



# 2011

## *LOOKING BACK ON WHAT HAS SHAPED US*



*A summary of responses to the first 2011 survey of prior  
participants in the Transition into Ministry programs*

*- funded by the Lilly Endowment -*

David Gortner

Alvin Johnson

Anne Burruss

*Transition Impact Study,*

*Virginia Theological Seminary*

6/5/2011

# Looking Back on What Has Shaped Us

A Summary of Responses

from

Transition into Ministry Program Participants

David Gortner, Alvin Johnson, and Anne Burruss

A publication of



Virginia Theological Seminary

Alexandria, Virginia

©June 2011

Research funded by the Lilly Endowment

## LOOKING BACK ON WHAT HAS SHAPED US

This summary is based on responses from over 300 of over 750 seminary graduates who concluded their participation in the various Transition into Ministry programs funded by the Lilly Endowment. We are far from finished with gathering responses from remaining alumni, and we expect to reach at least 400 responses.

This is a unique group of seminary graduates to participate in such a study. Over 95% of respondents are Mainline/Oldline Protestant, while over 4% are Evangelical Protestant. The Christian denominations represented include Episcopal/Anglican (16%), Baptist (8%), Disciples of Christ (6%), UCC/MCC (17%), Presbyterian/Reformed (42%), Lutheran (5%), Methodist (5%), and African Methodist Episcopal and Holiness traditions (1%).

Alumni of the 30 Transition into Ministry programs range from their mid-20's to their mid-50's, predominantly in their 30's. They come from all over the United States, with a few coming from other countries like Canada, Korea, Germany, Ghana, and Trinidad and Tobago. Among our respondents were 60% women and 40% men. 73% are married, 12% are single, 6% are currently divorced, 3% are in covenanted relationships, and the remaining are dating or engaged. 46% of respondents have children. 16% were previously married and divorced.

The 323 respondents represent some of the racial diversity challenges in several of the denominations represented. The group is 90% Euro-American, 4% African-American, 2% Asian-American, 0.6% Latin-American, 0.3% Native American, and 2% with Mixed racial background (2% indicated themselves as "other").



## WHICH PROGRAMS PARTICIPATED IN THIS SURVEY?

Below is a summary of respondents by the Transition into Ministry (TiM) programs in which they participated. “Residencies” were congregation-based programs that employed seminary graduates for 1-3 years, providing an intensive training ground with seasoned clergy, peers, and congregation members. Over 200 seminary graduates participated in the residency programs. “Peer-based programs” were broader-based programs directed by seminaries, judicatories, regional ministry centers, or national denominational offices, which provided regular gatherings of recent seminary graduates who were moving into first positions of leadership and ministry in a variety of settings (mostly congregations), with other leaders in ministry, for reflection, training, and support. About 500 seminary graduates participated in these peer-based programs.

### Residencies

- Bryn Mawr Presbyterian –	5 out of 10
- Central Christian –	4 out of 10
- Central Presbyterian –	3 out of 9
- Charles Street AME –	1 out of 9
- Christ Church Episcopal –	9 out of 20
- Church of the Servant –	7 out of 11
- Community Christian –	1 out of 5
- Concord Baptist –	1 out of 8
- First Presbyterian, Ann Arbor –	8 out of 15
- Fourth Presbyterian –	9 out of 20
- Hyde Park Union –	3 out of 12
- Minneapolis Congregational Cluster –	9 out of 16
<i>(Plymouth, First, &amp; Mayflower)</i>	
- Plymouth Congregational, IA –	0 out of 2
- St. James’ Episcopal –	4 out of 7
- St. Paul Lutheran –	4 out of 6
- Trinity Lutheran –	5 out of 9
- Wellesley Congregational –	5 out of 8
- Wilshire Baptist –	8 out of 14
- Ministry Residency, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship –	3 out of 36
- Congregational Immersion, Disciples Divinity House –	2 out of 4
<hr/>	
TOTAL –	91 out of 218

### Peer-based Programs

- First Parish Project (Hinton Rural Life) –	37 out of 100
- Center for Teaching Churches (McAfee) –	10 out of 24
- New Clergy Program (Massachusetts UCC)	30 out of 133
- Company of New Pastors (PCUSA) –	98 out of 238 [roughly]
- Bridges Project (Princeton) –	11 out of 25
- Bethany Fellowship (General Assembly) –	9 out of 38
- Making Excellent Disciples (Chicago) –	15 out of 28
- First Three Years (Virginia) –	18 out of 67

