of the Academy.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“One piece of the worship that I did not expect to enjoy was the repetition of certain Psalms and certain prayers. To say the same morning prayers every time, I thought, well, this is going to get old. But [those prayers] just sort of sunk into the heart and just go with you. I don’t know that I would have expected that.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“The first thing that came to mind [when I thought about the most important aspects of my Academy experience] was the worship, the pattern of worship, especially morning prayers.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

**As many as 87 percent of the pastors said being part of a spiritual community for two years was extremely important, with 51 percent giving it the highest possible rating: a score of 10 on a scale of 1 to 10. (See Tables 2 & 3.)**

A number of the pastors detailed how the Academy gave them a feeling of being at home in a worshipping, spiritual community.

“The community experience of worship was [the most important aspect of my Academy experience]. We became a worshipping community that did not have to depend on the exact words printed on the page. And that was very, very important to me.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

“When I heard about the five-day Academy and the two-year Academy...they just really felt right. I remember feeling [as if] I’ve come home; I’ve come home to a place and a group of people that understands this same kind of feeling inside me, within me.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

Some pastors talked about the importance of the relationships they had established in the Academy’s spiritual community, including how much they learned in the informal interactions.

“It was all the conversations around the table, which [were] so rich, so wonderful. That was what really changed my life.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“The other aspect...that was important was the opportunity to sit at the feet or alongside so many people who we read books for or with. The opportunity to hear different people talk and learn from them [was really important].” *Woman, Burlingame CA focus group.*

A number of pastors talked about the value of the bonds they formed in their covenant groups.

“During my Academy experience, I went through a divorce. And my covenant group was especially helpful because it gave me a place to process my feelings, a place that was safe for sharing, a place I could call home in the midst of so much upheaval in my life.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“For me, the covenant group was the best...We became so close...I still keep in touch with all of those people. I just have such fond memories and just love those people so much.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

“I would say for me, [the most important thing at the Academy was] the relationships. I still see some people from my covenant group.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

**Eighty-six percent of the pastors said the daily Eucharist was extremely important to them, with half of them giving it the highest possible rating: a 10 on a scale of 1 to 10. (See Tables 2 & 3.)**

A number of pastors said the Academy’s centering on the Eucharist permanently changed their lives and the way they worship.

“[What was most important to me was] the worship, but more specifically, the daily Eucharist. I don’t remember a single sermon, and I preached [some of] them... [But] the daily Eucharist – my life has been changed by that. And worship will never be the same.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“One thing that I had to learn at the Academy was that it centered around the Eucharist. And that the Christian life was centered around the Eucharist.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“[What was most] meaningful was worship...four times a day with Eucharist in the middle of each day.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

“[Most important to me] was receiving Communion. As a pastor that’s not something you get to do very often. And just to be able to go as a member of the body of Christ through that line and receive Communion – that’s a gift I will never forget. Ever. It was the most wonderful thing.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**A total of 86 percent said the periods of silence were extremely important. (See Table 2.)**

A number of the pastors talked about their appreciation of silent time.

“The rhythm of silence was important. Silent times were profound. The silence was wrapped into a rhythm, and helped with my self-understanding.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“We used silence, meditative silence after we listened to chanting, and then singing, and then silence. So it’s a repetitive pattern of contemplative worship that’s valuable.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

Some said that while they were initially doubtful about the value or appropriateness of silent periods, they quickly came to see their value.

“One of the things that I have always thought was blasphemy was silence. You’re supposed to praise God, make a joyful noise. And I discovered [at the Academy] that I enjoyed silence.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“Something that I thought I would never be able to do was the whole business of silence. [But after being at the Academy], that became so important for me and continues to be so important for me – silence.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**As many as 83 percent said worshipping three times a day was extremely important to them. (See Table 2.)**

Very large numbers found the practice of worshipping three times a day, which is also of course part of the Academy’s rhythmic design and pattern, to be very important.

“When I was thinking about rhythm, part of what I was thinking about was going in and responding, participating [in] worship with Ginger [Howl], morning,

afternoon and evening. And so part of [the Academy experience] is that it's whole. And that's part of what it teaches us – to create a new whole in our lives. And the Academy is just carefully, very carefully thought about and put together so it is a whole. And any one piece we talk about reflects how the whole thing works together.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**A total of 82 percent said the emphasis on a holistic spirituality (mind, body, and spirit) was extremely important. (See Table 2.)**

The pastors' appreciation for the emphasis on holistic spirituality was evidenced in part by what some reported doing after leaving the Academy.

“The Academy [allowed me to practice greater self-care] through its focus on diet, exercise, and time throughout the day to take care of myself spiritually.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“The health and fitness component...was valuable...The main type of exercise I get now is still the power walking that I learned at the Academy.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**As many as 80 percent of the pastors said the faculty presenters were extremely important to them. (See Table 2.)**

A number of the pastors talked at length about the importance of the faculty.

“I had never been in a situation with faculty presenters where the faculty was so transparent and [I was] able to have Communion [with them]. And not only having Communion daily with Eucharist but to sit at the table and have [conversations] with them...The relationship I was able to develop with [some of the members of the faculty] was experientially fantastic.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“The Academy makes sure we all understood the faculty worth [and that] the faculty [is] available to us one-on-one throughout the week for private consultations. And the faculty members afterwards were very good about answering the mail and staying in touch when needed.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

The names of various faculty members were mentioned from time to time, especially the name of Bob Mulholland who was highly praised.

“The teacher I enjoyed most was Bob Mulholland.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“Bob Mulholland was my first lecture and he really blew me out of the water. ‘Shaped by the Word, Shaped by the Scripture.’ After that first lecture, I knew I was in the right place. There was no question about it.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“The relationships [I established with faculty members at the Academy were vitally important to me]...Glenn [Hinson] and Bob [Mulholland]. There’s no one in the world to me like Bob.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“I was thinking about faculty...the people who gave the lectures. And the names I would throw out are [Flora Slosson] Wuellner, Ron [del Bene], who was actually at a five-day Academy. Miriam Schmidt [who] did Psalms...And Wendy [Wright] and Bruce [Rigdon] are two other names I’ll throw in. And probably there’d be others if I thought more. Those were people that I found to be inspiring and interesting.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**Smaller majorities said other aspects were important, including the music (73 percent), the curriculum (68 percent), the covenant group (67 percent), the healing services (57 percent), and the readings (50 percent). (See Table 2.)**

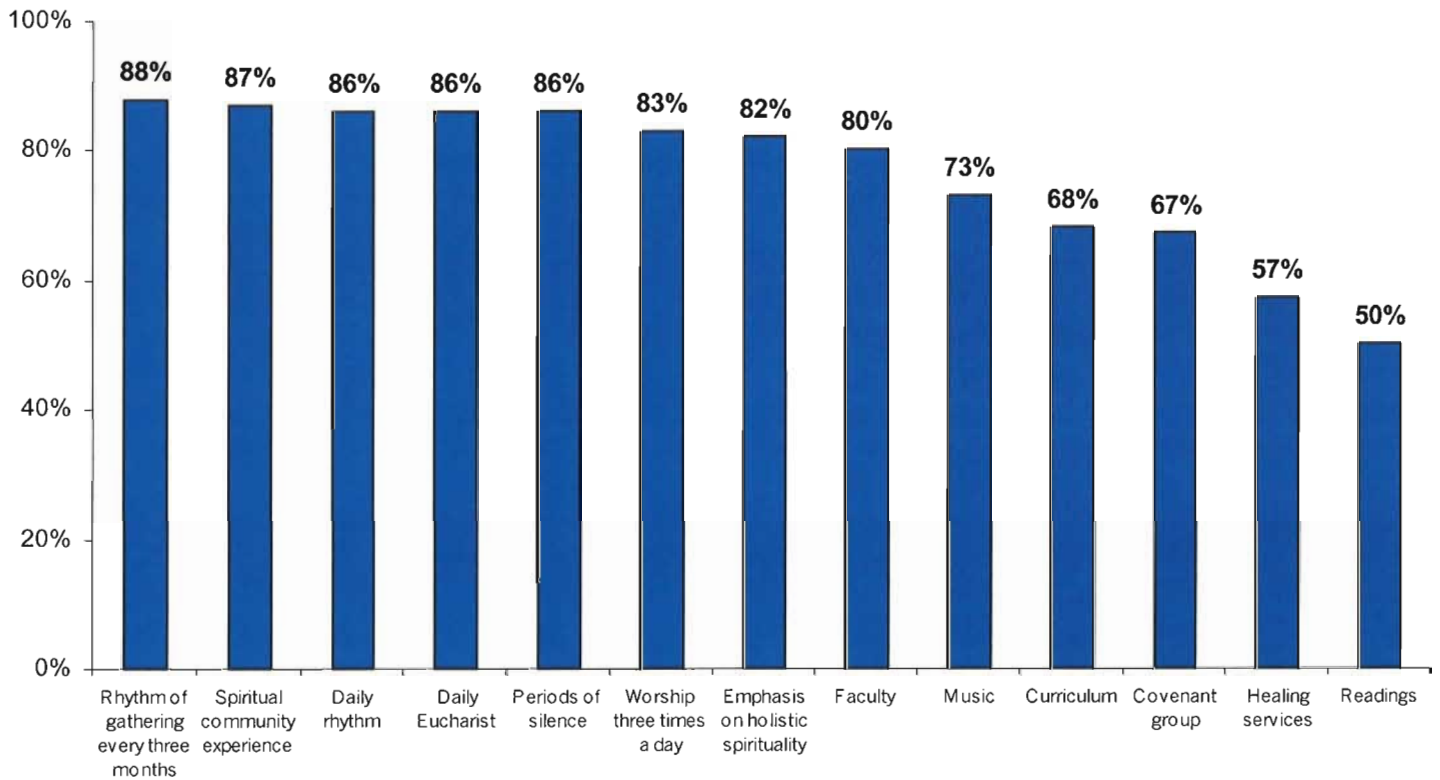
The positive comments that pastors made about the music and the covenant groups include the following:

“[The music] was one of the most important things and it’s amazing how years later the music comes right back to you, especially the morning music.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

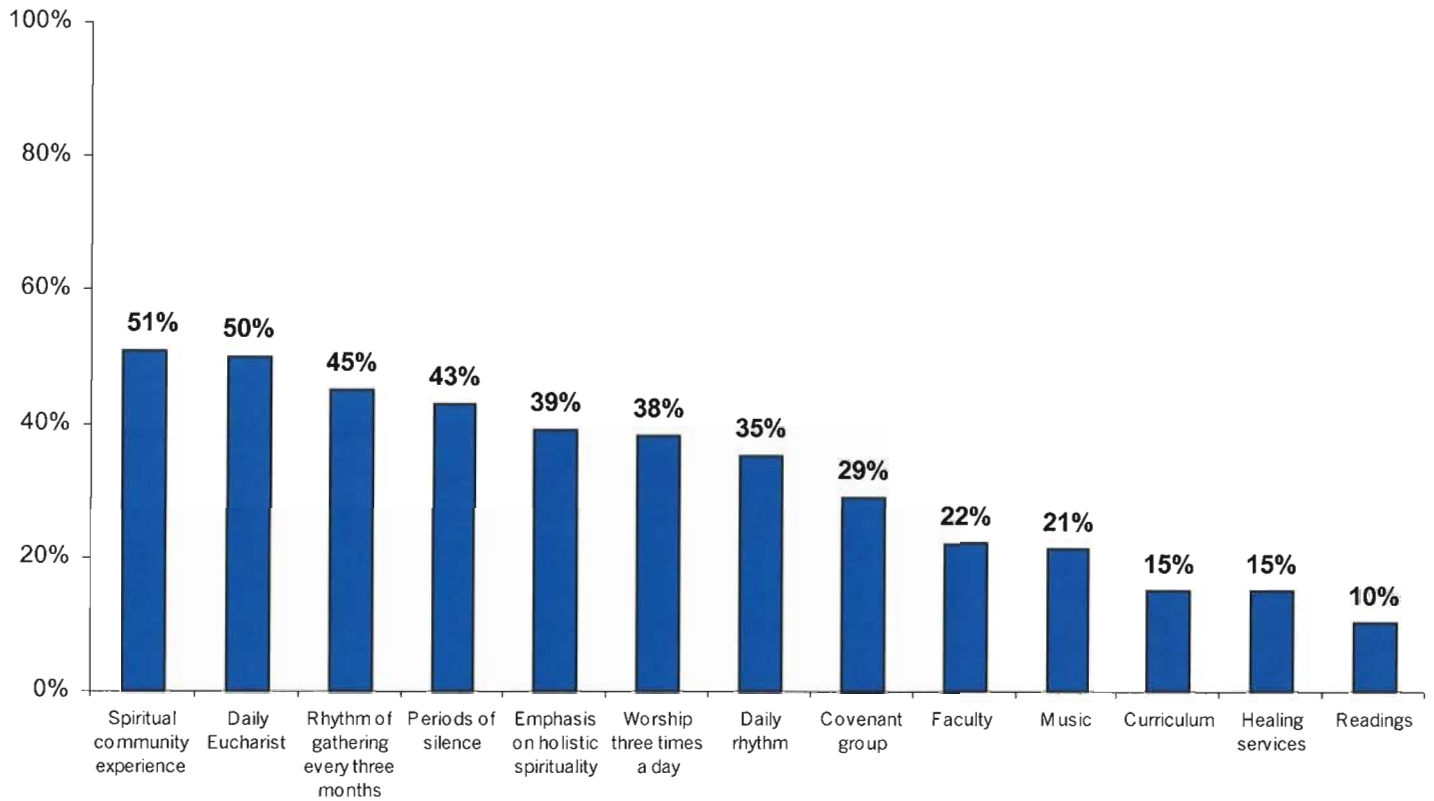
“There are two things about worship [that were very important to me]. One was the music. And we used the ‘Faith We Sing’ a lot, the supplement.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“[Our covenant group] became so close. We even had another gathering...after [the Academy] was over...And I still keep in touch with all of those people. So, I just have such fond memories and just love those people so much.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

**Table 2: Extremely Important Academy Aspects**  
(Rated 8, 9 or 10 on a 1-10 Scale)



**Table 3: Extremely Important Academy Aspects**  
(Rated 10 on a 1-10 Scale)

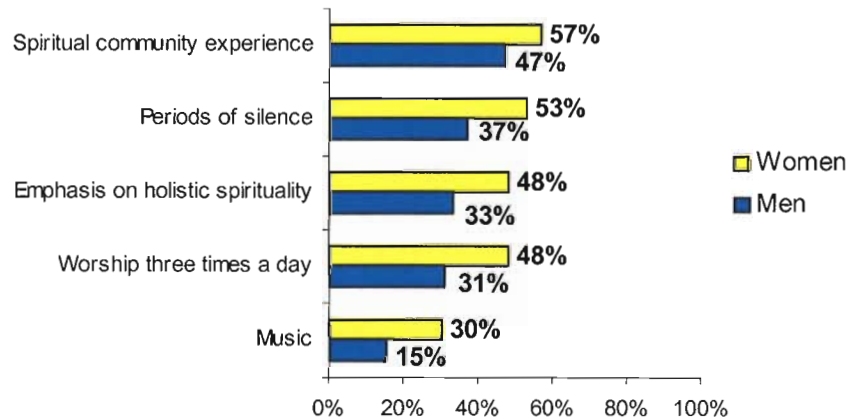




**There were some noteworthy demographic differences on the question of which aspects of the Academy were important, especially between men and women.**

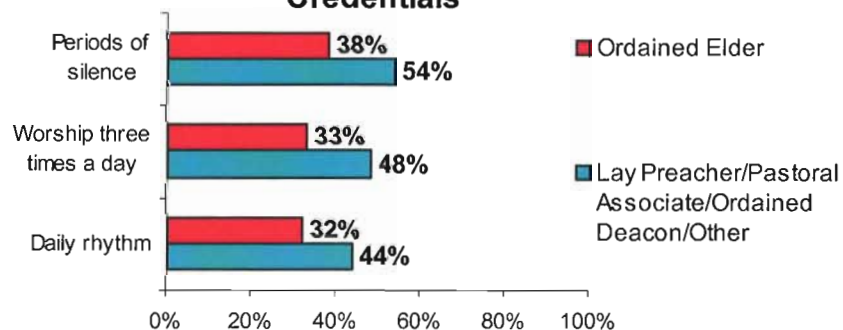
Women were more likely than men to say the following aspects were extremely important: the spiritual community experience; periods of silence; emphasis on holistic spirituality; worship three times a day; and the music. (See Table 4.)

**Table 4: Extremely Important Academy Aspects:  
Men vs. Women**



Ordained Elders were less likely than other pastors to say that periods of silence, worship three times a day, and the daily rhythm were extremely important to them. (See Table 5.)

**Table 5: Extremely Important Academy Aspects:  
Credentials**



**The pastors were asked how helpful the various Academy courses had been to them. While most did not remember the courses in great detail, the consensus was that the courses had been very helpful.**

While most of the pastors interviewed in the focus groups and by telephone did not remember a great deal about any particular course, they comfortably talked about the importance or helpfulness of the courses as a whole.

“It’s hard to name just one thing that was important to me. But one thing would be the lectures, the 16 lecture periods. Those gave me a lot of tools, not only for use in my personal life, but for use in my ministry.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“The lectures...made [the entire Academy experience] accessible to me. That was a safe place. If there hadn’t been the lectures and...how good they were...just that piece [was vitally important to me].” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“I loved the courses. I mean, every one. I went to them with eagerness and still reflect on some of them...[The courses] forced me to read and make time to read things I would have never read. Ever. And I’m so grateful for that.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“The courses were extremely valuable to me. They were almost better than seminary.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

**As many as 70 percent said the course on Spiritual Disciplines was very helpful while 69 percent felt that way about The Place of Scripture in Spiritual Formation. (See Table 6.)**

While the courses on Spiritual Discipline and The Place of Scripture in Spiritual Formation were most often cited as being very helpful, majorities also said the following courses were very helpful to them: Discernment and Ways of Prayer (60 percent); Spirituality in the Psalms (52 percent); and Orthodox Spirituality (51 percent). Near majorities called these courses very helpful: The History of Christian Spirituality (48 percent); Liturgy and Spirituality (47 percent); and Spirituality in the New Testament (45 percent). (See Table 6.)

