

Gallup: Most religious Americans have high levels of well-being

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(RNS) The most religious Americans also have the highest rates of well-being, according to a new Gallup survey.

The finding is based on a survey of more than 550,000 people about their physical and emotional health and their work environment.

Overall, the very religious received a score on Gallup's well-being index of 68.7 percent, while both the moderately religious and the nonreligious received a score of 64.2 percent. The very religious were defined as those who said religion is an important part of their daily lives and they attend worship services at least every week or almost every week.

Researchers did not determine why the very religious had higher levels of health and happiness.

"It is possible that Americans who have higher well-being may be more likely to choose to be religious than those with lower well-being," the organization said in a Thursday (Oct. 28) report announcing the findings.

But it is also possible that being religious can contribute to higher levels of personal well-being.

The survey was the result of a partnership between Gallup and Healthways, a Tennessee company focused on health. It involved a random sample of 554,066 U.S. adults between Jan 2 and July 28 and had a margin of error of plus or minus 0.5 percentage points.