---

TOTAL – 228 out of about 653

## B. T. – BEFORE “TRANSITION INTO MINISTRY”

### LIFE BEFORE SEMINARY

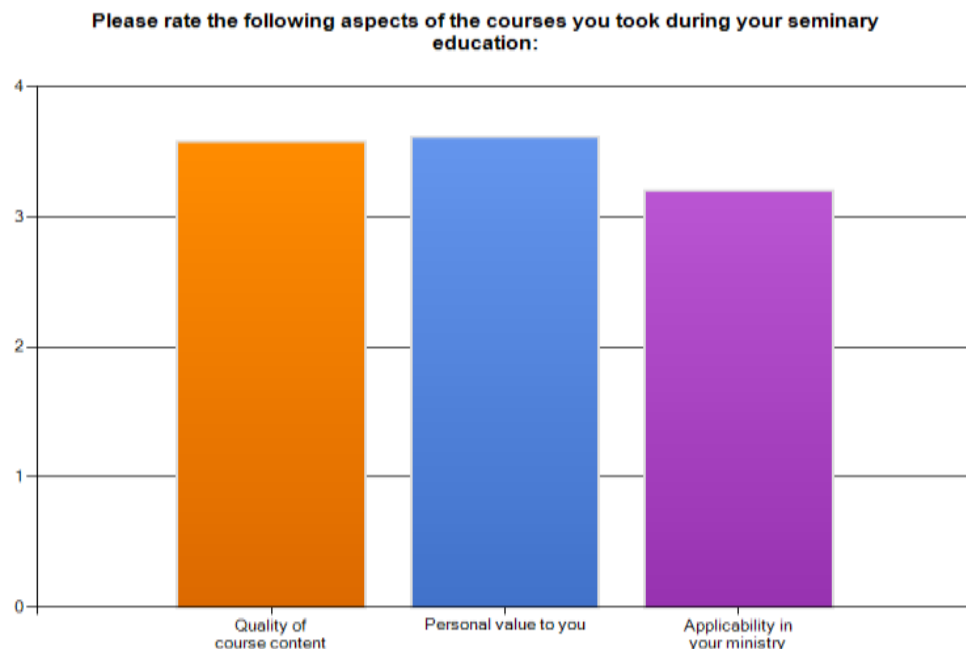
Even at a generally younger age, **59%** of Transition into Ministry (TiM) participants had worked in another field prior to ordination. Work ranged from construction to theater and graphic design, from teaching to non-profit administration, from corporate consulting to television production, from restaurant and grocery work to publishing and information technology, from social work and community organizing to marketing and finance.

Many TiM participants also came to seminary and to their TiM programs with prior graduate education: 22% have a Masters degree in addition to the Master of Divinity degree earned in seminary, and 6% have Doctoral degrees.