Some pastors did volunteer comments about particular courses.

“[Michael Cartwright’s] lectures on the different aspects of different Protestants have been very helpful. I’ve used his tapes as short-term courses in the church. And in finding that we’ve got so many people from so many different backgrounds, it really engages in a lot of discussion to talk about what it means to be Anglican or Lutheran [or another denomination].” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“When I sat through those lectures on spirituality and depth psychology I went, ‘what [on earth are they talking about?].’ But two years later it clicked...that stuff kicked in.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

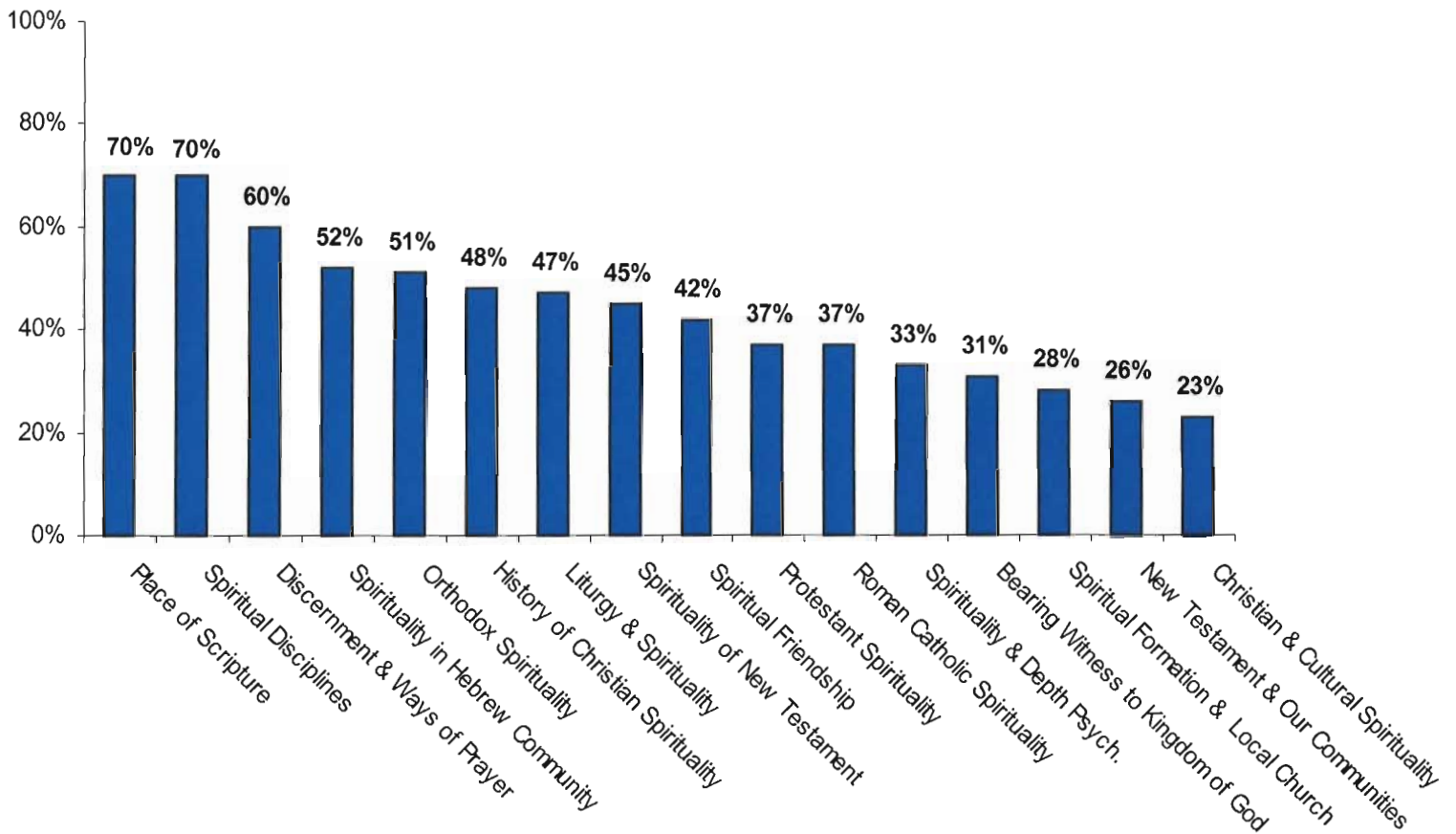
A number of pastors described why the course, “Spiritual Formation and the Local Church,” was very helpful to them.

“The course on Spiritual Formation [and the Local Church] was especially helpful. We prepared a plan to use in our local churches and it [helped us]...actually formulate a plan about what you would do to make a difference.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

But while the course on Spiritual Formation and the Local Church was very highly rated, a majority of the pastors, 52 percent, also said it needs to be strengthened. (See Table 27.)

“The Academy does not have a good handle on [Spiritual Formation and the Local Church]. I’m always doing more than the presenters. It’s hard to find ordinary people that can model the kinds of things we’re doing. It hasn’t been a good resource even though it should be.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

**Table 6: Percentage Saying Course Was Very Helpful**

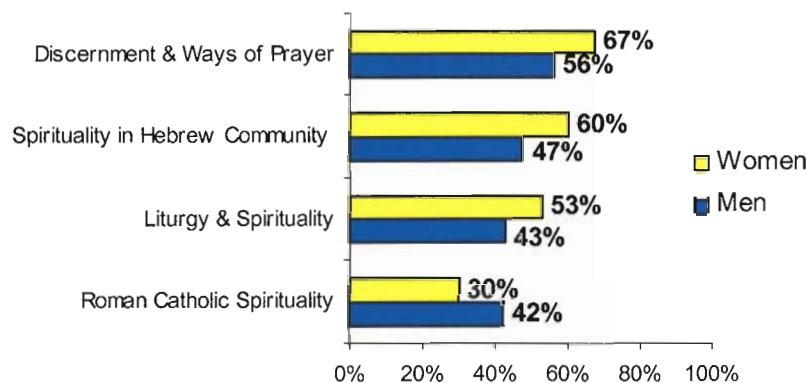


**There were some interesting demographic differences between the views of men and women about which courses were very helpful. (See Table 7.)**

Women were more likely than men to say that these courses were very helpful: Discernment and Ways of Prayer; Spirituality in the Hebrew Community; and Liturgy and Spirituality. Men, however, were more likely to say that the Roman Catholic Spirituality course was very helpful. (See Table 7.)

**Table 7: Very Helpful Upper Room**

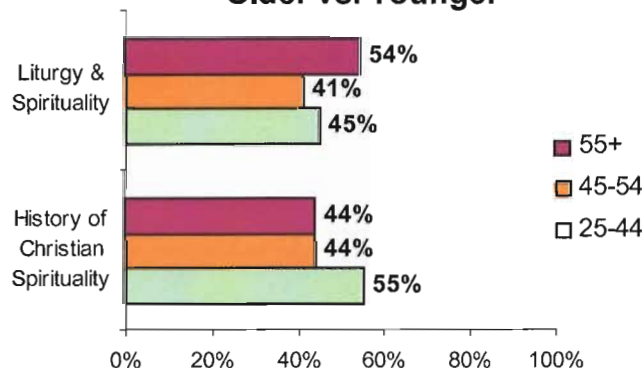
**Courses:  
Men vs. Women**



Pastors over age 55 were somewhat more likely to say that the Liturgy and Spirituality course was very helpful, while younger pastors were somewhat more likely to say that the course on the History of Christian Spirituality was very helpful. (See Table 8.)

**Table 8: Very Helpful Upper Room**

**Courses:  
Older vs. Younger**



## *Part II: After the Academy*

**The pastors were asked whether being at the Academy led to any changes in their attitudes or behavior. Nearly four in five, 79 percent, said the Academy deepened their hunger for God. (See Table 9.)**

A number of pastors described how the Academy deepened, helped them nurture, or find language to articulate their own hunger for God.

“[At the Academy] I found a language to help me with [my] hunger [for God] and to nurture the hunger that was there. That’s what the Academy did...and is still doing [for me].” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“[The Academy] was a place where [I found]...a way to give voice...to not only my hunger [for God] but to have a way to express [it] in some kind of ritual that was like a metaphor for what I was feeling inside.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

Several pastors described how the Academy deepened their own personal approach to spirituality.

“I grew because of the Academy experience. It enhanced, expanded, and deepened my spirituality, but without fundamentally changing who I am.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“[The Academy taught me] that there didn’t have to be one box...[about] how you do spiritual direction. I...allowed myself to feel comfortable in using and...being able to use...my own experience of being in nature and knowing that that was okay because it had always been part of Christian tradition.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“The Academy...certainly developed in me a sense of assurance and confidence in the spiritual practices and spiritual formation.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**Nearly three out of four said the Academy helped them increase their compassion for themselves. (See Table 9.)**

In the background interviews, one pastor said that members of the clergy are always “on” and that even when they go to a party or another social event, lay people see them in their role as pastors and therefore feel free to take up spiritual or personal matters. Sometimes,

he added, pastors share this sentiment and feel an obligation to be “on,” which amounts to extraordinary or even unrealistically high expectations.

In a telephone interview, another pastor said it is hard for members of the clergy to take an afternoon off, kick off their shoes, and just watch a football game. He added that members of most congregations do not expect their pastors to take a lot of time off. And even if a congregation does allow some leeway, what can be even weightier is a pastor’s own feeling that he or she should be doing something useful and that it is inappropriate to take too much personal time and just relax. The result, he said, is that pastors simply burn out after 10 or 20 years.

Another said that no one is harder on themselves than pastors, that pastors own expectations for themselves are often unrealistically high, and that pastors must learn to be easier on themselves. This was, he said, a lesson that was reinforced for him at the Academy.

**As many as 71 percent said the Academy shaped their practice of pastoral ministry. (See Table 9.)**

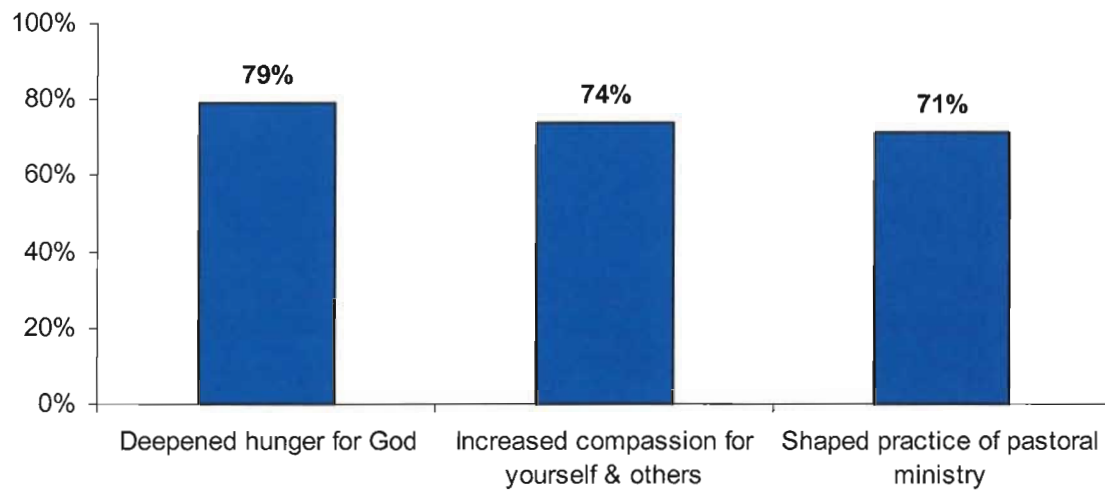
A number of pastors detailed how their Academy experience changed their entire practice of ministry.

“[The Academy] was a turning point [for me]... [I set] different priorities afterwards. [After the Academy, I saw] myself more as a spiritual person, and my...life [as being] about spiritual formation and not just for myself but also for [others].” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“[The Academy] changed my whole way [of preaching]. I think this is true for a lot of preachers. I [used to] preach a lot about repentance and forgiveness. And now my focus is not so much on repentance but on preaching about love and deepening your relationship with God.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

A further discussion about how the Academy influenced the pastors’ identity and pastoral ministry follows in Part IV. The Practice of Ministry.

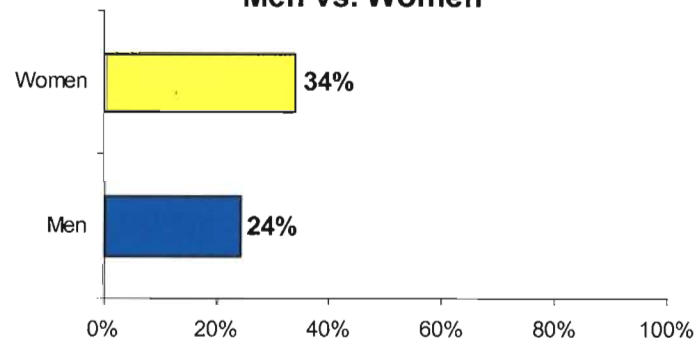
**Table 9: Highest Rated Personal Changes Made After the Academy**  
(Rated 8, 9, 10 on 1-10 Scale)



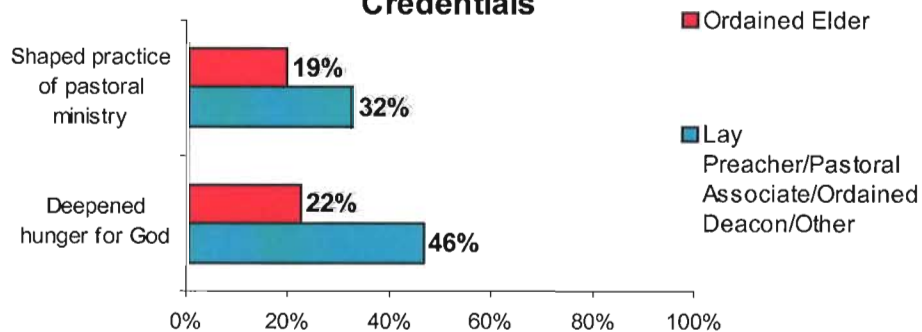


**Women were more likely than men to say that the Academy experience deepened their hunger for God. At the same time, Ordained Elders were less likely than other pastors to say that the Academy shaped their practice of pastoral ministry and deepened their hunger for God. (See Tables 10 & 11.)**

**Table 10: Academy Deepened My  
Hunger for God:  
Men vs. Women**



**Table 11: Personal Changes Made After the  
Academy:  
Credentials**



**The pastors were asked to detail any behavioral changes they made as a result of their Academy experience. More than 80 percent reported making three changes: taking more time for prayer, reflection, and meditation; reading scripture more meditatively; and more readily seeking spiritual friendships and the counsel of others. Three in four also said they now go on retreats on a regular or occasional basis. (See Table 12.)**

A total of 83 percent said that as a result of the Academy, they now take more time for prayer, reflection, and meditation. (See Table 12.)

“I found that taking time to take prayer yourself made you far more effective as a pastor. And that was the great learning I got from the Academy – that [I need to] take time for myself, holistically, spiritually and physically.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“I’m very grateful for the Academy...And I can now spend 30 minutes every day in quiet meditation. And be revived.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

Eighty-three percent also reported reading scripture more meditatively (*lectio divina*) and integrating periods of silence into their daily routine. (See Table 12.)

“I never used to read scripture except with the mind of how to write a sermon. [Every prayer] was for the needs of the church. Those were good things, but I just woke up one day and said, I’m a *technician*...[But] I didn’t have language to say that...There was no language, no place [for me] to turn...[The Academy] gave me some language [and] the ability to continue [my] journey and to talk to some other folks and to break out of tradition.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“Now [silence] has become almost indispensable in my house and I’m wondering how in the world I had managed [before].” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“[Silence] is the one discipline that I do more than anything. I just sit in silence for hours at a time now.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

A total of 81 percent said they more readily seek spiritual friendship and the counsel of others while 74 percent report going on retreats on a regular or occasional basis. (See Table 12.)

“[After the Academy] a lot of my efforts [went into]...some spiritual formation things and doing retreats for people.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“There comes a sense of community and when you get through [the Academy, you find yourself asking], where do you go? I mean there’s no way to find that kind of community in any other setting. And that’s why we started this group [I mentioned a moment ago] that meets because it was a group of people longing for some way to continue community.” *Man, Birmingham AL focus group.*

**Sizable numbers reported making other changes as a result of the Academy, including seeing a spiritual director (52 percent), receiving and celebrating Holy Communion more often (45 percent), journaling regularly (43 percent), improving diet (42 percent), and exercising more (41 percent). (See Table 12.)**

Some pastors talked about seeing a spiritual director and about their own focus on the Eucharist.

“I engaged with a spiritual director for two years after the Academy.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“The Eucharist was a powerful element for me. And so now, in my last two churches since the Academy, we have the Eucharist every week.” *Woman, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“[The Academy] changed patterns of...worship [for my congregation such as] the value of the Eucharist.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

“I’ve done the focus on the Eucharist [in my church]...The Academy certainly values that. And I value it.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

Large numbers said they now journal regularly.

