



Survey Shows Broad Public Support for Ten Commandments Displays

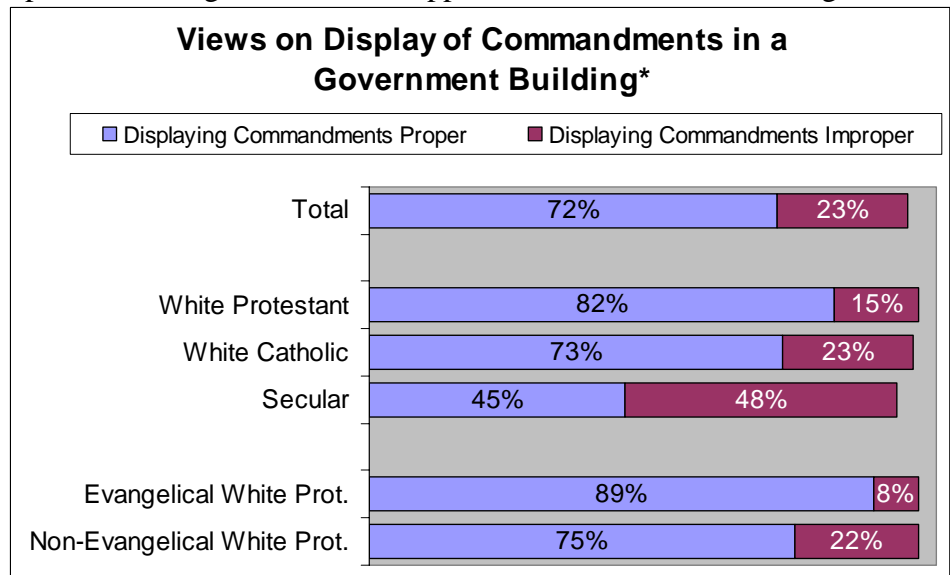
Level of Support Varies Across Religious Traditions

The Supreme Court today issued its opinion on the legality of Ten Commandments displays in public buildings, thus weighing in on one of the country’s defining “culture war” issues.

In August 2004, the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press conducted a survey that asked respondents whether they believe it is proper or improper for the Ten Commandments to be displayed in a government building. The survey results indicate that Americans overwhelmingly support displaying the Ten Commandments on public property, with more than seven-in-ten saying they believe such displays are proper. Despite this broad support for displaying the commandments, important differences exist in the way members of different religious groups view this issue.

- More than 80% of white Protestants believe it is proper to display the Ten Commandments in a government building. Support is particularly strong among those who describe themselves as evangelical or born-again Christians, with nearly nine-in-ten saying it is appropriate to display the commandments in a public building. The level of support is somewhat lower among white Protestants who do not describe themselves as evangelical or born again, with 75% saying it is proper.

- White Catholics closely resemble non-evangelical white Protestants on this issue, with 73% indicating that they believe it is proper to display the commandments in a government building.