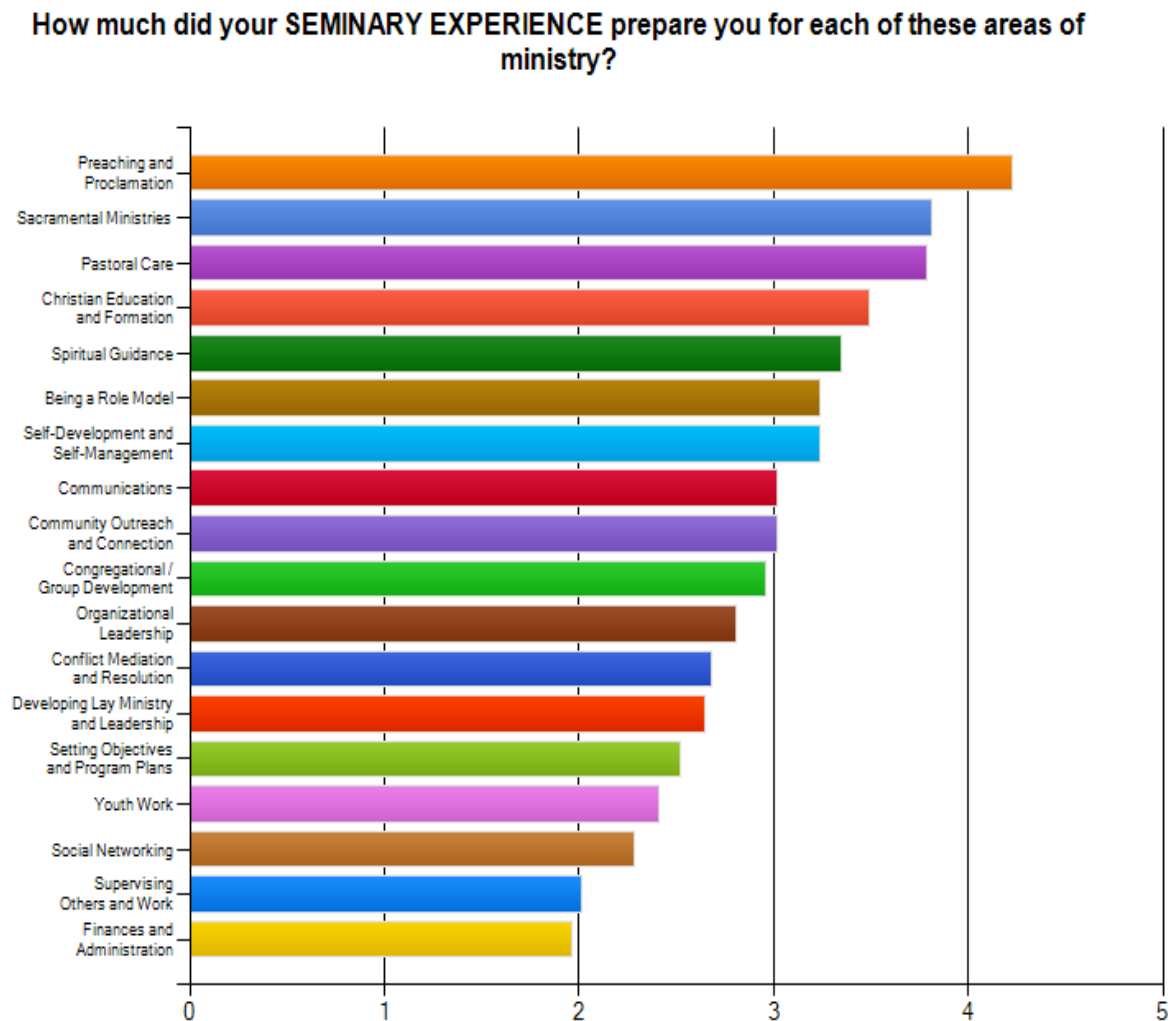
### THE SEMINARY EXPERIENCE

Transition into Ministry (TiM) participants attended seminaries and divinity schools from across the country and spanning a wide range of denominations. TiM participants have tended to be high-caliber students in seminary. Considering grades alone, performance was high in seminary: 49% of TiM alumni had GPA's of 3.75 to 4.0, and 41% had GPA's of 3.3 to 3.74.

TiM alumni also rated their seminary experience in generally positive terms. Ratings were higher for the quality and personal value of course than for the applicability of courses to everyday ministry – but ratings for all three categories were high. Ratings were similarly high for professors.



TiM alumni felt best prepared by their seminary experience for ministry and leadership in the areas of preaching, sacramental ministries, pastoral care, and Christian education/formation. They noted their weakest seminary preparation for ministry and leadership in areas of finance and administration, supervision, youth work, social networks, objectives and planning, and conflict resolution.



TiM alumni are devoted to lifelong learning, with 90% pursuing continuing education regularly.

## WHAT ABOUT THE PROCESS OF BEING ORDAINED?

At this point, TiM alumni who are ordained range from 1-11 years in ordained ministry. Their experience with the process toward ordination varied. For the most part, ordination processes were generally positive experiences of support, understanding, and clarity. But 17% of these high-caliber TiM alumni indicated some kind of major problems of delays in ordination process. Below are some situations that respondents wrote to explain what created problems or delays.