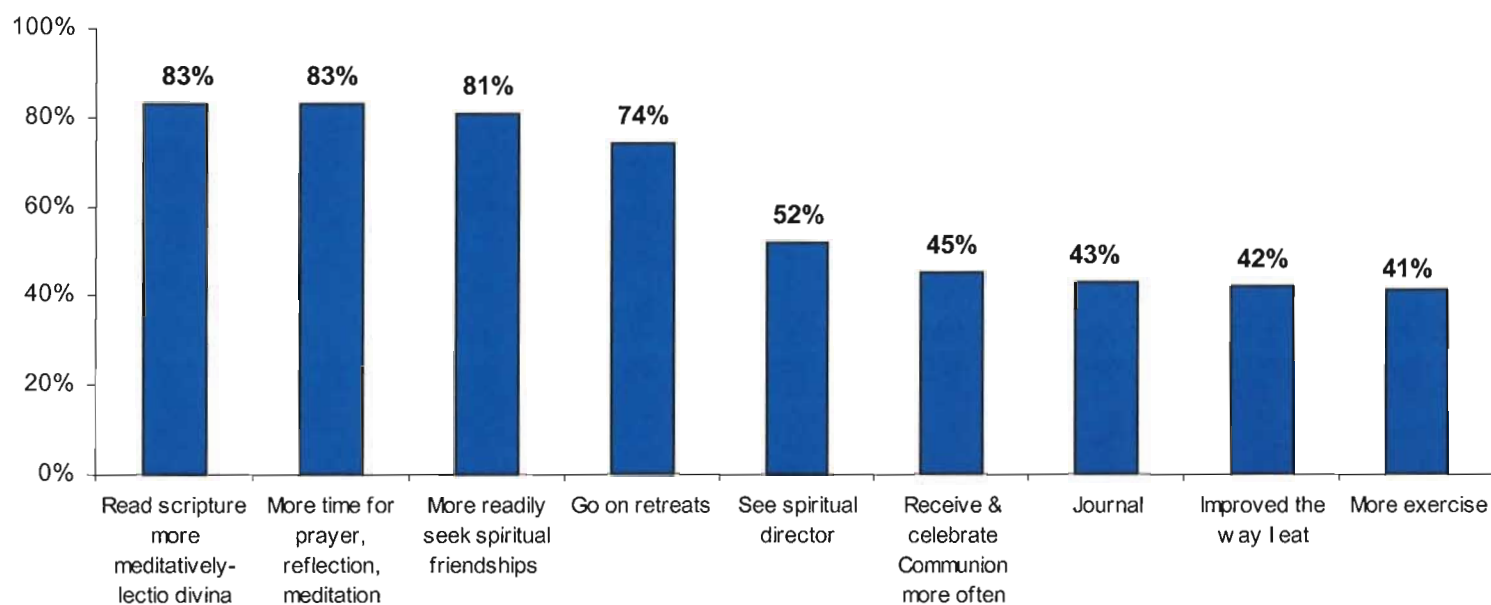
“[The Academy] changed some of my patterns of understanding prayer and of giving attention to journaling.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

More than four in ten said they continue to diet and exercise.

“The diet and exercise component, that stayed with me. I valued this component [because] they were really caring about me as a whole person. The need for regular physical exercise continued [after the Academy] as did the need to be careful about my diet.” *Man, telephone interview.*

“My exercise [is something] that I keep going all the time. I walk five miles three times a week. I have a treadmill at my house. And a bicycle...the Academy helped me get in the habit of doing it so I carried it on since then.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

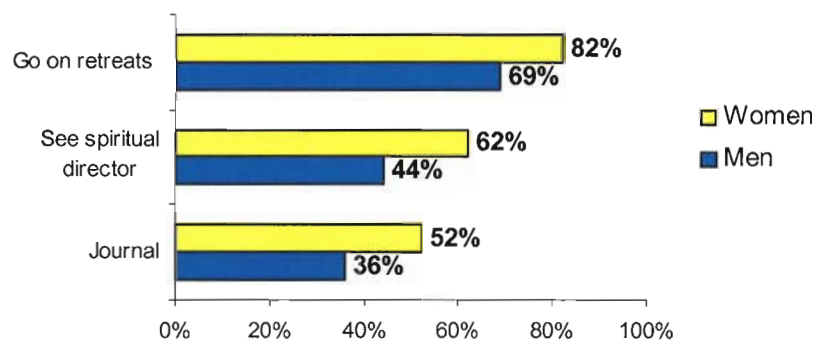
**Table 12: Behavioral Changes Made as a Result of the Academy**



**There are a number of noteworthy demographic differences in terms of the changes pastors made in their lives because of the Academy. (See Tables 13 & 14.)**

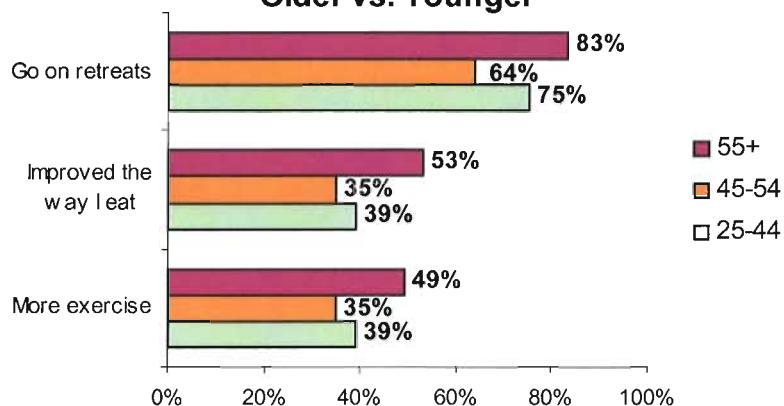
As a result of their Academy experience, women were more likely than men to say they go on retreats, see a spiritual director, and journal regularly. (See Table 13.)

**Table 13: Behavioral Changes Made as a  
Result of the Academy:  
Men vs. Women**



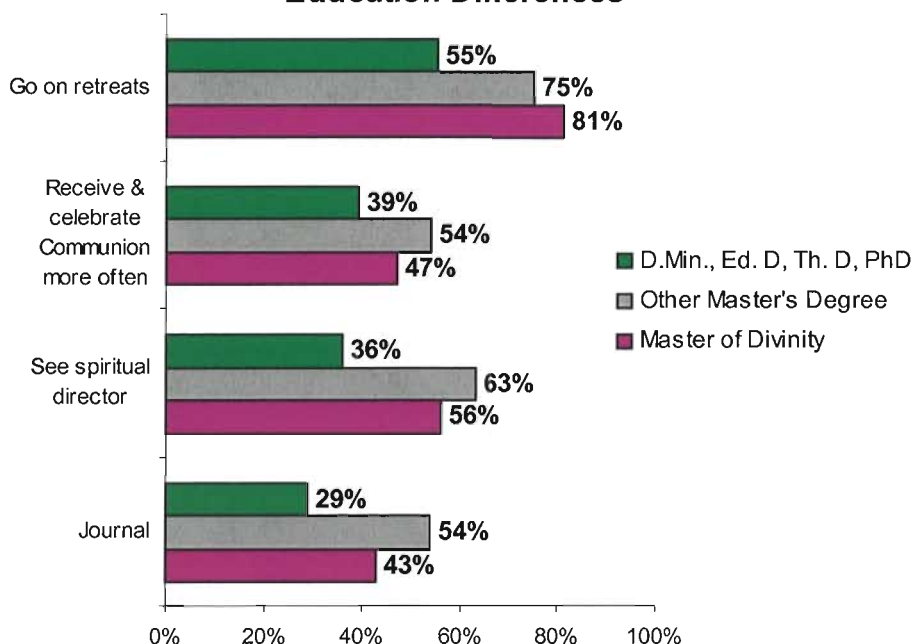
Older pastors were more likely than younger ones to say they go on retreats, improve their eating habits, and exercise more frequently. Middle-aged pastors between 45 and 54 were least likely of all the age groups to make those same behavioral changes. (See Table 14.)

**Table 14: Behavioral Changes Made as a Result of the Academy:  
Older vs. Younger**



Compared to pastors without a PhD, those with a Doctor of Ministry, Ed. D, Th. D, or PhD were less likely to say they go on retreats, receive and celebrate Communion more often, see a spiritual director, and journal. (See Table 15.)

**Table 15: Behavioral Changes Made as a Result of the Academy:  
Education Differences**



**Huge numbers attributed an array of attitudinal changes to their experience at the Academy. About nine in ten said they now have a deeper, richer understanding of themselves, more awareness of different people's spiritual journeys, and a much deeper appreciation for Christian spirituality. (See Table 16.)**

As many as nine out of ten pastors said that because of the Academy, they now have a deeper, richer understanding of themselves. (See Table 16.)

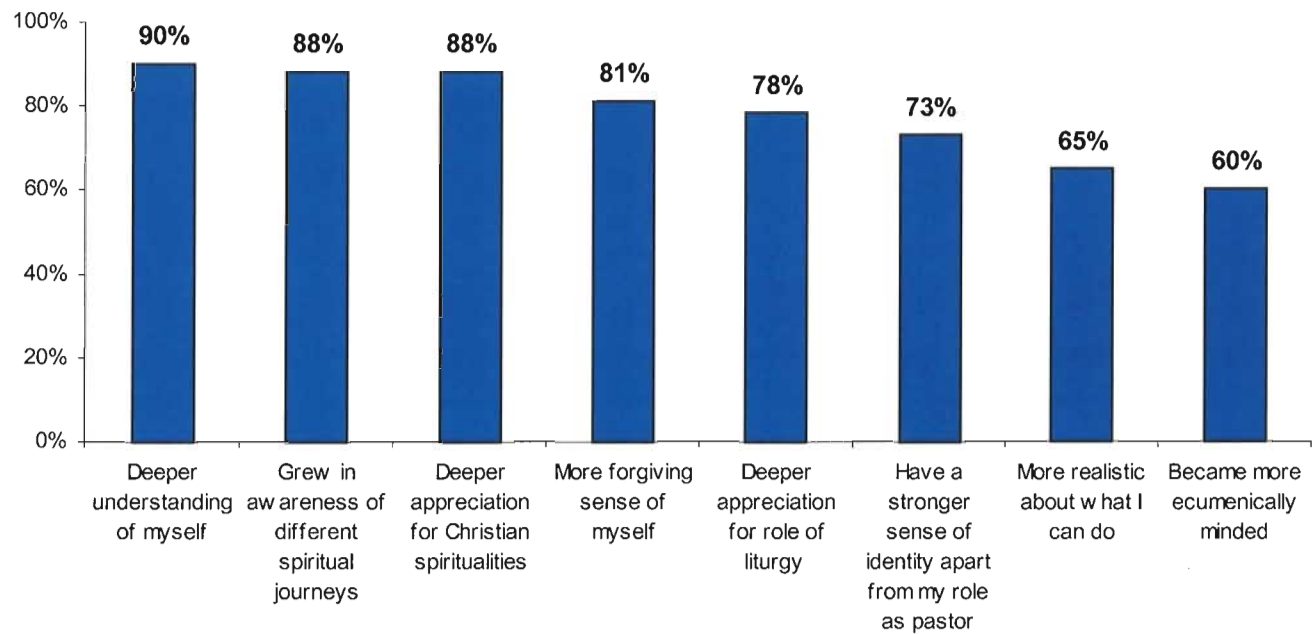
“A key part for me is that [the Academy] has continued to form my own journey as a person of God in whatever expressive ministry I'm in. It has... [given me] a more holistic sense of who I am and the effects of doing ministry on me as a person in a role, and as a person, and as a person of God.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

Eighty-eight percent said they now have more awareness of different people's spiritual journey as well as gained a much deeper appreciation for Christian spirituality/spiritualities.

“The Academy has changed some of my patterns of understanding prayer...journaling and spiritual direction.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

About eight in ten also said that as a result of the Academy, they have a more forgiving, tolerant view of themselves (81 percent), and a deeper appreciation of liturgy in worship and spiritual formation (78 percent). Large majorities also said they have a stronger sense of identity apart from their own role of pastor (73 percent), a more realistic sense of what they can and cannot do (65 percent), and have become more ecumenically minded. (See Table 16.)

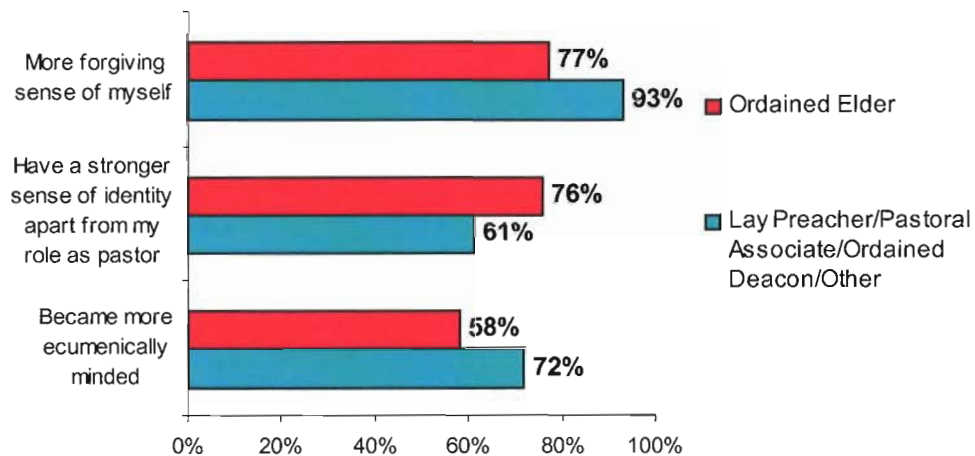
**Table 16: Attitudinal Changes Made as a Result of the Academy**





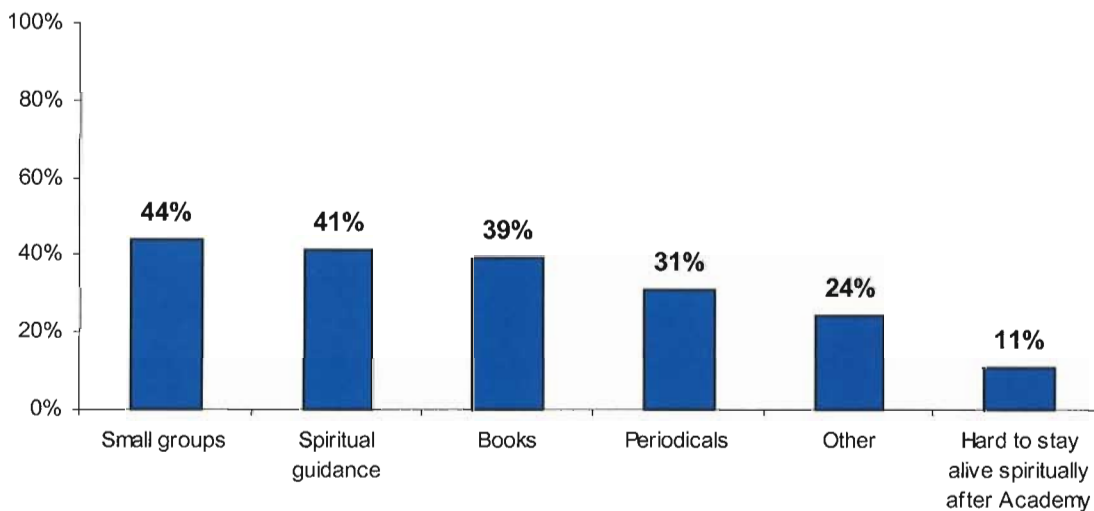
**There was only one noteworthy demographic difference when it came to attitudinal changes caused by the Academy. Ordained Elders were less likely to have a more forgiving sense of themselves and less likely to become more ecumenically minded. They were, however, more likely than other pastors to have a stronger sense of identity apart from their role as pastors. (See Table 17.)**

**Table 17: Attitudinal Changes Made as a Result  
of the Academy:  
Credentials**



**The pastors were asked what kept them alive spiritually after they completed the Academy. A total of 44 percent said small groups while 41 percent said spiritual guidance. Somewhat smaller percentages named books (39 percent) and periodicals (31 percent). (See Table 18.)**

**Table 18: I Was Kept Alive Spiritually After Academy by:**



### *Part III: Suggestions for Change*

**When the pastors were asked what if anything should be changed about the Academy, they most frequently mentioned doing something to reduce the costs, cited by 40 percent. (See Table 19.)**

A number of the pastors found it discouraging that the cost of the Academy makes it difficult or even impossible for some to attend.

“This [Academy] kind of model will always be at risk of becoming the territory of an elite, financially and otherwise...[In our two Academies] cost was a big barrier.”  
*Woman, Gallant AL focus group.*

“The only thing [I’d like to see changed] is cost, especially if you are still struggling to pay back loans. The cost [of the Academy] is very prohibitive.”  
*Woman, telephone interview.*

“One of the fundamental issues that has to be addressed of the Academies is the cost. All along it’s been prohibitive and I think it’s getting even worse.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

When asked what might be done about the costs, a woman in Gallant said, “I’d like to see us encourage more and more that people make the effort to obtain funding from the community of faith.”

**A sizable minority, 31 percent, wanted more emphasis on helping Academy graduates apply what they learned. Nearly as many called for greater diversity. (See Table 19.)**

When asked what might be changed, 30 percent said they wanted to do more to help pastors apply what they learned in the Academy to their local congregation or ministry setting. A woman in a telephone interview said the Academy should invite churches that are “doing beautiful things” to share what they are doing. Such a presentation, she said, would give pastors new ideas about how to apply what they are learning.

Just over one in four called for greater ethnic and racial diversity.

“The world is becoming more and more racially and ethnically diverse. And our Academies might not be reflecting on how the world is becoming. In order to really celebrate the wholeness of our spiritual journey, I think ethnic people must have some place to contribute to enrich that journey.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

“I have this ongoing beef with the Upper Room. They’ve got to be the only division of the board of discipleship that does not administer to African Americans as a group of people. They get an “F” on that.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

“I am always mindful of the fact that when I come down here I’ll probably be the only person of color. For most of those Academies that has been the case...But I am convinced that there are ways that the Academy can be opened and be a possibility, not only for our African-American pastors, but for Hispanics and Korean pastors as well. And I’m not certain that the Upper Room is working as hard to speak to that constituency of the church.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

About one in five mentioned teaching more about non-Christian and especially eastern traditions. In a telephone interview, a man suggested that the Academy bring in a Buddhist or a Rabbi to teach meditation in their own tradition.

The same number, 19 percent, also mentioned the following: encouraging pastors to find a spiritual director during the Academy; reducing the number of sessions from eight to six; and implementing a more holistic approach, especially in terms of the body.

“I would like [the Academy] to have some people...who can do spiritual direction. Maybe it would be somebody associated with Mercy Center rather than part of the leadership team that can help you walk through those experiences and still have some kind of distance.” *Woman, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“The Academy should more thoroughly integrate holistic spirituality for more understanding of how spiritual disciplines can impact the body.” *Man, telephone interview.*

“[The nutrition/physical therapy program was] too much on the edges...It’s trying to be crammed into this thing around dinnertime instead of part of the personal time. I want it to be part of my personal time.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

Seventeen percent wanted more focus on the post-Academy transition. A number of pastors said that after the Academy ended, they did not know how to integrate what they had learned back into their real-life role in their congregation and community.

“After the Academy, I was at sea [about what to do with what I’d learned].” *Man, telephone interview.*

“I didn’t have a clue about how to integrate [the Academy experience] in the church.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“When you get through [the Academy, you feel a sense of], ‘now where do you go?’ I mean, there’s no way to find that kind of community in any other setting.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

One pastor talked about conceptualizing the issue of integration.