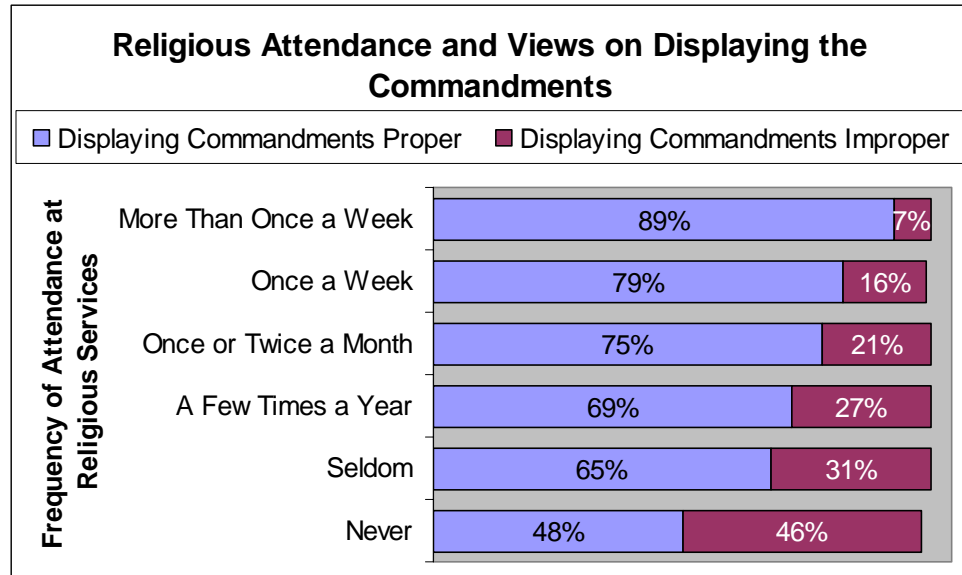


*Figures do not add to 100 because “Don’t Know” and refused responses are not included in the charts.

- Seculars – that is, those who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic, not a believer or as having no religion – are much less likely than either white Protestants or white Catholics to view the display of the Ten Commandments favorably. But even among seculars, there is not overwhelming opposition to public displays of the commandments. In fact, seculars are about evenly divided on this issue, with 45% indicating that displaying the commandments is proper and 48% saying that such displays are improper.

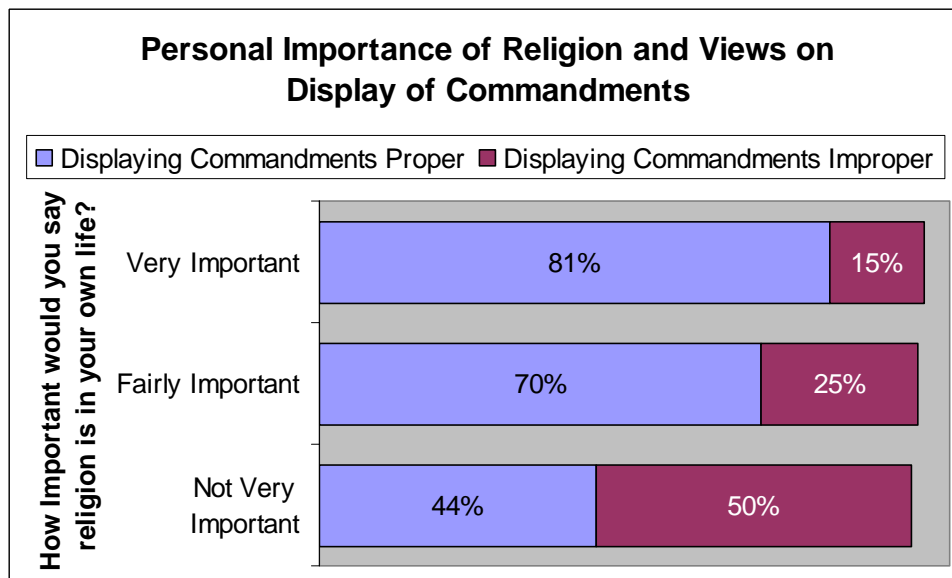
RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE AND VIEWS ON THE COMMANDMENTS

Perhaps not surprisingly, there is a strong relationship between frequency of religious attendance and acceptance of the public display of the commandments. Simply put, those who attend religious services regularly are much more likely to consider it proper to display the commandments in a government building than are those who attend religious services infrequently or not at all. Nearly nine-in-ten of those who attend religious services more than once a week believe it is proper to display the commandments, while fewer than half of those who say they never attend religious services share this opinion.



RELIGION'S IMPORTANCE AND DISPLAY OF COMMANDMENTS

There is also a strong relationship between the degree to which religion is an important part of respondents' lives and opinions concerning the propriety of public displays of the commandments. More than 80% of those who say religion is "very important" in their lives also say that displaying the commandments in a government building is proper. Conversely, among those who say religion is "not very important" in their lives, 50% say it is *improper* to display the commandments in a government building.



The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life is a project of the Pew Research Center. For more information, see www.pewforum.org.