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Wheatley Report: Religion in the Home

by Lyndi Jenkins

In October 2020, BYU's Wheatley Institution released compelling findings from a multinational study they conducted on the impact of religious observance for individuals and couples. The study, [Religion in the Home](#), reported on data collected from over 16,000 couples in 11 nations and across various faith traditions, representing a strikingly diverse sample of people.

Although many prior studies have investigated differences between secular and religious individuals on a number of personal and relational outcomes, this study provided new insight by differentiating between respondents with varying religious “dosages” (e.g., between individuals who occasionally attend church services—“nominals,” those who attend regularly—“attenders,” and those who attend regularly and engage in home worship behaviors—“home worshippers”).

This distinction allowed researchers to analyze and compare outcomes across different levels of religious involvement, finding that even when controlling for income and other key demographics, men and women who worship at home experience significant individual and relational benefits compared to other groups.

For example, the analysis suggests that “home worshippers” are significantly more likely to report greater life meaning, happiness, and a sense of God’s love in their lives, as well as strengthened marital outcomes like enhanced emotional closeness, sexual satisfaction, and overall relationship quality. These findings are especially intriguing and relevant to consider in the context of the current global pandemic, which has necessitated the temporary closure of many houses of worship throughout the world and spurred a shift to at-home religious practices for many people of faith.

As part of the release of this study, a series of articles were written by faculty and students in BYU's School of Family Life (SFL) to make the significant findings of this report more widely known. BYU students and faculty regularly engage in public scholarship efforts to make reliable social science information accessible across many publication outlets.

Lyndi Jenkins is a senior studying human development at Brigham Young University and serves as a member of the School of Family Life's student editorial board.

Here are some recently released articles:

Hal Boyd, SFL faculty member and Naomi Schaefer Riley, well-known American journalist:

‘Handmaid’ Reality: Deeply Religious Marriages Have More Spousal Equality

The New York Post | <https://bit.ly/wheatrep>

Julie Haupt, SFL faculty member and Kaylin Cash, BYU Human Development student:

New Study Proves President Nelson right: Home-Centered Worship is Resulting in Stronger Family Relationships and Testimonies

LDS Living | <https://bit.ly/wheatrep2>

Matthew Saxey, BYU Family Studies student and Hal Boyd, SFL faculty member:

Do ‘Church Ladies’ Really Have Better Sex Lives?

Institute for Family Studies | <https://bit.ly/wheatrep3>

Paul Edwards, Director of the Wheatley Institution and Allie Sharp, BYU Human Development student:

COVID-19 Moved Church Home—And Families Became Stronger

Deseret News | <https://bit.ly/3od7NtY>

Spencer James, Hal Boyd, and Jason Carroll, all SFL faculty members:

Why the Partisan Divide? The U.S. Is Becoming More Secular—and More Religious

Religion & Politics | <https://bit.ly/wheatrep5>

Julie Haupt, SFL faculty member and Lyndi Jenkins, BYU Human Development student:

Emotional Closeness in Desperate Times

Public Square Magazine | <https://bit.ly/wheatrep6>