“All of us at this table probably fashion ourselves as spiritual leaders...So the issue [now becomes how do] you continue to walk the path of your formation in Christ and at the same time make sure that that gets integrated into how you lead?” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

A total of 15 percent called for greater denominational diversity. Implying that he would welcome greater diversity in terms of who attended the Academy, one pastor said:

“I felt that the emphasis, especially on the Protestant and Evangelical Protestant traditions, was quite weak... I didn’t gain anything out of the Academy in terms of [learning about] that tradition and how that impacts me.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“I’d like to see the Academy open the door to people from other religious backgrounds.” *Man, telephone interview.*

Several suggested that the Academy provide more free or unstructured time.

“I wanted more free time to spend privately.” *Man, telephone interview.*

“Sometimes there’s not enough unstructured time.” *Man, telephone interview.*

Two pastors found fault with some faculty members.

“Some faculty members were wonderful but others were extremely weak and not really qualified to be presenters or teachers.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“[The Academy does not] have a broad enough perspective in terms of who can [be effective faculty members]. They tend to use the same people over and over again.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

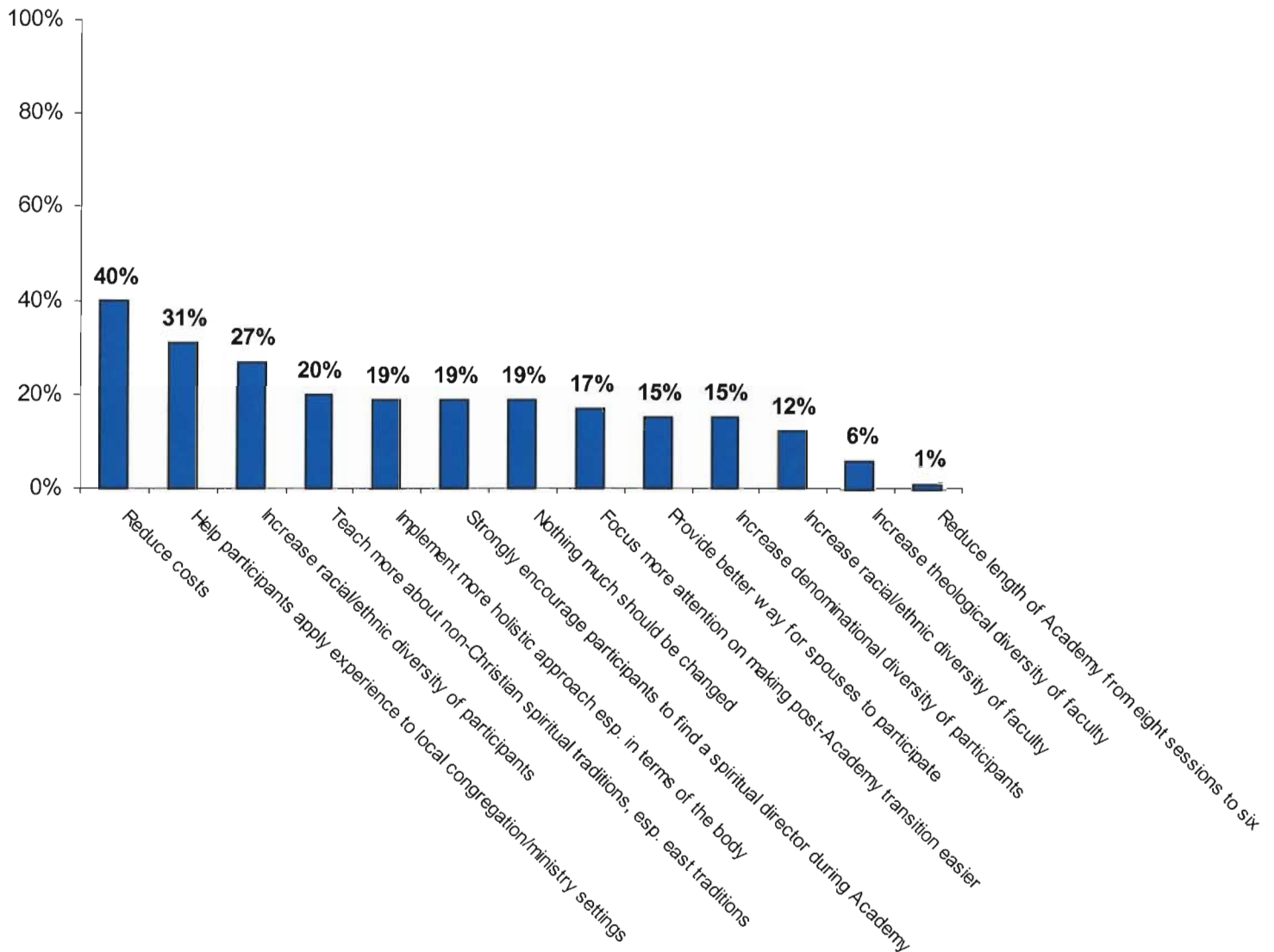
One pastor focused on leadership of the covenant groups.

“There wasn’t that much introduction to the covenant leadership process. That’s an area, where I think some improvement could occur.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

Another said the Academy focuses too much on introverts.

“One place I would fault the Academy [is that] it’s geared towards introverts. Introverts draw energy from being alone while [we] extroverts draw strength from being outside all of the models. Silent prayer time drives extroverts crazy. [The Academy] is geared towards introverts, [but] spirituality embraces more than one style or rhythm.” *Man, telephone interview.*

**Table 19: Suggestions for Change at the Academy**



## *Part IV. The Practice of Ministry*

**When the pastors were asked how the Academy experience changed their pastoral ministry or personal identity, 81 percent said they now focus more on their role as a spiritual guide to their congregation. (See Table 20.)**

A number of the pastors described how their Academy experience changed their perspective on their role.

“My personal experience as shepherd was transformed through the experience at the Academy. Not so much in a formal sense but as a companion on the spiritual journey of the congregation.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“Before the Academy, I saw ministry in...a functional way. It was...sermons...worship, putting worship services together. [Now] I view it more as a *relational* experience or profession. It’s more about the relationships between people and between you and other people working with their relationship with God.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

In a telephone interview, a man said that in his preaching, he tries to make his congregation more aware of what God is doing.

A few pastors talked about how they now set limits on what they can and cannot do.

“Two things [changed in]...the way I did ministry...I no longer saw worship as primarily an evangelistic piece...of trying to get people to respond to an altar call. And I quit trying to see myself as just another one of the guys in the community.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“[The Academy] helped me better understand...my role as spiritual guide...not only in terms of leading and planning worship, but more importantly in the counseling session. I understood [for] the first [time] that I don’t have the time or skills to do in-depth counseling with all of the people who come into my office. But I do have time to lay out spiritual frameworks, spiritual foundations out of which their situations might arise.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*



**Large numbers said the Academy influenced their pastoral ministry or personal identity in other ways. As many as 71 percent see the need to offer healing ministries, 65 percent take more risks with their congregation in worship leadership, and 64 percent said they are more open and vulnerable in their preaching. (See Table 20.)**

A number of pastors described how the Academy helped them more clearly define their own role within the church. Rather than take on every task, they said they now focus on what is essential.

“I was on call to run the church before I came to the Academy...the kind of mechanics of what goes on in keeping buildings going and that sort of stuff. That’s not what I was called [by God] to do. But I didn’t have great clarity on what I was supposed to do. And the Academy became an opportunity for me to work that out.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“The Academy helped...change the image of me having to always be there working hard and guiding everything and having my hands on everything. It helped me to see that I didn’t have to do that, [that I didn’t have to be] the most important person there.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

One pastor said the Academy provided a holistic model for her work.

“One effect of the Academy on my ministry is that [I now see that]...all of the pieces...put together form a whole. So, it’s not just the content of the presentation. It’s the hospitality; it’s the manner of other people together, the rhythm of the day...The Academy...modeled [what to do. And so now], when I bring in a speaker [for example, I realize that] it’s not just about...a speaker. It’s about where the food is, the child care, the directions to the place, let’s be sure that worship is involved, where’s the silence.” *Woman, Columbus OH focus group.*

**About six in ten said the Academy led them to incorporate silence into worship and add more time for spiritual formation in meetings. (See Table 20.)**

A number of the pastors reported having integrated silence into their services.

“My role in terms of pastor evolved from the Academy...One of the things I brought to the congregations I served since then is [integrating] silence in the worship service, which had been unknown to every one of these [people].” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

“I told people [in my congregation] that they could keep praying silently...that the silence is more important. I haven’t heard complaints on that.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“[After the Academy], I found that I covet silence, not only in my personal devotional time, but I covet silence in worship [services] too.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

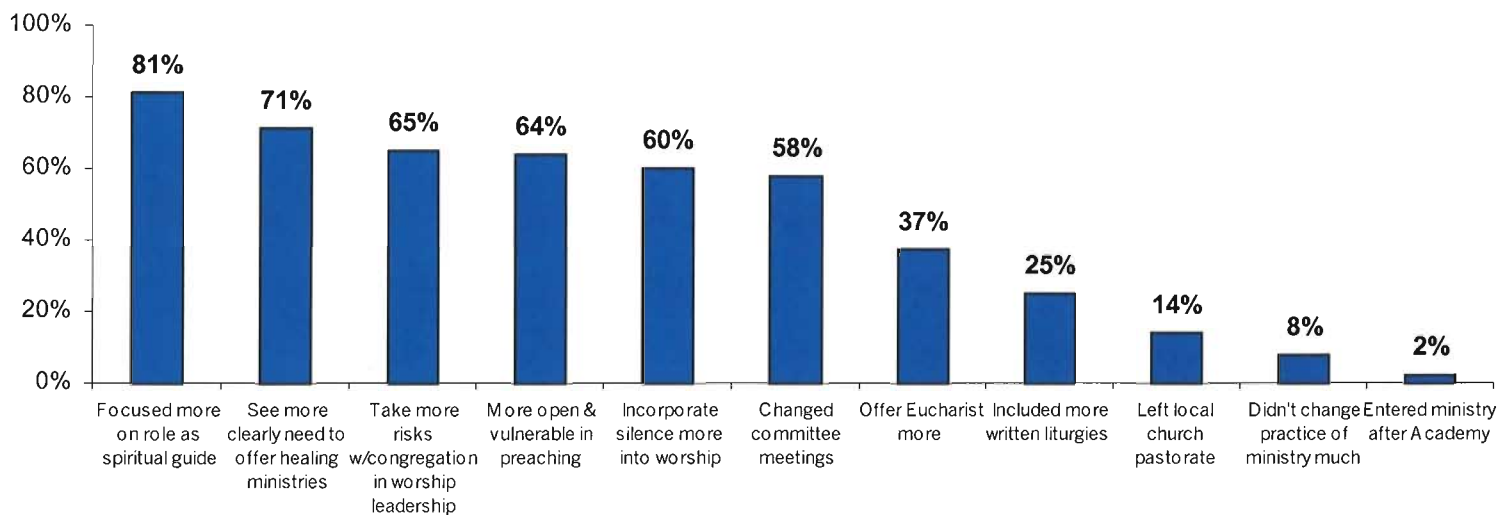
A number of pastors introduced spiritual formation in their own churches.

“[After leaving the Academy], I started spiritual formation groups in my church and found people had a yearning for them. They all meet once a week and follow a similar structure to the Academy. We use ‘A Guide to Prayer’ put out by the Upper Room and we follow and do that together. When we come back together, we share our insights.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“[As a result of my experience at the Academy], I now have a full time director of spiritual formation on the church staff.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

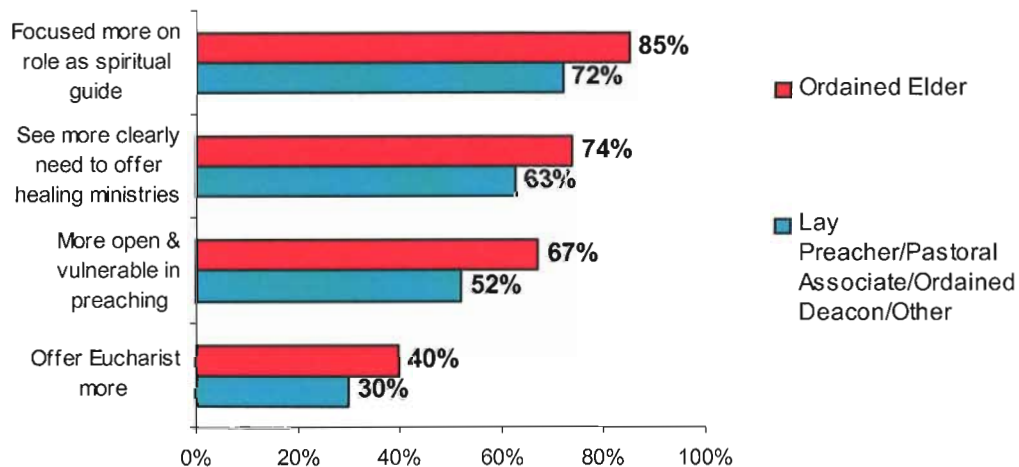
“[As] a retreat leader [or] perhaps most of all, working with youth, I feel a confidence in being able to introduce types of prayer and other spiritual practices.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**Table 20: Changes in Ministry Practice as a Result of Academy**



**There were only a few noteworthy demographic differences when it came to changes in the pastors' practice of ministry. As a results of the Academy, Ordained Elders were more likely than other pastors to focus more on their role as spiritual guides, more clearly see the need to offer healing ministries, be more open and vulnerable in their preaching, and to offer the Eucharist. (See Table 21.)**

**Table 21: Changes in Practice of Ministry as a Result of Academy: Credentials**



**A number of pastors said that as a result of their Academy experience they now offer the following new ministries: small groups (66 percent); retreats (55 percent); adult classes (51 percent); and healing services (47 percent). (See Table 22.)**

Below are examples of some of changes pastors reported making.

Retreats:

In a telephone interview, one pastor said that as a result of the Academy, he made changes in structure, started retreats, and implemented a quiet “mini-retreat” day at his church while another said in a telephone interview that a permanent change he made in his congregation was to lead retreats.

“I’ve done a lot of retreats for the local church people, prayer retreats. We have an ongoing prayer group that meets 7 o’clock every Wednesday morning. And those are the ways in which the Academy has really impacted my ministry.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

“When I start to plan a retreat, the model that comes to mind is the Academy, that’s absolutely true.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

Healing services:

“I started healing services in our church, which had never happened [before]. That was really scary for [the congregation]. Before the Academy, I had never been to a healing service and [I] found it so powerful.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

“One of the best things about the Academy was the healing and anointing with oil. It was very meaningful for me and the church and [this] was a change that I put in after the Academy experience.” *Man, telephone interview.*

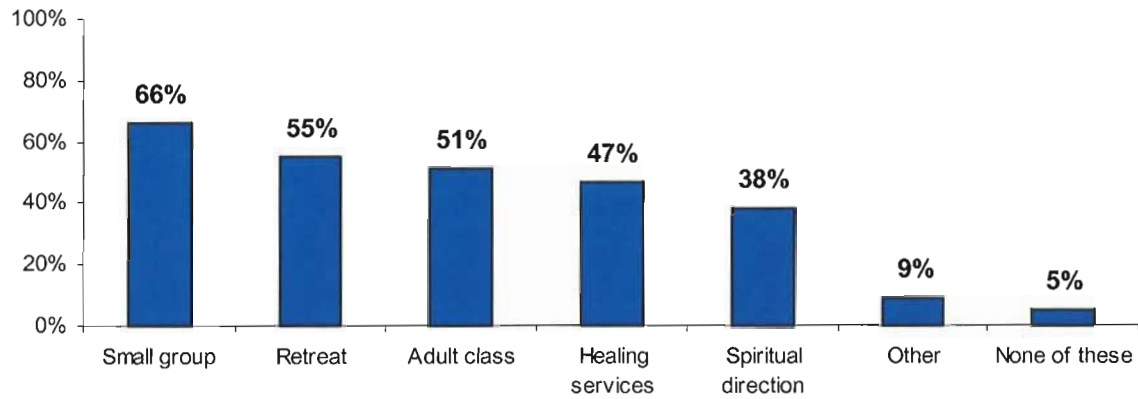
Programs for women:

“I started teaching a women’s spiritual journey group and we spent a lot of time in meditation. And women from the neighborhood came who did not come to church. That came [about as a result of my experience at] the Academy. I would never have thought about it [before].” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

“[We are] implementing a program...to address the need for women [who] are clergy serving in the parish in their first 8 to 10 years. And it’s very much impacted by my Academy experience.” *Woman, Gallant AL focus group.*

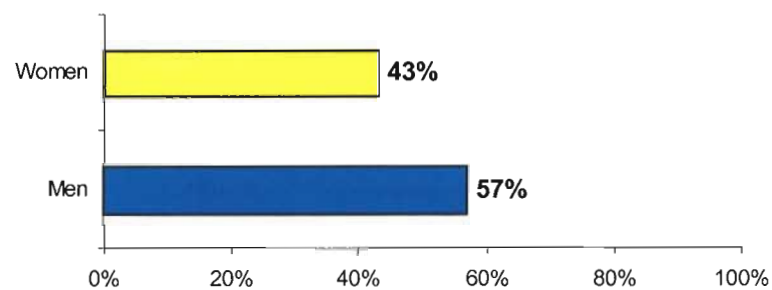
In a telephone interview, one pastor reported using the Academy modeling of a more balanced spirituality. He also instituted consensus decision-making, inclusive liturgy, and spiritual traditions.