*My sponsoring parish entered an interim period and the ordination process went on hold with that.*

*One month prior to graduation from seminary my committee for preparation for ministry decided not to certify me to receive a call. I had passed all previous steps with strong affirmations and was completely surprised by their response. They required me to perform a one year internship prior to becoming certified ready for call. Six months into my internship they certified me ready for call without asking any probing questions about the internship or contacting my internship supervisor.*

*I had to go to the commission on ministry twice due to theological differences with the commission.*

*When I received a call, my [region] of care and [new region of destination] had different notions of who should administer the ordination exam. After it was resolved, I had to wait for a meeting to be examined before I could begin working at the church. Since [they] meet only 3 times a year, this was quite a challenge and resulted in my waiting a month after moving to be able to begin working.*

*I transferred annual conferences – cost me a year.*

*My divorce.*

*I developed rheumatoid arthritis and wasn't able to pursue ordination until it was under control.*

*My sexual orientation was a problem for [one] region of the Church. I was able to be ordained after moving to [another] region of our church (which is open and affirming).*

*My primary experiences in lay ministry were in communities whose racial, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts contrasted with the majority of [this denomination] and with its gatekeepers*

*My ex-spouse and I were assigned to a [region] where they did not actually have two full-time vacancies willing to call a first-call pastor near one another. Then we were released and picked up by [another region], which was very slow to provide interview opportunities (about ten months total from assignment to ordination).*

*In the Baptist world, each congregation or church staff develops their own ordination process. In my first ministry position, my head pastor continued to refuse to let me begin the ordination process even though the remaining staff members advocated on my behalf. I was finally allowed to begin the process by calling together a council after a conflict arose between staff members and the pastor.*

*My original denomination removed my ministerial status for not being at a local meeting--while I was doing church missionary work in Africa. I had little support to be reinstated, and at the time did not feel empowered to go directly to my bishop.*

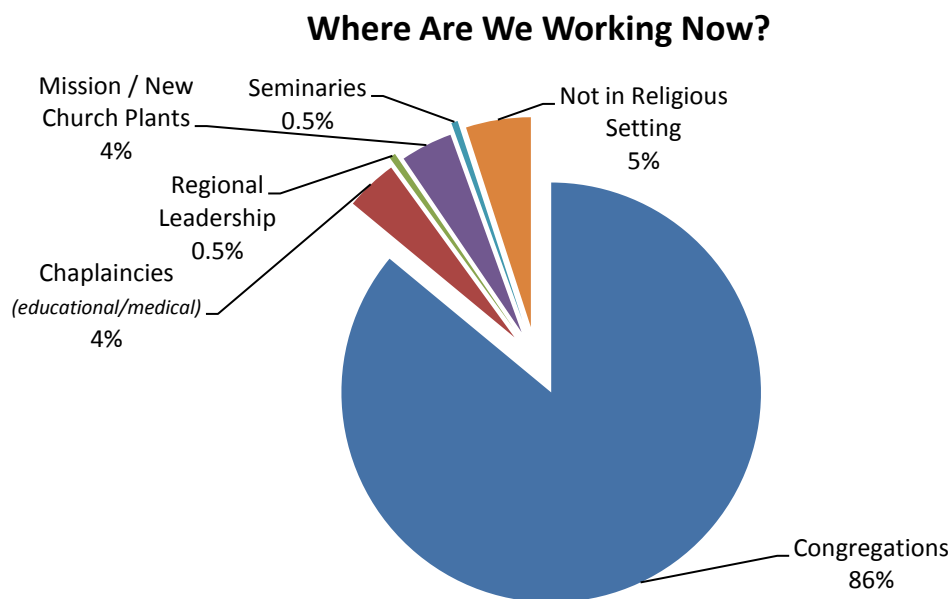
*While I passed all of the official requirements for ordination quickly, my [region's] "preparation committee" is notorious for delaying ordination of younger candidates (by 1-3 years) through adding additional, case-specific requirements.*

*I was a well-educated, young, progressive, out spoken woman... I crossed every 't' and dotted every 'i,' but I was up against much resistance in the local [denominational] committee for the preparation for ministry.*

## LIFE A. T. (AFTER TiM) – WHERE ARE WE NOW?

TiM alumni are all over the country in different churches, ministry settings, and places of employment. The majority of TiM alumni (74%) have held 1 or 2 positions since ordination/graduation; 13% have been in 3 positions, and 6% have moved through 4 to 6 positions.

