

Study: Worship together aids marital relations

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The old slogan "couples who pray together stay together" may be true especially for African Americans, a new study shows.

The survey of religion, race and relationships found that African Americans attend church more as couples compared to members of other racial and ethnic groups.

Four in ten African-American respondents said they attended services regularly as a couple, according to a study published in the August issue of the *Journal of Marriage and Family*. In comparison, 31 percent of Mexicans or Mexican-Americans and 29 percent of whites said they regularly shared a pew.

"Without prayer, black couples would be doing significantly worse than white couples," said W. Bradford Wilcox, a coauthor of the study and the director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. "The vitality of African Americans' religious lives gives them an advantage over other Americans when it comes to relationships. This advantage puts them on par with other couples."

In addition to worshipping together, African Americans were found to be more likely than non-Hispanic whites to participate in prayer and scripture studies at home.

The study, which was based on responses to the 2006 National Survey of Religion and Family Life, does have limitations, scholars cautioned. For example, the responses to the survey came from only one partner's report on the quality of their relationship and the extent of their religious involvement. —RNS