**Table 22: Most Popular New Ministries Offered as a Result of the Academy**



**When it came to demographic differences, men were somewhat more likely than women to offer an adult class as a result of their Academy experience. (See Table 23.)**

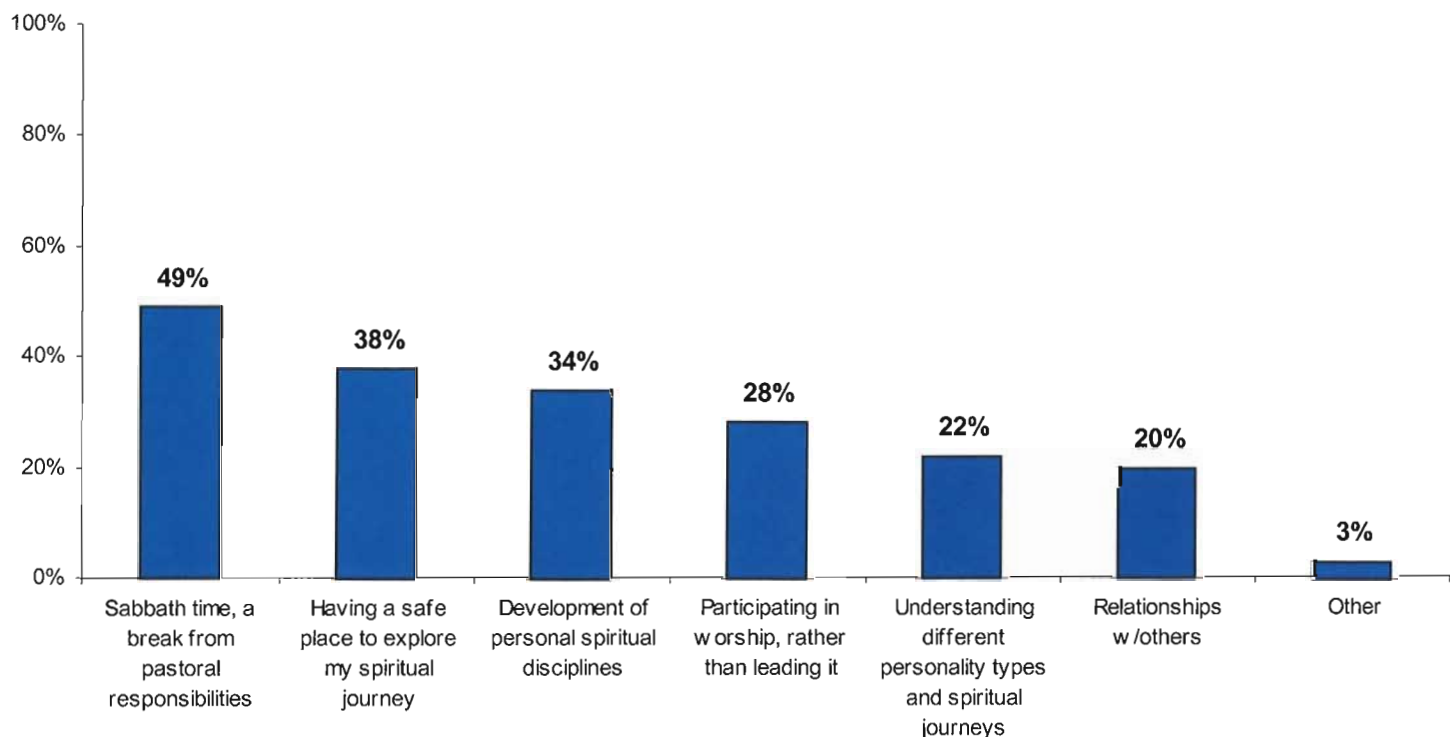
**Table 23: Offered an Adult Class as a Result  
of Academy:  
Men vs. Women**



**The pastors were asked what about their Academy experience did they find to be most helpful in their ministry. Sabbath time/having a break from pastoral responsibilities, named by 49 percent, was most frequently mentioned. (See Table 24.)**

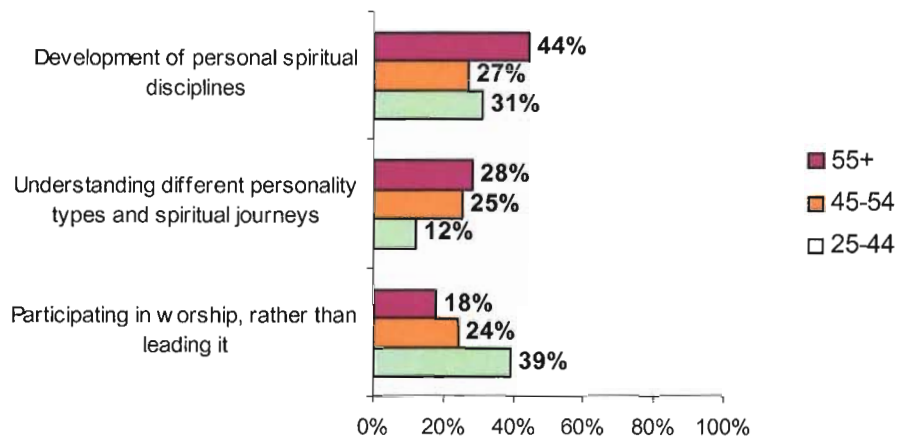
In addition to Sabbath time/having a break, large numbers also said having a safe place to explore my spiritual journey (38 percent) and participating in worship rather than leading it (28 percent) was most helpful. About one in five said understanding different personality types/different spiritual journeys, and relationships with others. (See Table 24.)

**Table 24: Aspects of Academy Experience Most Helpful in Pastoral Ministry**



The most noteworthy demographic differences in this area involved age. Older pastors were more likely than younger ones to say the development of personal spiritual disciplines and the understanding of different personality types were most helpful for pastoral ministry. Younger pastors on the other hand, were more likely to name the importance of participating in worship, rather than leading it as most helpful for pastoral ministry. (See Table 25.)

**Table 25: Aspects of Academy Most Helpful in  
Pastoral Ministry:  
Older vs. Younger**





**When they were asked what was not helpful in the Academy, one pastor in four mentioned the lack of support afterwards. (See Table 26.)**

A sizable minority wished they had had more support after the Academy, and some yearned for a spiritual director.

“The spiritual director piece has been an important piece and it was not easy for me. I’ve really, really struggled with it. I’ve looked [for a spiritual director] with a fair amount of follow up from the Academy, never found anyone.” *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

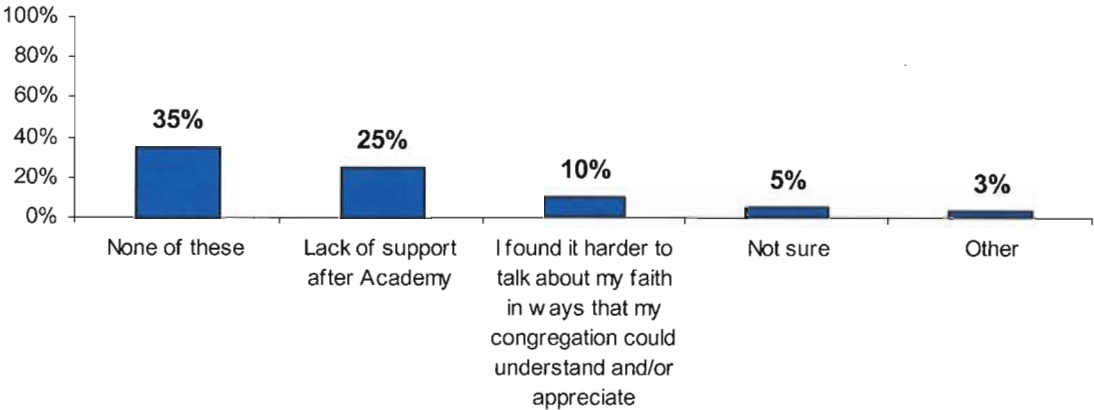
Others maintained contact with their covenant group long after the Academy ended.

“I still maintain regular contact with my [covenant] group after ten years.” *Man, telephone interview.*

Still others formed their own support groups.

“Since the Academy, I have never been without being in a covenant group. I think one of the elements of the Academy that I walked away with is the importance of being in a covenant community both for the accountability and the support.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

**Table 26: Least Helpful Aspects of Academy**



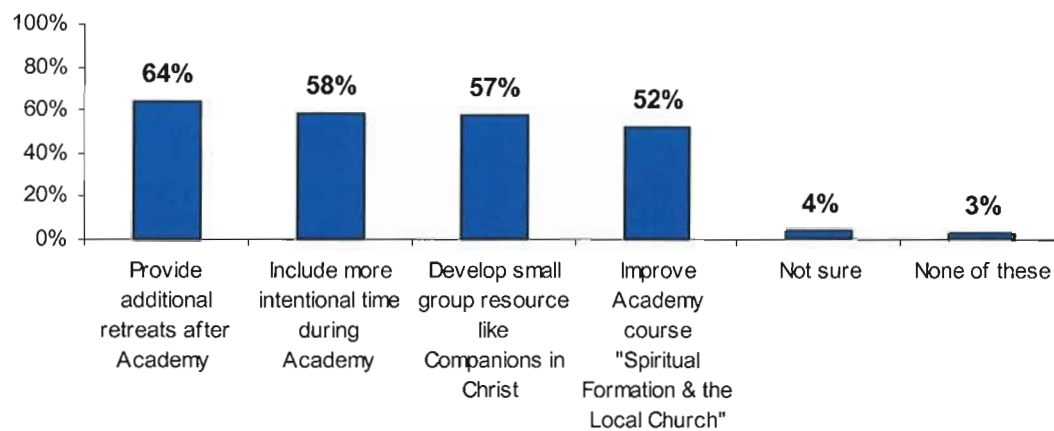
**The pastors were given some ideas for improving the capacity of the Academy to resource pastors for ministry and were asked whether they thought each was necessary. Nearly two in three called for more retreats. Smaller majorities wanted more time to talk about how to bring about what one learns at the Academy, more small group resources like Companions in Christ to help pastors serve as spiritual guides to their congregations, and improvements in the course, “Spiritual Formation and the Local Church.” (See Table 27.)**

In one focus group, the pastors were asked what people feel upon leaving the Academy.

“There is a sense of loss at the end...a let down and some sense of being disoriented and saying, ‘Now what do I do?’ It would be helpful to have a group that you could...reach out to and respond to...for a specific journey for two years...I think people would resonate with that.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

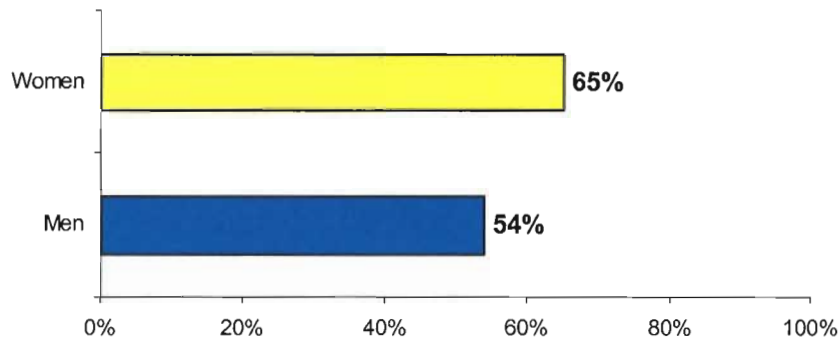
As noted earlier, and despite the fact that it was rated as very helpful by 69 percent of the pastors, 52 percent said that the course “Spiritual Formation and the Local Church” needs to be improved. Further discussion about pastors’ reactions follows in the section about Companions in Ministry. (See Table 27.)

**Table 27: How to Improve Academy's Capacity to Resource Pastors for Ministry**



**Women were more likely than men to suggest that the Academy include more intentional time for talking about how to bring what one has learned at the Academy to the local church. (See Table 28.)**

**Table 28: Academy Should Include More  
Intentional Time:  
Men vs. Women**



## *Part V: Further Resources for Pastoral Formation*

### *1. What Has Helped Most in Your Work in Pastoral Ministry?*

**Graduates were asked what beyond the Academy helped them most in their pastoral ministry. By far the most frequently mentioned resource, named by 55 percent, was a supportive spouse, family, or friends. (See Table 1.)**

[Even when] there have been several years between Academy experiences and I haven't gone off to be on a leadership team, my wife has become so accustomed to the rhythm that she will occasionally say to me, isn't it time for you to go somewhere. Or she'll say to me, when was the last time you saw your spiritual director....In some ways she even monitors rhythm and ritual for me. *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

[My Academy experience helped me] understand my husband's very different giftedness and...why we were together. And why our household functioned even though people who know us well think of us as such opposites. It has informed my whole understanding of the community effect, as a gift that is by definition characterized by God's diversity. *Woman, Gallant AL focus group.*

I'm in a group of four women and we meet monthly and they're all graduates of the two-year Academy. And they're my best friends. And that's very important for me to be in that group. And they're still serving churches or have active ministries. *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

**The central importance of individuals is underscored by the fact that each of the following was said to be most helpful in terms of pastoral ministry:**

- **Colleagues in ministry, named by 40 percent;**
- **A spiritual director, 35 percent;**
- **A wise pastor or mentor(s), 33 percent; and**
- **A small group with other pastors, 24 percent. (See Table 1.)**

**Colleagues:** Many times...trying to keep the rhythm in my own life but also preparing for worship in my own congregation, the words and phrases of...what my colleagues in the Academy said in worship time were very important and helpful. *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

**A Spiritual Director:** I've been in either a formal or some cases less formal scriptural director or scriptural mentor relationships, and I have found both of those were elements,

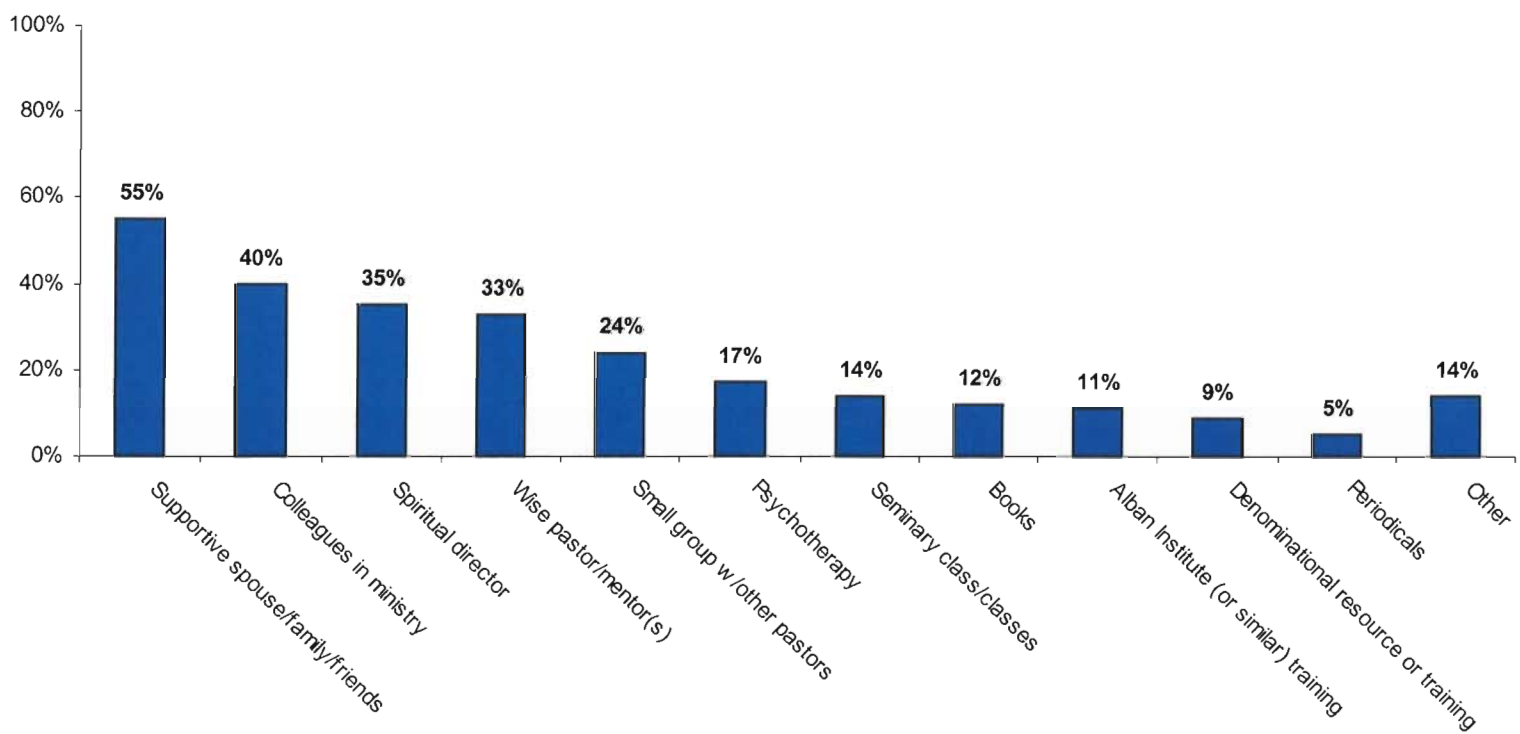
which were encouraged in the Academy, have been important to me. *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

**A Wise Pastor or Mentor:** There was this retired pastor...and we became friends....And he gave me a lot of great advice in a couple of instances where it was really needed, some crucial advice...I would say that [my] connection with colleagues was just absolutely essential. In my case it just solved the major problem I had. *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**A Small Group:** I've always made myself part of a small group in my church...And that has been extremely valuable...We have a small prayer group...And another small group...that keeps me in the rhythm of what is happening here. [That group has also been] very helpful. *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**Much smaller percentages said that instruction or training were most helpful. For example, only 14 percent said seminary classes were most helpful while 11 percent named the Alban Institute or similar training and 9 percent said denominational resources or training. (See Table 1.)**

**Table 1: Most Helpful Aspects in Pastoral Ministry**  
(Other than Academy)



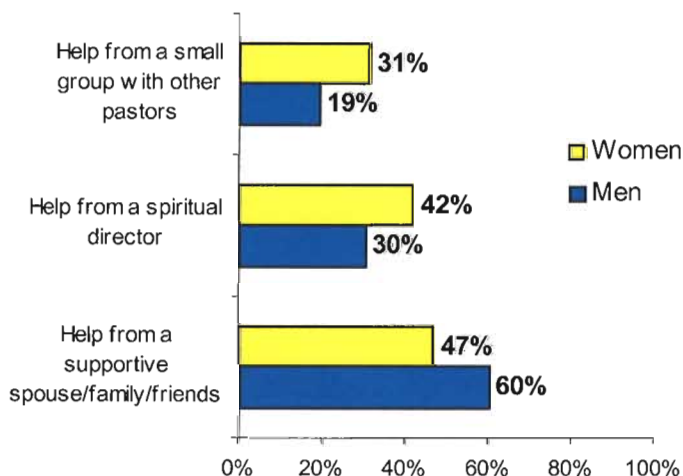


**There were some noteworthy demographic differences. Women were far more likely than men to say that a spiritual director and a small group with other pastors were helpful in their work in ministry. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to say they got great help from a supportive spouse or family and friends. (See Table 2.)**

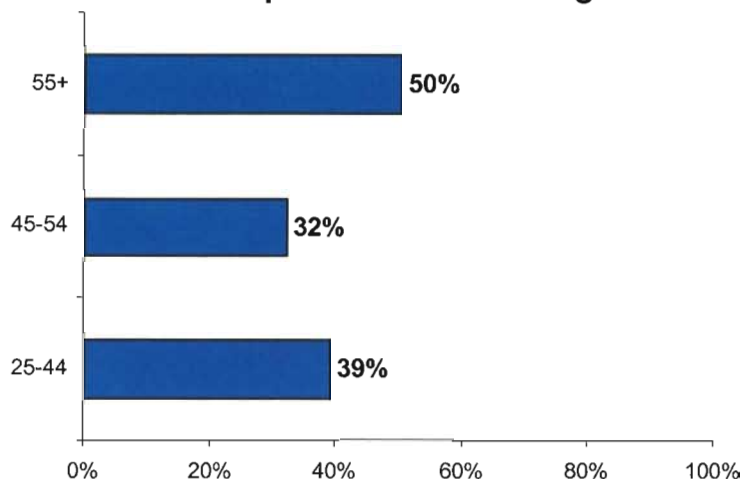
There were a few other significant demographic differences. Those age 55 or older were more inclined than younger graduates to say that colleagues in ministry were most helpful to them in their own work in pastoral ministry. (See Table 3.)