Most TiM alumni have continued to focus on congregational ministry – but some are serving as chaplains, some as regional leaders, and some as missionaries and church planters. Most TiM alumni (71%) have been in their current position 3 years or less.



**TIME:** Most (69%) are working 40-60 hours per week, but about 12% are working  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, and 8% are working at a consuming pace of 61-80 hours per week. 3% work minimal hours.

**COMPENSATION:** Most TiM alumni are being compensated according to accepted practices for paying clergy: 63% receive a salary, benefits, and housing allowance, while 24% have housing provided directly along with a salary and benefits; 4% receive no housing support but some benefits; 7% receive a salary only, with no benefits or housing allowance; 2% are working without a compensation or with only housing provided. One pastor solved the lack of housing support problem by serving as a “Night Sexton/Building Manager for a different church with live-in housing.”

Median compensation ranges between \$45,000 and \$55,000.

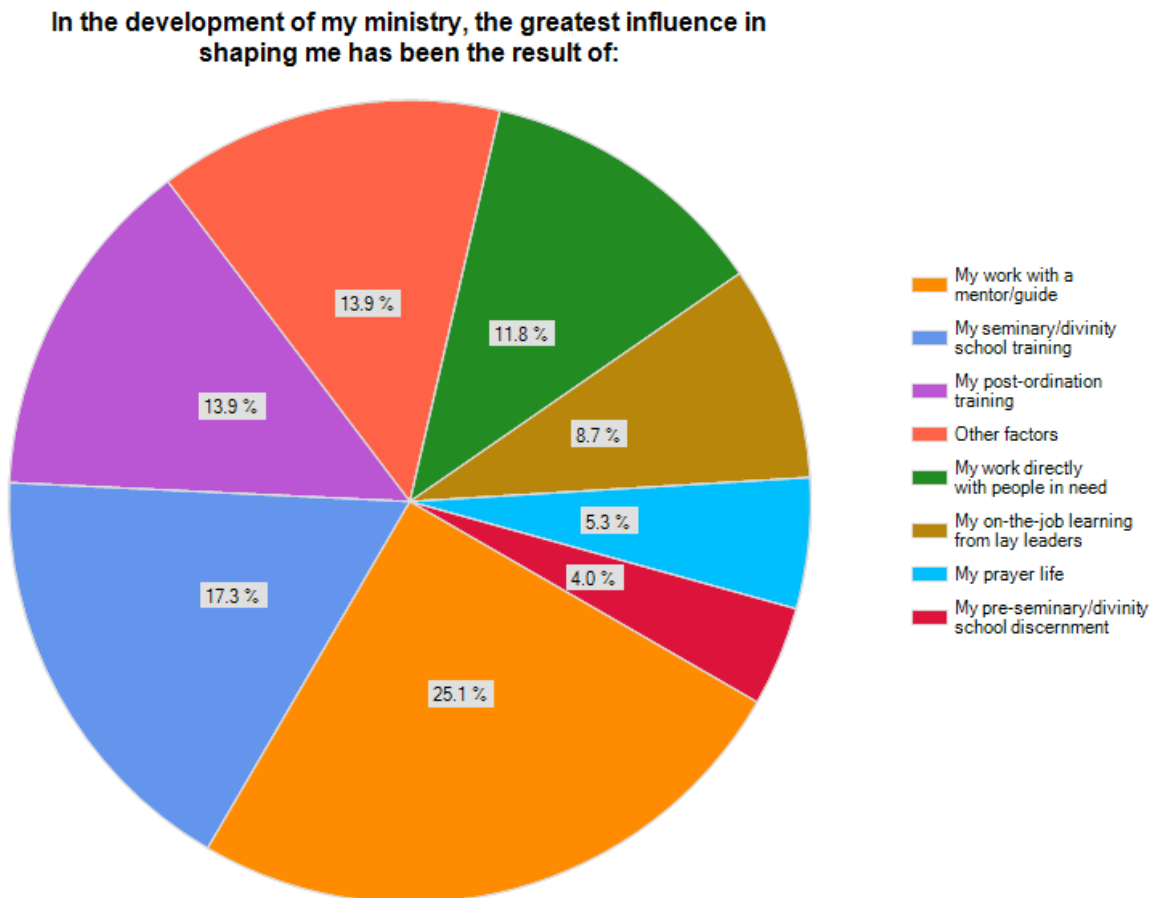
**SUPPLEMENTAL EMPLOYMENT:** 18% report additional employment to supplement their primary ministry work. Of those engaged in supplemental employment (usually quarter-time or less), nearly 65% are not engaged in religious work – some in sales, on-call or supply chaplaincy, adjunct or substitute teaching, coaching, administrative work, and consulting and freelance work. The supplemental work contributes about  $\frac{1}{4}$  or less to total income.

