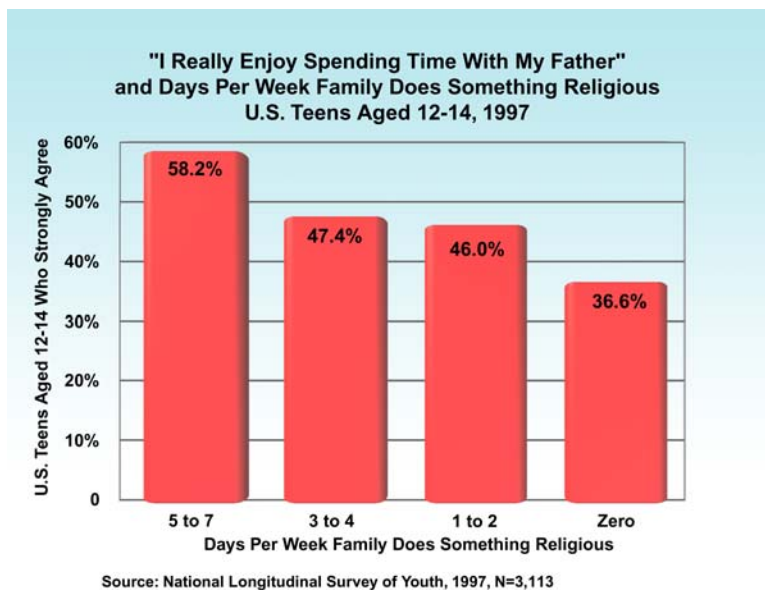


Religious Youth Are More Likely to Have Positive Relationships with Their Fathers

Youth from religiously active families — at any level of religious involvement — are significantly more likely than their non-religious peers to have a positive relationship with their fathers, according to sociologists with the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

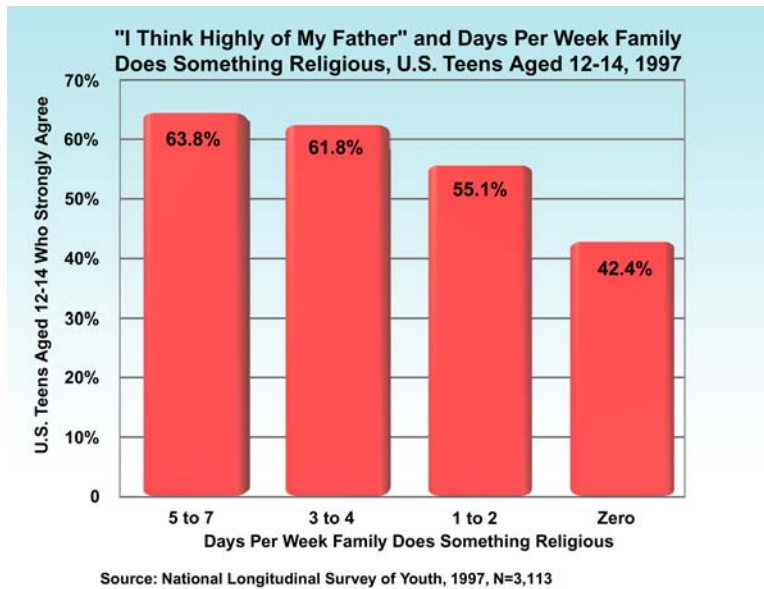
This statistically significant positive correlation indicates that teens in families that are active in their religious tradition are more likely than non-religious teens to say they enjoy spending time with their fathers and that they admire their fathers. They are also more likely to describe their fathers as being helpful with things that are important to them. These findings are based on analyses of data from The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997) (NLSY97).

Forty-six percent of youth with families that do something religious one or two days per week strongly agree with the statement, “I really enjoy spending time with my father.” This percentage increases to 58 percent among youth whose families participate in religious activities five to seven days per week, compared to 37 percent of youth who do not engage in religious activities.

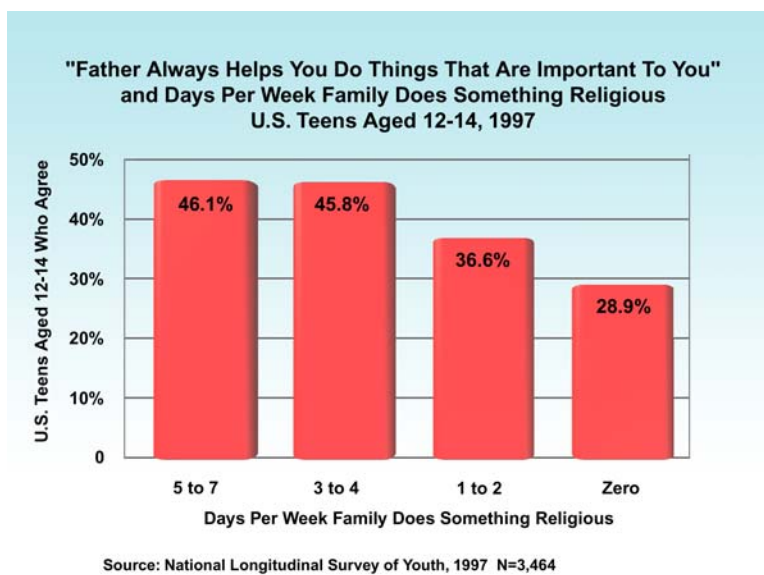


In addition, 55 percent of youth with families that do something religious one or two days per week strongly agree with the statement that they think highly of their fathers. This number

increases to 64 percent when families are involved in religious activities five to seven days per week. These percentages compare to 42 percent of youth from families that are non-religious.



The numbers are also significant regarding teens’ report of their fathers’ participation in their lives, with 46 percent of youth from families that do something religious five to seven days per week reporting that their fathers “always” help with important things, compared to 29 percent of youth from non-religious families.



This preliminary analysis is designed to provide baseline information that will aid in the development of a comprehensive survey of adolescents for the National Study of Youth and Religion, a four-year research project being conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill under the direction of Dr. Christian Smith. Funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., this project is designed to enhance understanding of the religious and spiritual lives of American adolescents.

Analysis of the data was completed by Christian Smith and Phillip Kim. Christian Smith is professor and associate chair of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Phillip Kim is a Ph.D. graduate student in sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997) (NLSY97) is a nationally representative survey documenting the transition from school to work of youth living in the United States who were between 12 and 16 years old as of Dec. 31, 1996. These analyses focused on younger adolescents, ages 12 to 14 years old. Reports of religious behavior are based on the parent surveys, where the question was asked: "In a typical week, how many days from 0 to 7 do you do something religious as a family?" Reports about family relationships are based on the youth surveys, which included the following questions: 1) "To what extent do you agree with the following statements: 'I really enjoy spending time with him.' and 'I think highly of him?'" and 2) "How often does he help you do things that are important to you?"

The general term "father" represents both biological male parents and non-biological male parent figures who may instead be present in the household. The differences reported here are statistically significant in a regression model controlling for age, sex, race, relationship of youth to household parent figure, income, rural/urban residence, region and education of the residential mother.