Local church pastors disproportionately cited the importance of a supportive spouse, etc. (See Table 4.) But associate pastors of a local congregation were more likely than others to name the importance of a wise pastor mentor. (See Table 5.) Those who were themselves spiritual directors were especially likely to mention the helpful role that their own spiritual director had played in their work in pastoral ministry. (See Table 6.)

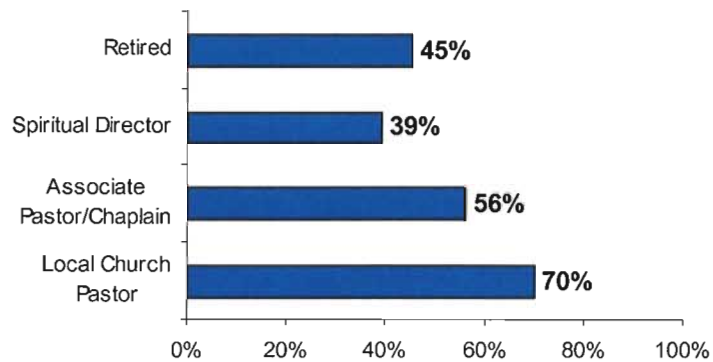
**Table 2: Most Helpful Resources in Pastoral Ministry: Men vs. Women**



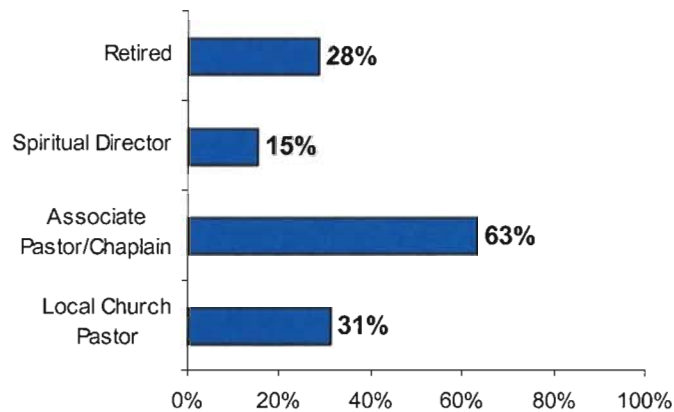
**Table 3: Colleagues in Ministry Were Most Helpful: Older vs. Younger**



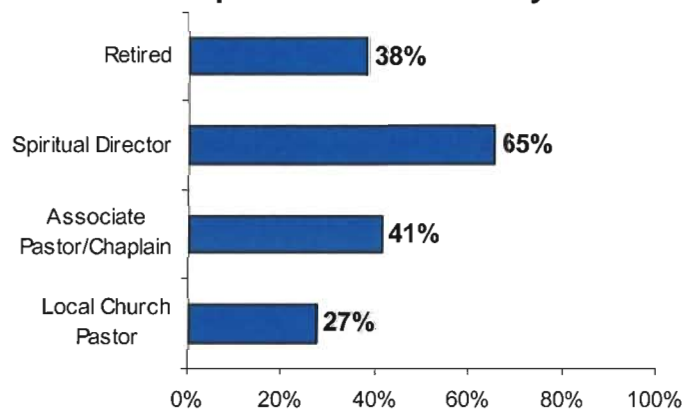
**Table 4: Supportive  
Spouse/Family/Friends Were Most  
Helpful: Current Ministry**



**Table 5: Wise Pastor Mentor Was  
Most Helpful: Current Ministry**



**Table 6: Spiritual Director Was Most  
Helpful: Current Ministry**



## ***2. Most Helpful Resources in Pastoral Ministry: Books***

**Graduates were asked to indicate how helpful various resources other than the Academy had been in terms of their work in pastoral ministry. *Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*, edited by Rueben Job and Jacob Shawchuck, was very highly rated, with as many as 50 percent calling it “extremely helpful.” (See Table 7.)**

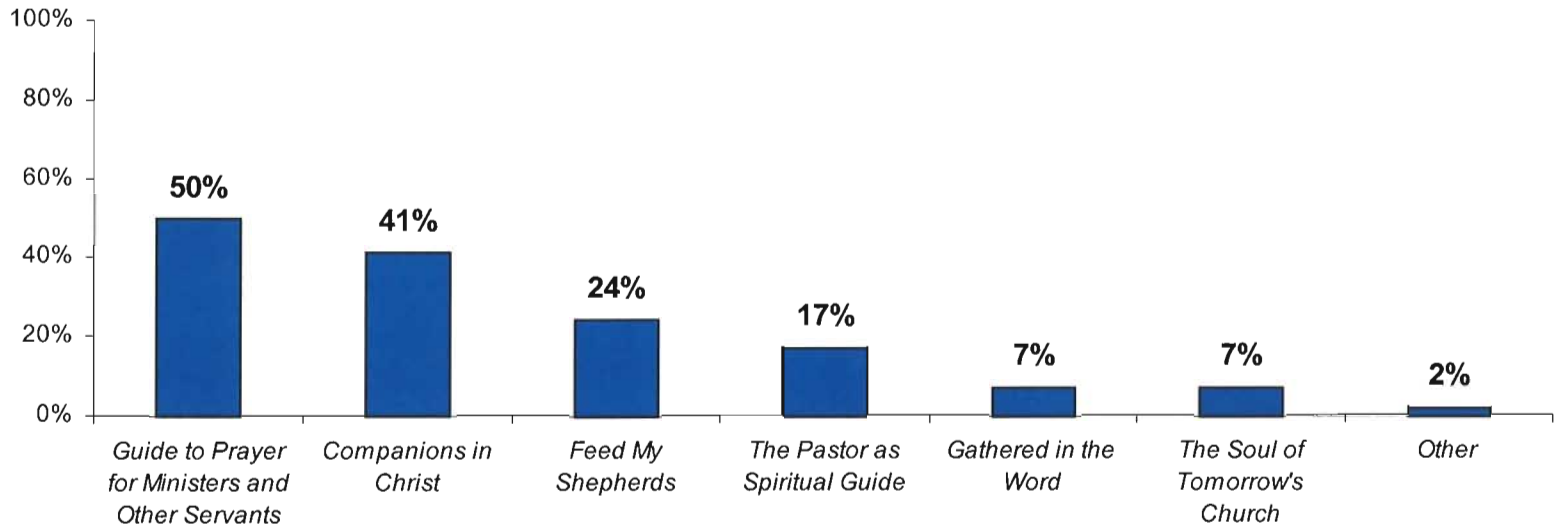
In a telephone interview, one woman said that she uses *A Guide to Prayer* and that in her church, she follows a “similar structure to the Academy.”

***Companions in Christ* by Job, Thompson, Hinson, Gonzalez, Scott Dawson, and Wright was also well regarded, with 41 percent calling it extremely helpful. Indeed, this volume actually had the highest mean or average score of any book, with graduates giving it an exceptionally high overall rating of 8.5 on a scale of 1 to 10. Using this measure, *Companions in Christ* was felt to be even more helpful than *A Guide to Prayer*. (See Tables 7 and 8.)**

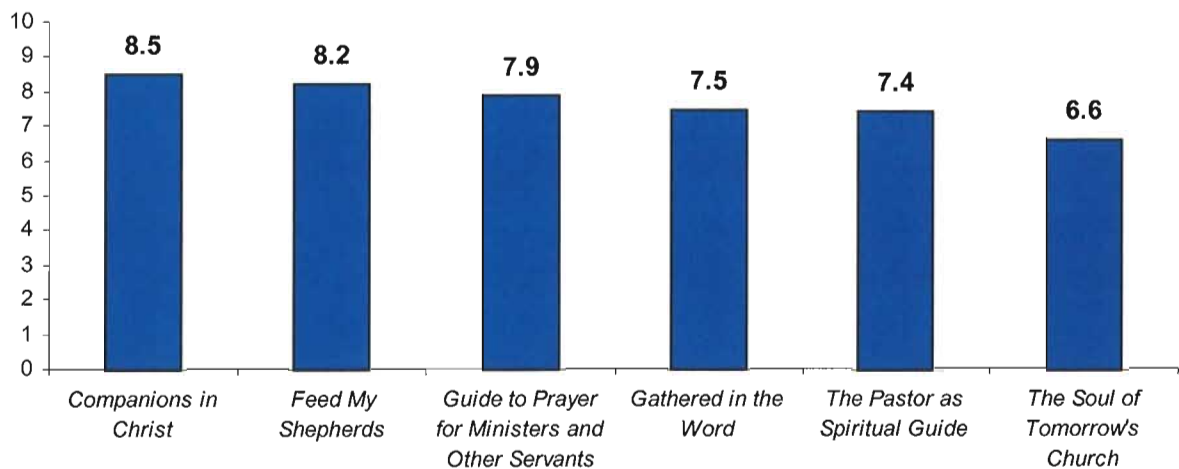
Flora Slosson Wuellner’s *Feed My Shepherds* was said to be extremely helpful by one in four. (See Table 7)

**Academy graduates were less familiar with three other books – *Gathered in the Word*, *The Pastor as Spiritual Guide*, and *The Soul of Tomorrow’s Church*. While these books were not as well regarded as the other works mentioned above, each was said to be quite helpful. (See Table 7.)**

**Table 7: Extremely Helpful Upper Room Books  
(Rated 8, 9, 10 on a 1-10 Scale)**

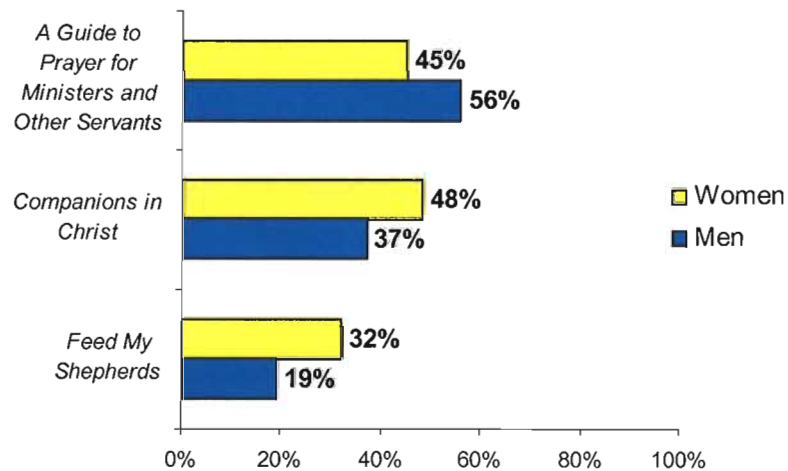


**Table 8: Highest Rated Upper Room Books  
(Based on a 1-10 Scale)**



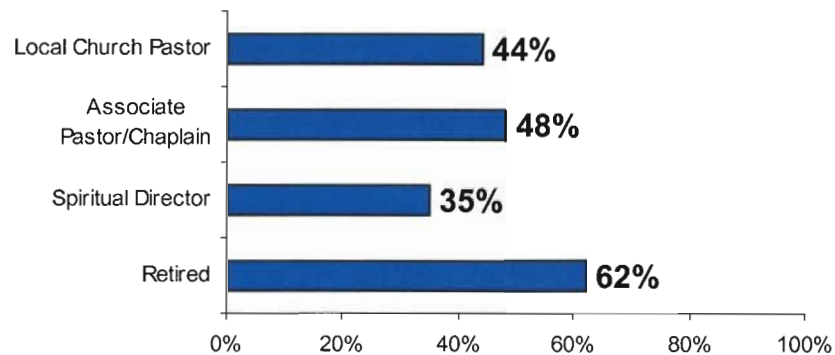
**Men who graduated from the Academy were more inclined than women to say that two books had been extremely helpful in their work in pastoral ministry: *A Guide to Prayer...*, and *Companions in Christ*. Women on the other hand were more likely to say that *Feed My Shepherds* had been extremely important. (See Table 9.)**

**Table 8: Extremely Helpful Upper Room Books: Men vs. Women**

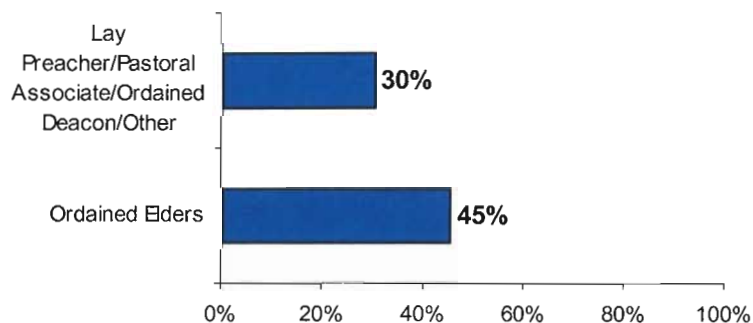


**Retired Academy graduates were more inclined than younger people to say that *A Guide to Prayer...* was helpful in their work in pastoral ministry. On the other hand, Ordained Elders were disproportionately likely to say that *Companions in Christ* was helpful to them. (See Tables 10 and 11.)**

**Table 10: *A Guide to Prayer...* Was Extremely Helpful: Current Ministry**



**Table 11: *Companions in Christ* Was Extremely Helpful: Credentials**



### ***3. Most Helpful Resources in Pastoral Ministry: Programs and Events***

**When asked which programs and events had been most helpful in their work in pastoral ministry, graduates were most inclined to cite the Five Day Academy, with as many as 51 percent calling it “extremely helpful.” Graduates gave the Five Day Academy an unusually high overall rating of 8.4. (See Tables 12 and 13.)**

I went to [a five-day Academy] in Southern California when I was a pastor... I thought it was terrific. *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

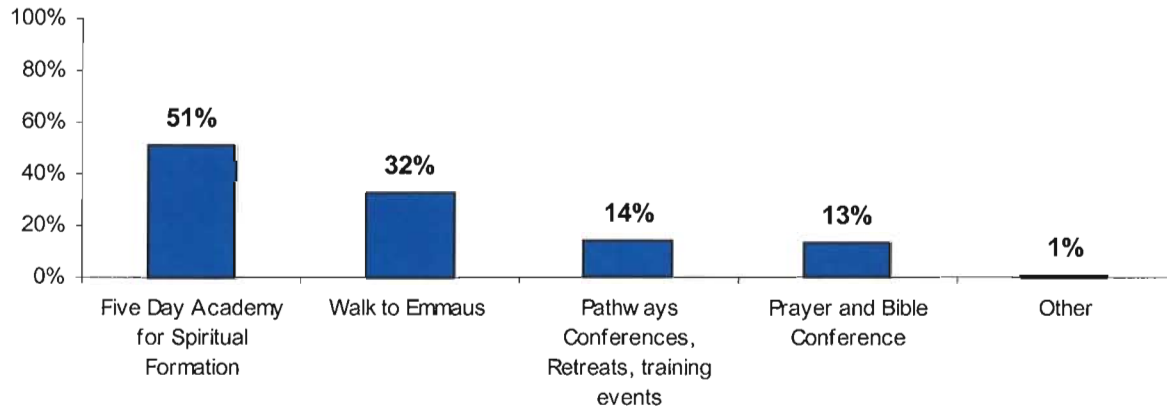
By the end of five days, there was such a sense of unity or sense of community that emerged out of this experience. So, I really appreciated that sense of wholeness. And [the experience] very intentionally affirmed our human diversity. *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

When I heard about the five day Academy...and started attending [it], it just really felt right. I remember feeling [as though] I have come home. I have come home to a place and a group of people that understands this same kind of feeling inside me, within me. *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

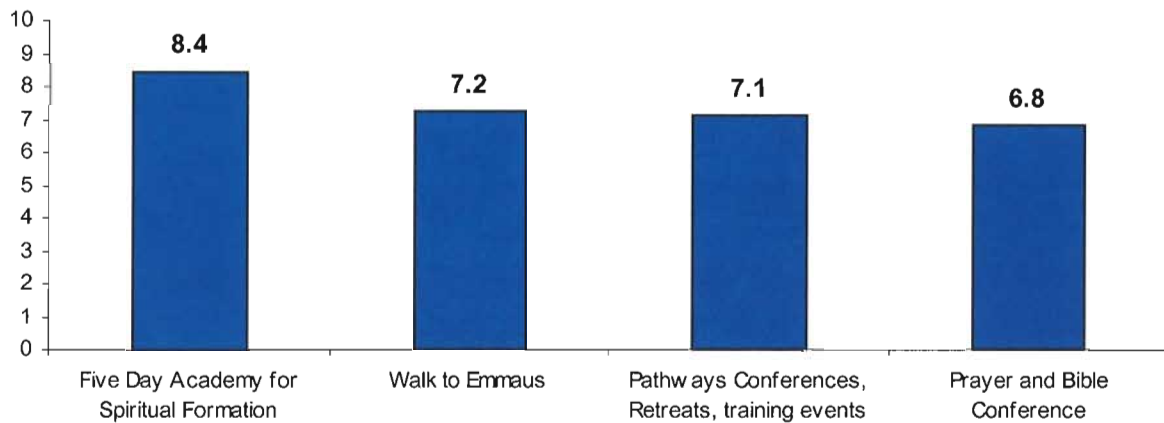
**Large numbers of Academy graduates also said several other programs and events had been helpful in their work in pastoral ministry, especially *Walk to Emmaus*, which had an overall score of 7.2 and was named as extremely helpful by 32 percent. (See Tables 12 and 13.)**