## A RETROSPECTIVE:

### WHO HAS INFLUENCED US MOST AS ORDAINED MINISTERS?

TiM alumni have benefited from tremendous educational and training opportunities, leading up to seminary, during seminary, and during their early post-seminary years. What are some of the most important influences on their development as pastors and priests?

Of TiM alumni, 25% said that the greatest influence on their pastoral development was their work with a mentor. For others, important influences were seminary education itself (17.3%), post-ordination training (13.9%), direct work with people in need (11.8%), and on-the-job learning from lay leaders (8.7%), as well as personal prayer life and pre-seminary discernment. Those who selected “Other factors” (13.9%) wrote about their families growing up, their spouses and close friends, their prior professional lives, development programs (like CPE, internships, and the TiM programs), their spiritual lives, and various combinations of experience and people during the actual work of ordained ministry.



## MENTORS

98% of TiM alumni said they have had at least one significant mentor who shaped their ways of thinking and being – and 53% said they had 2 or 3 significant mentors in their lives.

### Who were our mentors?

Most TiM alumni (64%) said that a congregational pastor or priest was the most significant mentor. Including mentions of college chaplains, judicatory leaders, and pastors from other denominations, over 73% TiM alumni regarded another ordained minister as their most significant mentor. Others identified a teacher or professor (10%), or a counselor or spiritual director (8%). Only 3% mentioned a lay leader, and only 1% identified a secular boss or supervisor as a most significant mentor.

### When were we mentored?

Most TiM alumni said they engaged their most significant mentors in their early post-ordination years (32%), or during seminary and/or field ed (38%), or during college (12%). Nearly 8% said their important mentors were during secular employment; 6% identified the period of life before college; and 4% identified the period three or more years into their ordained ministry.

### Was a TiM person an important mentor?

62% of TiM alumni said that a TiM person (director, supervisor, assigned mentor, or otherwise involved in their TiM program) was one of their key mentors.

## WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM OUR MOST IMPORTANT MENTORS?

### Strongest learnings

TiM alumni ranked the following as their strongest learnings from their most significant mentors.

- ❖ Own and live into my calling as a pastor/priest (*43% highest ranking, 34% high ranking*)
- ❖ Live an authentic life as a Christian leader (*34% highest ranking, 31% high ranking*)
- ❖ Preach with greater clarity and strength (*27% highest ranking, 20% high ranking*)
- ❖ Reflect on God's work in situations we face (*20% highest ranking, 34% high ranking*)
- ❖ Step back and take perspective on situations (*20% highest ranking, 31% high ranking*)
- ❖ Know and value myself more fully (*23% highest ranking, 28% high ranking*)
- ❖ Find confidence in my own theological voice (*21% highest ranking, 28% high ranking*)
- ❖ Read and learn congregational culture (*16% highest ranking, 28% high ranking*)
- ❖ Plan and lead Sunday worship (*18% highest ranking, 21% high ranking*)
- ❖ Be open and responsive to people (*13% highest ranking, 34% high ranking*)

## Weakest learnings

TiM alumni ranked the following as their weakest learnings (or capacities they did not learn) from their most significant mentors.

