

**From the Solidly Secular to Sunday Stalwarts,
a look at our new religious typology
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About the names ...

The names of the typology groups try to convey distinguishing characteristics in just a few words. Of course, no name this brief can perfectly describe a group, and some license was taken in choosing them. For example, “Sunday Stalwarts” includes some highly religious people (such as Jews, Muslims and Seventh-day Adventists) who do not observe the Sabbath on Sunday. However, nine-in-ten respondents who fall into this group identify with Christian churches that generally hold services on Sunday.

Similarly, the broader group categories – highly religious, somewhat religious and nonreligious – are meant to convey general characteristics about the subgroups they comprise. For example, while God-and-Country Believers and the Diversely Devout are less likely than Sunday Stalwarts to participate in weekly worship, they are all categorized as highly religious due to similar beliefs, prayer habits, and ways they view and interact with God, among other factors.

Most American adults identify with a religion, describing themselves as Protestants, Catholics or Jews, to name just a few examples. But a new Pew Research Center analysis looks at beliefs and behaviors that cut across many religious identities, producing a new and revealing classification, or typology, of religion in America. The new typology sorts U.S. adults into seven cohesive groups based on their answers to 16 questions about their religious and spiritual beliefs and practices, the value they place on religion, and the ways they find meaning and fulfillment in life.

The Religious Typology: The highly religious, nonreligious and in between



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults.
"The Religious Typology"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Three of the seven groups are composed of highly religious Americans who are united by a traditional view of God and by the shared conviction that organized religion is generally a force for good in American life. **Sunday Stalwarts** are the most religious of the seven typology groups; they have a high level of involvement in religious congregations and actively practice their faith.

God-and-Country Believers are less active in church groups or other religious organizations, but, like Sunday Stalwarts, they hold many traditional religious beliefs and tilt right on social and political issues.

The **Diversely Devout** includes a relatively large share of racial and ethnic minorities. They are also diverse in their beliefs: It is the only group in which most people say they believe in God "as described in the Bible" *and* in which majorities say they believe in psychics, reincarnation and that spiritual energy can be located in physical things like mountains, trees and crystals.

At the opposite end of the spectrum from the three highly religious groups are two nonreligious groups characterized by their tendency to seldom or never attend religious services, rarely pray,

and to reject belief in the God of the Bible – instead believing in another higher power or spiritual force, or in no higher power at all. The **Solidly Secular** are the least religious of the seven groups. These relatively affluent, highly educated U.S. adults – mostly white and male – tend to describe themselves as neither religious nor spiritual. **Religion Resisters**, on the other hand, largely consider themselves spiritual but not religious. Another unifying characteristic is their opposition to organized religion.

In between the three highly religious and two nonreligious categories stand two additional typology groups – the **Relaxed Religious** and the **Spiritually Awake**. Most Relaxed Religious Americans say they believe in the God of the Bible, and four-in-ten pray daily. But relatively few attend religious services or read scripture, and nearly all say it is not necessary to believe in God to be a moral person. All Spiritually Awake Americans hold at least some New Age beliefs (e.g., in psychics or that spiritual energy can be located in physical objects) and believe in God or some higher power, though many do not believe in God as described in the Bible and relatively few attend religious services on a weekly basis.

While these typology groups were assembled without regard to religious affiliation, it is still revealing to analyze the religious composition of each group. Each has its distinguishing markers, but none of the typology groups is religiously uniform, and every major religious tradition is represented within multiple typology groups. Sunday Stalwarts, for example, are largely Protestant but also include Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Jews. And while most Solidly Seculars are religiously unaffiliated, their ranks also include Americans who identify as Protestants, Catholics and Jews, among others.

Questions used to define cluster groups

	Highly religious groups			Somewhat religious groups		Nonreligious groups	
	Sunday Stalwarts	God-and-Country Believers	Diversely Devout	Relaxed Religious	Spiritually Awake	Religion Resisters	Solidly Secular
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Religious engagement							
Attend religious services weekly	82	27	12	17	8	2	2
Pray daily	84	72	58	39	44	12	2
Participate in church groups	100	<1	9	2	4	2	3
Spiritual and religious identity							
Say they are very/somewhat spiritual	96	91	86	64	78	68	22
Say they are very/somewhat religious	90	85	85	51	43	3	3
Religious beliefs							
Believe in God as described in the Bible	94	92	87	68	50	3	1
Believe the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally	54	57	54	10	10	0	1
Say it is necessary to believe in God to be moral	62	93	99	1	<1	4	2
Believe in heaven	97	96	94	95	98	12	4
Believe in hell	91	90	81	78	78	5	2
Believe there is spiritual energy located in physical things, such as mountains, trees or crystals	29	0	95	0	99	98	<1
Sources of meaning							
Derive a great deal of meaning/fulfillment from their religious faith	87	67	53	24	20	1	<1
Derive a great deal of meaning/fulfillment from spiritual practices, such as meditation	41	24	28	5	23	19	2
Derive a great deal of meaning/fulfillment from being outdoors and experiencing nature	42	39	59	36	58	64	42
Religion's impact							
Say churches and religious organizations do more good than harm in American society	86	77	70	58	53	15	29
Say religious beliefs help a lot in family relationships	76	54	44	21	17	3	1

Note: See questionnaire for full question wording. Boxes are shaded according to a scale, with darker shades indicating higher numbers. Differently shaded boxes do not necessarily represent a statistically significant difference.

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults.

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Catholics are classified as follows

Highly religious groups	
Sunday Stalwarts	13%
God-and-Country Believers	24%
Diversely Devout	29%
Somewhat religious groups	
Relaxed Religious	25%
Spiritually Awake	23%
Nonreligious groups	
Religion Resisters	9%
Solidly Secular	9%