**Pathways Conferences/Retreats/training events and Prayer and Bible Conferences were also said to be helpful by a significant number of Academy graduates. (See Tables 12 and 13.)**

**Table 12: Extremely Helpful Upper Room Programs**  
(Rated 8, 9, 10 on a 1-10 Scale)



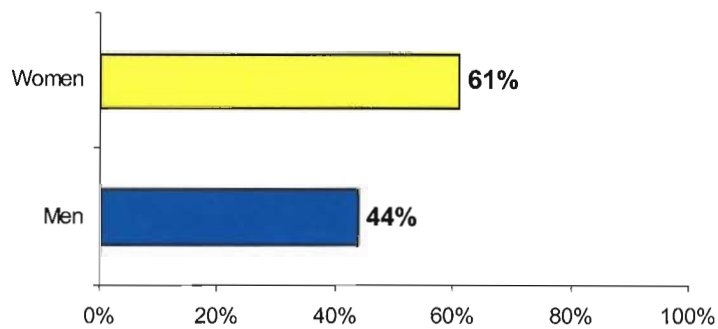
**Table 13: Highest Rated Upper Room Programs**  
(Based on a 1-10 Scale)





**Women were far more likely than men to say the Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation had been “extremely helpful” to them in their work in pastoral ministry. (See Table 14.)**

**Table 14: Five Day Academy Was Extremely Helpful: Men vs. Women**



#### ***4. Most Helpful Resources in Pastoral Ministry: Periodicals***

**When asked which periodicals have been most helpful, Academy graduates were most inclined to name *Weavings*, with a majority, 52 percent, calling it extremely helpful. *Weavings* received an overall rating of 7.9 on a scale of 1 to 10. (See Tables 15 and 16.)**

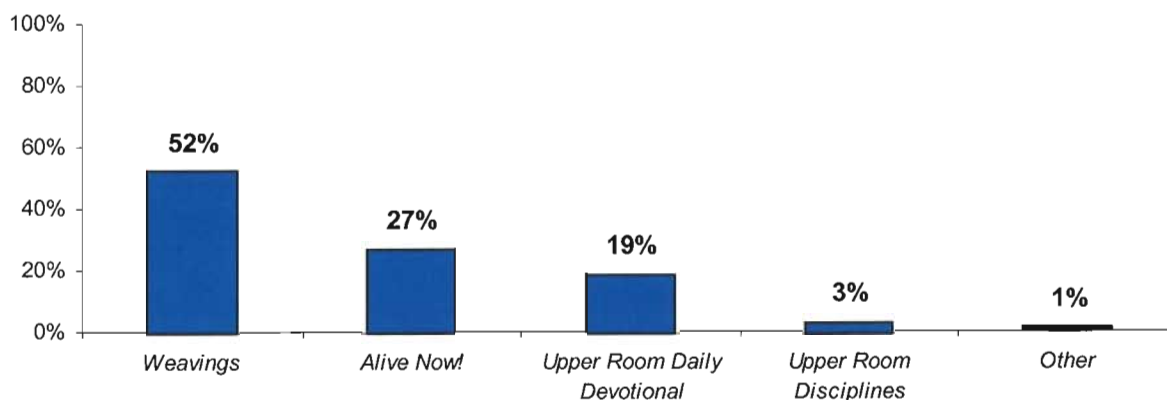
[A friend of mine] sent me...a subscription to *Weavings* a long time ago [because she thought] I needed it. [And I did.] *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

It's wonderful to be able to read *Weavings* and see the names [of authors I met at the Academy] and...hear their voice and see their face as I'm reading. It just makes it more meaningful, having had that connection with them. *Man, Burlingame CA focus group.*

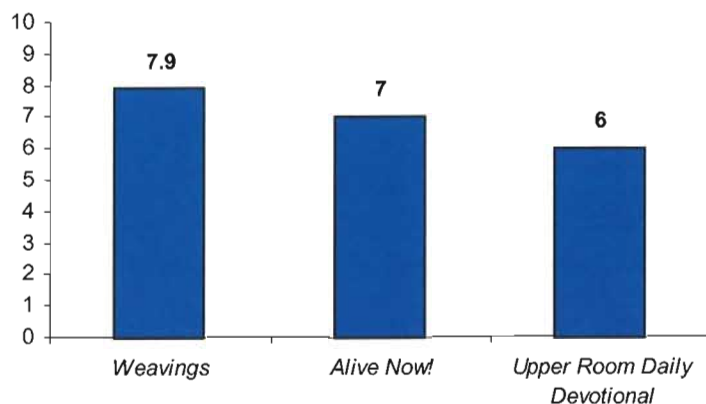
I started reading *Weavings* a million years ago and it just really spoke to my soul.  
*Woman, Burlingame CA focus group.*

**Compared to *Weavings*, *Alive Now!* and the *Upper Room Daily Devotional* were said to be helpful by somewhat smaller numbers of Academy graduates. (See Table 15.)**

**Table 15: Extremely Helpful Upper Room Periodicals**  
(Rated 8, 9, 10 on a 1-10 Scale)



**Table 16: Highest Rated Upper Room Periodicals**  
(Based on a 1-10 Scale)



**\*Note:** Percentage rating *Upper Room Disciplines* is too small to calculate meaningfully.

## ***5. New Resources for Pastors Committed to Spiritual Formation***

**Academy graduates were asked what issues the Upper Room Ministries should keep in mind as it develops new resources for pastors committed to spiritual formation.**

**Solid majorities singled out two issues as particularly important:**

- **How to integrate spirituality into the systems of the local church, and**
- **How to help the congregation learn to pray and practice the presence of God in their daily lives. (See Table 17.)**

Academy graduates were told that the Upper Room Ministries is involved in the development of new resources for pastors committed to spiritual formation and then asked to identify which three issues were most important for the Upper Room to keep in mind as it does so. Two issues were said to be the most important by a solid majority of the graduates: “How to integrate spirituality into the systems of the local church” was named by 58 percent and “How to help the congregation learn to pray and practice the presence of God in their daily lives” was named by 56 percent.

**Integrating Spirituality:** I certainly can see a need for a bridge between the Academy experience and one’s ministry in one’s place of service and how to integrate more of the profound personal change and benefit we’ve experienced into a fruit of ministry for the people one is serving. I see a need for that bridge. *Woman, Gallant AL focus group.*

**Learn to Pray and Practice the Presence of God:** There are so many different ways to enter into the presence of God...and be present to God. And that helps me as a pastor, and in my worship [to] create ways of helping different kinds of people relate in different kinds of ways to find somehow the presence of God there. *Woman, Burlingame CA focus group.*

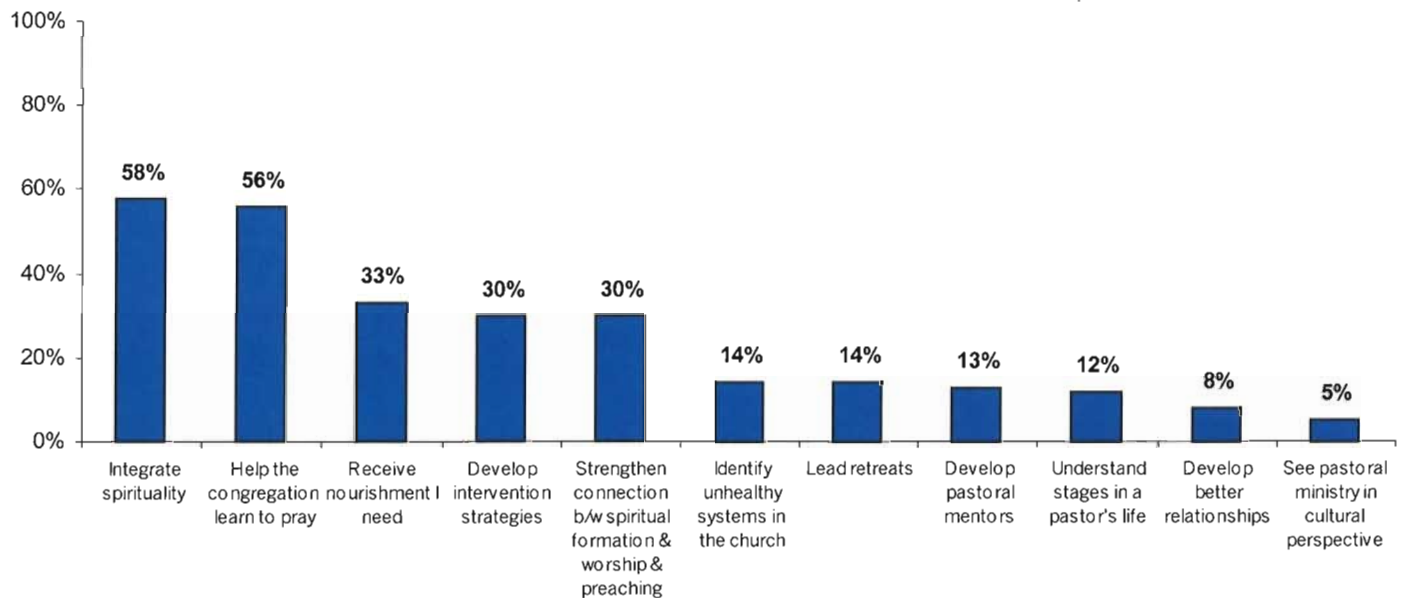
**Significant numbers named three other issues as being among those that are most important:**

- **How to receive the nourishment I need;**
- **How to develop intervention strategies for bringing about changes in unhealthy churches; and**
- **How to strengthen the connection between spiritual formation and worship and preaching. (See Table 17.)**

Large numbers named three other issues as most important for the Upper Room to keep in mind as it develops new resources:

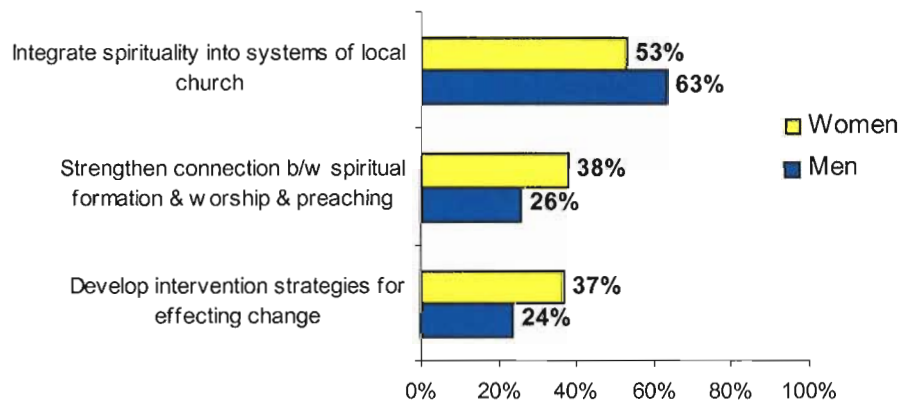
- Fully one-third named the issue of “how to receive the nourishment necessary to enable them to minister to others” as most important;
- “How to develop intervention strategies for bringing about changes in unhealthy churches” was named as key by three in ten;
- Three in ten also named “How to strengthen the connection between spiritual formation and worship and preaching” as one of the most important issues for Upper Room to keep in mind as it develops new resources for pastors committed to spiritual formation. (See Table 17)

**Table 17: Most Important Issues for Upper Room to Consider as it Develops New Resources**



While there were not sharp demographic differences on this question, there were some noteworthy differences in degree. Men were more likely than women to say that integrating spirituality into the systems of the local church was most important, while women were more inclined to name strengthening the connections between spiritual formation and worship and preaching as most important. Women were also more likely than men to cite the importance of developing intervention strategies to bring about change in unhealthy church systems as a key issue. (See Table 18.)

**Table 18: Most Important Issues for Upper Room to Consider as it Develops New Resources: Men vs. Women**



## ***Part VI: Analysis of Results Related to Companions in Ministry***

**No matter how it was presented, it was difficult to briefly explain the original conception of Companions in Ministry.**

Companions in Ministry is a new program that The Upper Room is considering and one goal of this study was to learn how the pastors feel about the idea. Using background material provided by The Upper Room, Doble Research and The Upper Room developed a bulleted summary that would rather economically explain what Companions involves. (See Summary #1 in the Appendix.) This bulleted summary was read to pastors in both the first focus group in Burlingame CA and in most of the telephone interviews. Then, depending on the pastors' initial and subsequent reactions, the summary was revised or supplemented in later research, as described below. (All of the summaries follow in an Appendix to the report.)

- In most of the telephone interviews and in the first group, in Burlingame CA, pastors were read a bulleted summary of Companions in Ministry and asked to react to it and to its elements.
- In the second group in Nashville, they were asked to read a bulleted summary that was revised to take into account some of the reactions in the telephone interviews and the first focus group. This revised summary was also used in Gallant and Columbus.
- In the third group, in Gallant AL, along with the bulleted summary, the pastors were asked to read a one-paragraph overview description of Companions that was developed in response to some reactions in Nashville.
- In the final group, in Columbus OH along with the bulleted summary, the pastors were asked to read two one-paragraph descriptions: the version used in Gallant and an alternative developed because of reactions in Gallant.

In the early telephone interviews and the first focus group in Burlingame, initial reactions to Companions, though positive, were marked by a lot of confusion, with the material seemingly raising almost as many questions for the pastors as it answered. In these interviews, for example, some questioned whether Companions was intended to replace the Academy or whether the exclusion of the laity meant that the Upper Room was losing interest in them. One pastor said that while Companions "sounds like a good idea," he himself would not be interested because his "primary focus is to help lay and clergy work

together.” Another expressed a similar sentiment, saying he had “reservations about losing the perspectives of the lay people.” (See Summary #1 in the Appendix.)

Such reactions led The Upper Room Ministries, working with Doble Research, to revise the bulleted summary to clarify some of the initial confusion and more clearly explain, for example, that Companions was not to be taken as a statement that The Upper Room was more interested in the clergy than in lay people. This revised bulleted summary was then used in the focus groups in Nashville, Gallant, and Columbus. (See Summary #2 in the Appendix.)

While the revised summary answered many of the initial questions, a number of the pastors in Nashville raised another set of questions, with several asking how Companions would bring spiritual formation into the local church.

“[This bulleted summary description of Companions] doesn’t specifically talk about bringing spiritual formation into your congregation.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

“[We need to] change the summary [description of Companions].” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

The Nashville results led The Upper Room Ministries to develop a summary paragraph, describing how Companions intended to help pastors “implement spiritual formation at the center of the local church.” This one-paragraph description was then used along with the bulleted summary in the next focus group in Gallant. (See Summary #3 in the Appendix.)

Before they saw the bulleted summary, the pastors in Gallant read the summary paragraph and were asked to react to it. Several of them said they had not expected Companions to be so focused on bringing spiritual formation into the local church.

“I am surprised [by the summary paragraph]...I didn’t realize that the intent of Companions in Ministry was to do spiritual formation in the local church...It’s certainly a shift from what I imagined.” *Woman, Gallant AL focus group.*

“I had understood that [Companions] was a more collegial experience for clergy in surviving ministry.” *Woman, Gallant AL focus group.*

One pastor disagreed with the entire premise of the paragraph; in his view, spiritual formation is personal and not something that should be taken back into the church.

“I do lectures on worship [and] spiritual formation [based on the Academy model]. And one of the first things [I say] is I’m not here to tell you how to do something that you can take back to your local church. Understand this is for you. And this [brief description of Companions] doesn’t seem as if it is for me.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*



The bulleted summary was then handed out to the Gallant pastors. After reading both the summary paragraph and the bulleted summary, one pastor in that group pointed to what he saw as a tension between the two.

“[This one-paragraph description says that] Companions in Ministry hopes to help pastors [bring spiritual formation to their congregation]. [But in] all those bulleted things, I don’t see anything that says what it is you’re going to do for me or for any other pastor that’s going to help them to take [spiritual formation back]. I don’t see that.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

In response to these reactions in Gallant, an alternative one-paragraph description was developed and pastors in the fourth focus group in Columbus OH were asked to read both versions – the one used in Gallant and the new version, revised to take into account reactions in Gallant –and to react to both of them. As we did in Gallant, we solicited the pastors’ reactions to the one-paragraph description before they were given the bulleted summary to read and react to. (See Summary #4 in the Appendix for both one-paragraph descriptions.)

Several pastors in Columbus did not particularly warm to either of the one-paragraph descriptions. In response to version B, for example, one said he had little interest in pairing with the Academy graduates who were described as typical in that one-paragraph description.

“When I read the blurb that came in the letter, I thought [Companions] would have been nice at the end of the Academy. But [I don’t want to partner with] somebody who has just left the Academy [and] feels disoriented and blue. I’d want [to partner with] somebody who’s been out doing integration. Then it’s a mentoring relationship.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

Another pastor agreed with this sentiment and said the summaries need to be rewritten.

“I’d like to write a counter statement to [these one-paragraph summaries]. I don’t remember...being blue and disoriented [when I left the Academy]...[What we need after the Academy is to] talk about where our dreams are and how that’s affecting the way we’re doing ministries.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

Several pastors chimed in, saying they too felt that the summaries should be rewritten and they suggested using the phrase “vocational formation” instead of spiritual formation.

“[Here’s] another stab at [rewriting the summary description]. [Companions] is an offering to assist pastors in their ongoing spiritual formation and an experience of growth [in terms of their] vocational formation to assist further growth ministry leadership.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

“I agree, vocational formation.” *Woman, Columbus OH focus group.*

“Vocational formation, exactly. It’s a very good word.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

In sum, what we take away from all of these reactions is that The Upper Room may find it a real challenge to briefly explain what Companions in Ministry or any similar program is and is not. Therefore, we strongly recommend that inordinate care be taken in developing a written description of any new program like Companions and that a broad range of reactions to any draft be solicited and carefully considered before a final version is decided on.