- ❖ Manage and oversee church's finances (*52% lowest ranking, 25% low ranking*)
- ❖ Plan and coordinate services for weddings, funerals, baptisms (*34% lowest ranking, 22% low*)
- ❖ Plan, direct, and lead Christian education (*31% lowest ranking, 25% low ranking*)
- ❖ Function in a paid position on a church staff (*24% lowest ranking, 20% low ranking*)
- ❖ Build networks with and among people (*20% lowest ranking, 26% low ranking*)
- ❖ Interact with people of different ages (*18% lowest ranking, 29% low ranking*)
- ❖ Use communication strategies effectively to reach people (*14% lowest ranking, 24% low ranking*)
- ❖ Manage my own wellness (*14% lowest ranking, 30% low ranking*)
- ❖ Speak the theological voice of the community (*14% lowest ranking, 25% low ranking*)
- ❖ Take intentional time for rest (*12% lowest ranking, 28% low ranking*)
- ❖ Help others take responsibility in decisions of the church (*10% lowest ranking, 29% low ranking*)

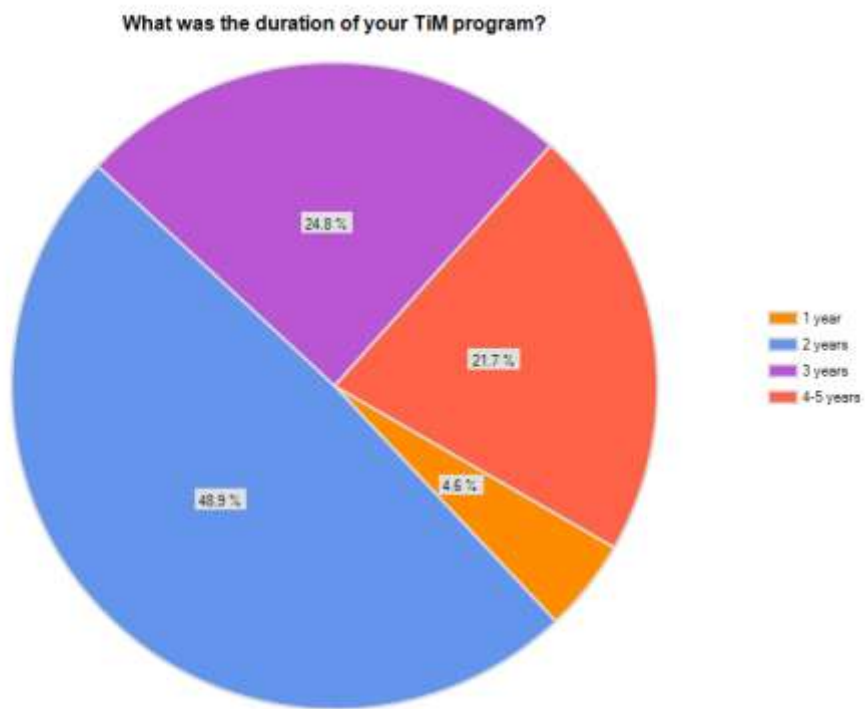
## Intermittent learnings

Other capacities, skills, and habits were ranked by TiM alumni as intermittent or occasional learnings from their most significant mentors.

- ❖ Dealing with conflict effectively
- ❖ Mobilizing and strengthening people's capacities and gifts
- ❖ Dealing with my own life transitions
- ❖ Listening to others
- ❖ Coping with criticism and feedback
- ❖ Looking at situations from different perspectives
- ❖ Working as a team member
- ❖ Offering spiritual guidance
- ❖ Offering clarity and purpose
- ❖ Offering pastoral care

## OUR TRANSITION INTO MINISTRY (TIM) PROGRAMS

Transition into Ministry programs ranged from 1 year to 5 years in length. Most TiM alumni were involved in programs that were 2 years long.

