



RELIGION: *A Blessing to Our Lives and Communities*



Faith and religion are a core part of our identity, as Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy explains in this issue (page 52). Our faith, and religion in general, affects our everyday lives. Numerous studies of Christian denominations and other religions show that believers are healthier and more likely to contribute to their communities. The findings presented here are just a sample of the many ways religion improves our lives.

Relationships



RELIGIOUS PEOPLE:

▶ ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER,¹ GIVE TO CHARITY,² AND JOIN CLUBS AND GROUPS.³

▶ HAVE HEALTHIER "SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND STABLE[R] MARRIAGES" AS WELL AS EXPANDED SOCIAL NETWORKS.⁴

▶ "ARE MORE APT TO MARRY AND LESS LIKELY TO DIVORCE [AND THEY] EXPRESS HIGHER DEGREES OF SATISFACTION WITH THEIR SPOUSES."⁵

▶ "ARE ABOUT A THIRD MORE LIKELY . . . TO SAY THEY ARE VERY HAPPY."⁶

▶ HAVE LOWER DEPRESSION RATES AND LESS ANXIETY.⁷

▶ TEND TO LIVE SEVEN YEARS LONGER THAN PEOPLE WHO AREN'T RELIGIOUS.⁸ ■

Community



Health



NOTES

1. See Arthur C. Brooks, *Gross National Happiness: Why Happiness Matters for America—and How We Can Get More of It* (2008), 52.
2. See Rodney Stark, *America's Blessings: How Religion Benefits Everyone, Including Atheists* (2012), 4.
3. See Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (2000), 66–67.
4. Tyler J. VanderWeele, "Does Religious Participation Contribute to Human Flourishing?" *Big Questions Online*, Jan. 14, 2017, bigquestionsonline.com.
5. Stark, *How Religion Benefits Everyone*, 4.
6. Brooks, *Gross National Happiness*, 48.
7. See Andrew Sims, *Is Faith Delusion? Why Religion is Good For Your Health* (2009), 220.
8. See Stark, *How Religion Benefits Everyone*, 4, 106–7, 111.