**Regardless of their initial reactions, however, the pastors' reactions to the overall concept were overwhelmingly positive *after they learned more and had a chance to deliberate about Companions*. That is, the more the pastors learned about Companions and the more they talked about it, the more favorable their views became.**

While many of the pastors were initially confused about Companions and had many questions about it, their thinking quickly shifted as they learned more about the idea and had a chance to reflect on it. For example, many pastors said people need a great deal of help making the transition from the Academy to their local church and rather quickly came to see Companions as something that could help pastors make the adjustment.

Moderator: *What do people feel upon leaving the Academy?*

"There is a sense of loss at the end...a let down and some sense of being disoriented and saying, 'Now what do I do?' It would be helpful to have a group that you could...reach out to and respond to...for a specific journey, [say] for two years...I think people would resonate with that." *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

"[At the end of the Academy] you need a way to begin to integrate being and doing. The Academy, for most of us, was a departure from doing and an investment in being. And that's one of the reasons why it was such a profound experience. But the reality is once you leave, you've got to go back and serve that church, run that retreat center, whatever – you're back in the doing [of your normal duties as pastor]." *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

"I just need spiritual nurture, that's my need." *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

Moderator: *Is Companions something you'd be interested in?*

"[Assuming travel and distance were not a problem, Companions], is definitely something that I hoped to find and achieve." *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

"This [detailed description of Companions, as opposed to the one-paragraph description] sounds very positive." *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

The pastors in both Gallant and Columbus felt much more positively about the bulleted summary than they did about either of the one-paragraph descriptions.

"In terms of my own felt need, the [bulleted] description of the first year resonates a whole lot more than the [one-paragraph] description does." *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“If I had seen this [bulleted summary first, before you handed out the two, one-paragraph descriptions instead of the other way around] I might not have had such strong [negative] feelings about [the two one-paragraph descriptions]. This [bulleted summary] says what we were saying [is needed].” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

The moderator commented that many heads were nodding as this pastor spoke.

In addition to responding favorably to the overall concept, the pastors responded positively to many of Companions’ elements when they learned more about them.

Not only did the overwhelming majority of the pastors’ react positively to the idea of Companions when they learned more about it, they also liked its components. Some approved of the retreat setting, especially over a two-year period. “It puts you in touch with nature,” one pastor said. Others focused on the idea of collegiality and support.

“I like the idea of Companions because collegiality is absolutely critical.” *Man, telephone interview.*

“The description of the first year resonates with me a whole lot...because it’s...saying that it’s going to be a mutual thing; it’s going to be a support system; it’s going to be a sharing. It’s going to have the kind of pieces in it, which I personally would find helpful. [The absence of those pieces] is the one weakness of the Academy system.” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

A number of pastors reacted positively to the idea of pilgrimage.

“Pilgrimage is a great idea. It would be very enriching.” *Man, telephone interview.*

“While it needs to be carefully thought through, I really like the idea of pilgrimage.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“I like the idea of pilgrimage. It’s important to get outside our boxes to keep us from getting stale.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“I want to affirm the pilgrimage model. There are some dangers. We have to avoid theological tourism. [But it has the potential to] be a clear transformation.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

Many pastors, especially women, were enthusiastic about creating a work of art.

“[One day when] our speaker cancelled...we did art and told jokes...we played with toys...We moved out of our comfort zone into a more playful place that complimented [other Academy activities] and brought wholeness [to everything we were doing].” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“The creation of a work of art to reflect one’s own spiritual journey...would be very scary for some people...I taught enough classes where there were art materials available and people stayed away on those days because they just felt completely intimidated...But other people would come alive because of that opportunity. It would be life giving.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“[At] the Academy you experience and learn a different style of prayer. Can we do that same thing with art? To just sit and do it in an afternoon session. Can we do it with the physical stuff?...[While creating] a piece of artwork...would be difficult, this just reinforces how important it is to me.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

Even when feelings were a bit mixed about a particular element, pastors said that on balance it made sense.

“While the wellness and support parts of Companions do not apply to me, I still think it’s a good idea to include them.” *Man, telephone interview.*

**While the pastors’ overall reactions to the concept of Companions and its components were positive, some voiced concerns about certain specifics or wanted to tweak or adjust certain aspects of the program.**

As they considered Companions along with its various elements, a number of the pastors did express particular concerns. Several talked about the importance of greater diversity and inclusiveness, especially in terms of the race and ethnicity of companion ministers but also in terms of denomination and background. A great many were concerned about costs. Others, especially women, said that women might be uncomfortable being paired with a man.

“Pairing might not work that well if I [and other women were] paired up with a man. Gender issues and being intimate with someone of the opposite sex may cause problems with a spouse and other family members. Some clergywomen may be more comfortable with a woman.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

A number of pastors preferred the idea of working in small groups of three or four instead of two, saying an unhappy pairing might detract from the experience.

“Personally, I lean toward having more than two, more than a pair...When you think of the dynamic of being able to listen and reflect with it and do some active listening with one another, it’s helpful to have more than just two persons.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

“The idea of pairing could be a problem. You need to pair with someone you have an affinity with.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“A group of four may be better, mainly because it would be more nurturing and offer a broader base of ideas.” *Man, telephone interview.*

“I use this program called ‘Prayer Triangles’ to introduce prayer and develop a church spiritually. And the church came alive and grew and it’s still growing and using three is often a good model. It’s Trinitarian. And if one person is lax there’s always the other. If one person isn’t praying you always know one is. And that’s why three [instead of two].” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

Some did not like the idea of being assigned to someone they did not know, saying they would prefer being able to choose their partner.

“The idea [of Companions] sounds great but I don’t want the Academy to choose my companion. I had someone I did not like in my covenant group, so there’s that fear about ending up with someone who’s not compatible with you. The partner does not have to be ideal but it should be a pairing that can work well together.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

“If you’re going to be open and vulnerable to somebody else, put yourself on the line and accept, etc., you need to be able to choose that person.” *Man, Columbus OH focus group.*

Some were concerned about the “power relationship” in any pairing.

“Might I be paired with my superintendent?” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“I don’t know if I want to be paired up with somebody who’s my supervisor.” *Woman, Nashville TN focus group.*

A few pastors felt that no matter what the aim of the program, laity should be included.

“I think that clergy learned [as much about] how to [bring spiritual formation back to their local church] by learning to associate with laity...[as] they did by being [with other clergy].” *Man, Gallant AL focus group.*

“I think Companions should be for the laity too; pastors learn a lot from them.” *Man, telephone interview.*

One or two did not like the idea of creating a work of art.

“I hate the idea [of creating artwork]. I don’t get into that kind of thing. Make this piece optional.” *Woman, telephone interview.*

One pastor was confused about who Companions is intended for.

“Is there an assumption [that Companions is only for] those serving local churches [but] not for those on the extension ministries? Or [is it] for those serving conference or district levels of ministry too? [Because] we’d like to be invited too.” *Woman, Gallant AL focus group.*

Another asked whether Companions would create an informal pressure or expectation that pastors enroll upon graduation. He strongly favored Companions as long as everyone clearly understood it was nothing more than an option.

“[It would be better if Companions weren’t offered] immediately upon graduation...[Participants] need to go off on their own and develop [what they got out of the Academy] for a while...[Companions should be] something they want to do rather than something that they think they’re supposed to do.” *Man, Nashville TN focus group.*

**In sum, it would be a serious mistake to conclude that the pastors’ initial reactions to the descriptions of Companions, which were often marked by doubts and confusion, represent their true, deeper feelings about the idea. When they learned more about Companions and had a chance to think and talk about the idea, they became increasingly enthusiastic about it and saw a real need for the program.**

***Summary #1***  
***SUMMARY READ TO PASTORS IN TELEPHONE***  
***INTERVIEWS AND THE BURLINGAME FOCUS GROUP***

**Companions in Ministry**

- Pilot program starting in 2005
- Built on ideas of community and pilgrimage
- For pastors who completed Academy or something like it

First year will meet for three, five-day sessions and include:

- Worship services held three times a day
- Five academic courses related to pastoral role
- Focused Reflection on pastor's role
- "Companion Ministers" paired for two years to act as a support system, share spiritual journeys, visit each other's church
- Create a work of art to reflect personal spiritual journey
- Pilgrimage to visit pastors from another place and/or time (e.g., Anglo pastors visit an African-American congregations, read journals of Puritan pastors, etc.)
- Presentations in wellness and support systems

In second year,

- Companion Ministers will design how to continue their work.
- May continue current partnership;
- May select another minister to companion, or
- May work with a small group of pastors.



*Summary #2*  
***BULLETED SUMMARY HANDED OUT IN THE FOCUS  
GROUPS IN NASHVILLE, GALLANT, & COLUMBUS***  
*(Handed out in Gallant and Columbus after pastors read the one-paragraph  
summaries, #3 and #4)*

## **Companions in Ministry**

**1. Companions Is:**

- Pilot program starting in 2005 and ending in 2007
- Built on ideas of community and pilgrimage
- For pastors who completed Academy or something like it

Companions is NOT:

- A substitute for the Academy
- Statement that Upper Room is more interested in clergy than laity

First year – Three, five-day sessions that tentatively include:

- The basic “rhythm” of the Academy (Morning Prayer, Eucharist and Night Prayer; Silence, covenant groups; Covenant projects for the first and second year; Re-emphasis on self-care, physical well-being, support systems)

**2. Faculty Presentations/Courses:**

- The Pastor as Spiritual Guide
- From Contemplation to Proclamation
- Discernment
- From Prayer to Worship
- “Coaching” as a way for pastors to mentor others

**3. Companion Ministers:**

- Pastors paired to act as support system for each other, share spiritual journeys, visit each other’s church

**4. Second year:**

- Companion Ministers will design how to continue their work
- May continue current partnership
- May select another minister to companion, or
- May work with a small group of pastors

**5. Ways that Companions differs from the Academy:**

- Pastors will take pilgrimage to another place or time (e.g., Anglo pastors visit an African-American congregation, read journals of Puritan pastors, etc.)
- “Artist guides” will help pastors learn skills in some artistic media (painting, pottery, dance, poetry, etc.)
- Time spent discussing the unique role and responsibility that pastors can play in shaping the spiritual life of the congregation

***Summary #3***  
***SUMMARY PARAGRAPH HANDED OUT IN THE FOCUS  
GROUPS IN GALLANT***

**Companions in Ministry**

Companions in Ministry is designed to help pastors who have gone through the Academy for Spiritual Formation implement spiritual formation at the center of the local church. It is one thing to personally have formative experiences like those felt through the Academy, but another to help the local church “see the light” in terms of spiritual formation. The Companions in Ministry program hopes to help pastors do this very thing.

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***Summary #4***  
***DESCRIPTIONS OF COMPANIONS HANDED OUT IN  
THE FOCUS GROUP IN COLUMBUS***

- A. Companions in Ministry is designed to help pastors who have gone through the Academy for Spiritual Formation implement spiritual formation at the center of the local church. It is one thing to personally have formative experiences like those felt through the Academy, but another to help the local church “see the light” in terms of spiritual formation. The Companions in Ministry program hopes to help pastors do this very thing.
  
- B. When people complete the two-year Academy, they often have a sense of feeling deeply fulfilled on the one hand, and a bit blue and disoriented on the other hand. They may wonder, “Why can’t my church be like the Academy?” Or perhaps they wonder how they can bring the best of the Academy to their local church, for its transformation and renewal. The Companions in Ministry program hopes to help pastors do this very thing.

## DEMOGRAPHIC TABLES

	<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>%</u>
<b>GENDER</b>	
Men	57%
Women	41%
No Answer	2%
<b>AGE WHEN ATTENDED ACADEMY</b>	
25-35	8%
36-44	29%
45-54	32%
55-64	24%
65-75	5%
75+	1%
<b>EDUCATION</b>	
Some Grad School or less	3%
Master of Divinity	54%
Other Master's Degree	20%
Doctor of Ministry	18%
Ed. D, Th. D, PhD	6%
Other	3%
<b>PASTOR CREDENTIALS</b>	
Lay Preacher/Pastoral Associate	1%
Ordained Deacon	5%
Ordained Elder	75%
Ordained Pastor	4%
Other	12%
<b>DESCRIPTION OF PASTORAL MINISTRY</b>	
Became a pastor after Academy	6%
Was a pastor before, during & after Academy	79%
After Academy I left pastoral ministry	5%
Other	6%
<b>IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT MINISTRY</b>	
Local church pastor of a congregation	45%
Associate church pastor of a congregation	9%
Chaplain	2%
Spiritual Director	11%
Judiciary position	7%
Retired	20%
Other "extension" ministry	5%
Other	12%

\*Categories may not add up to 100% due to No Answer responses, multiple responses, and numerical rounding.

# *Methodology*

This report draws on research gleaned from a variety of methods.

**Background Research:** In addition to background readings about spiritual formation, John Doble and his colleague, Research Associate Liza Khan, spent 24 hours at the Academy in San Antonio in January 2003, participating in all Academy activities except the covenant group sessions. In addition, we conducted roughly one-hour long, one-on-one telephone interviews with seven people recommended by The Upper Room Ministries as people who were instrumental either in getting the Academy started or otherwise shaping its program or curriculum. Those interviewed were:

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Mary Avram     | 5. John Mogabgab |
| 2. Stephen Bryant | 6. Danny Morris  |
| 3. Charles Lee    | 7. Lori Sawdon   |
| 4. Don Lefelar    |                  |

**Focus Groups:** Focus groups, or focused group discussions, normally last about 90 minutes. But given the complexity and depth of the issues The Upper Room Ministries wanted to explore, John Doble and Liza Khan moderated a series of focus groups that each lasted four hours with Academy graduates recommended by The Upper Room Ministries. Groups were held as follows:

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Burlingame, CA, 2/04/03 | 3. Gallant, AL, 4/03/03  |
| 2. Nashville, TN, 3/10/03  | 4. Columbus, OH, 4/25/03 |

**Telephone Interviews:** Doble Research conducted a series of roughly one-hour long telephone interviews with Academy graduates that The Upper Room Ministries felt could offer a unique perspective on the Academy.

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Marv Arnpriester   | 10. Kathy Leithner  |
| 2. Dar Berkenpas      | 11. Kent Millard    |
| 3. David Brownlee     | 12. Karen Manz      |
| 4. Richard Bruesehoff | 13. Sheila Richards |
| 5. Ann Dilenschneider | 14. Michael Ripski  |
| 6. Tony Fink          | 15. Barrie Tritle   |
| 7. Gary Furr          | 16. Linda Vance     |
| 8. Cindy Gregorson    | 17. Carolyn Waters  |
| 9. Matthias Krier     |                     |

**A Survey of Public Opinion:** Using a list provided by The Upper Room Ministries, Doble Research sent a questionnaire to 356 Academy graduates who were also members of the clergy beginning with those who attended the first Academy, 1983-1985. Questionnaires were sent both to those who were and were not interviewed earlier by telephone or in a focus group. A total of 241 graduates responded to the survey, yielding an extraordinarily high response rate of 68 percent. (The normal response rate to a mail survey is about four percent.) The questionnaire asked the clergy to respond to a long list of questions about their Academy and post-Academy experience, their suggestions for change, and their ideas of about further resources for pastoral formation. A copy of the questionnaire follows in this report.

# **About Doble Research Associates**

*Public Opinion: A Map, Not a Snapshot . . .*™

Doble Research Associates is a public interest consulting firm that specializes in exploring people's thinking about complex public issues.

Especially when it comes to complex issues or policy initiatives, the formation of public opinion is usually dynamic and evolutionary, a work in progress as opposed to a still life or a finished product. At Doble Research, we map people's thinking by identifying the public's "starting point" – what people think about an issue now, before learning more about it. Then we lay out how people's thinking evolves as they consider other points of view and have time to deliberate about an issue. We give clients and partners a blueprint of *how* and *why* people feel as they do – *a map, not a snapshot.*™

## **Clients and Partner Organizations:**

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The Center for Crime, Communities and Culture (Open Society Institute/The Soros Foundation)  
The Chiesman Foundation  
The Community Life Foundation of Owensboro KY  
The Public Life Foundation of Owensboro (PLFO)  
The Englewood Community Foundation  
The Fetzer Institute  
The Walter and Elise Haas Fund  
The Hager Educational Foundation  
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
The Kellogg Foundation  
The Kettering Foundation  
The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
The Peninsula Community Foundation  
The Pew Charitable Trust  
The Seva Foundation

### Government Agencies

The Board of Pardons and Parole, State of Georgia  
The Department of Corrections, Cedar Rapids, Iowa  
The Department of Corrections, State of Indiana  
The Department of Corrections, State of Vermont  
The Environmental Protection Agency  
The Governor's Family Council, State of Delaware  
The National Institute of Corrections (NIC)  
The National Institute of Justice (NIJ)  
The National Parks Service, Nebraska  
Vermont Commission on Public Healthcare Values and Priorities

### Public Service Organizations

The American Judicature Society  
Audubon Area Community Services, Owensboro, Kentucky  
The Buckeye Association for School Administrators  
The Center for Community Corrections  
The Center for Effective Public Policy  
The Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM)  
The Cleveland Summit on Education  
The Council of Governors' Policy Advisors  
The Council of State Governments, Eastern Regional Office  
The Crime & Justice Institute, Boston Massachusetts

The Educational and Social Science Consortium  
The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC)  
The Harwood Institute  
The International Research & Exchanges (IREX), Ukraine  
The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC)  
The National Conference of State Legislatures  
The National Academy of Social Insurance  
The National Environmental Policy Institute (NEPI)  
The National Issues Forums Institute (NIFI)  
The Oklahoma State-Centered Project  
The Pennsylvania Prison Society  
The Points of Light Foundation  
Public Agenda  
The South Carolina State-Centered Project  
The Southern Growth Policies Board  
The Southern Regional Council  
The Study Circle Resources Center (SCRC)  
The Upper Room  
*Weavings*, A Journal of the Christian Spiritual Life  
The West Virginia Center for Civic Life  
The Western Governors' Association

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