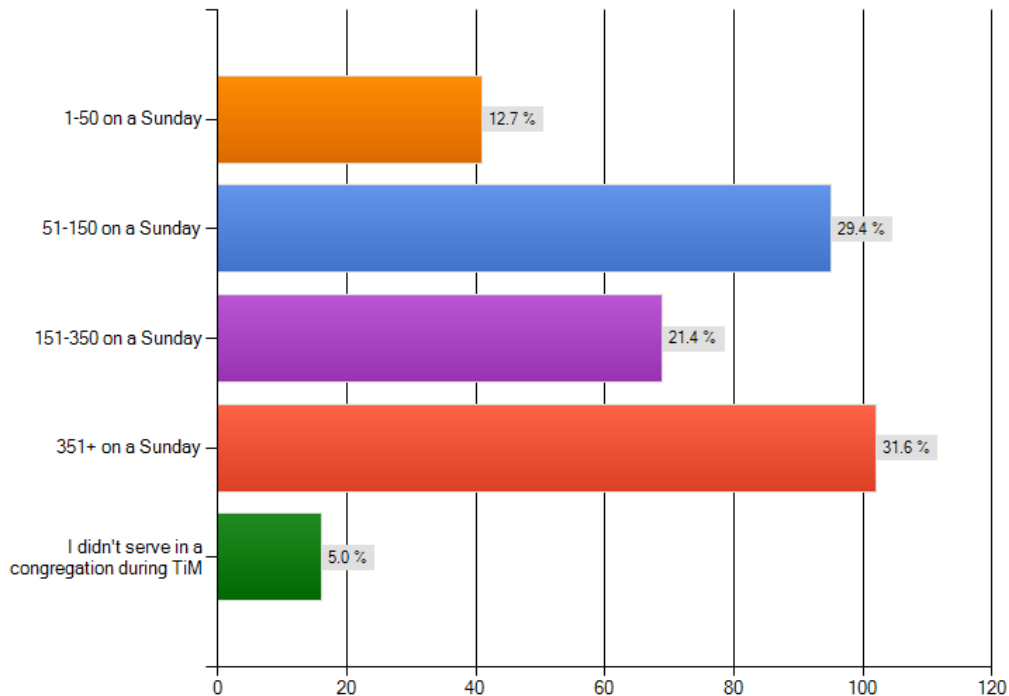


Most TiM alumni served in congregations during their involvement in these programs – but 5% did not serve congregations. 32% worked in **corporate-size** parishes (over 350 average Sunday attendance). These congregations had multiple staff and clergy, typically with annual budgets over \$1,000,000. 21% worked in **program-size** parishes (150-350 average Sunday attendance), typically with at least 2 full-time clergy.

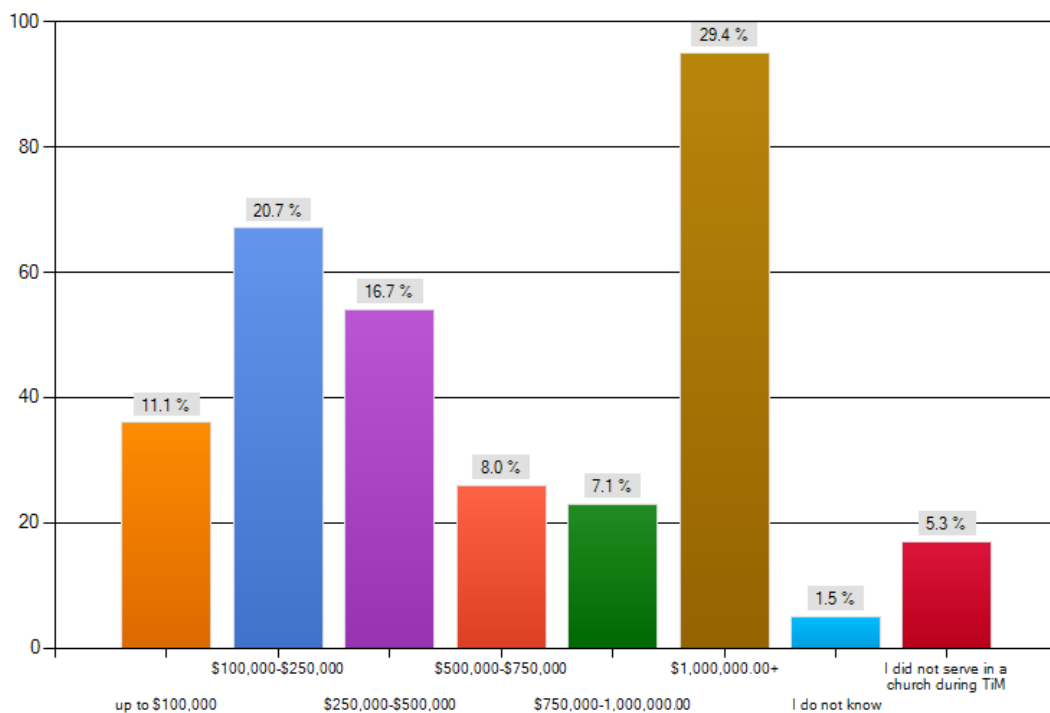
Another 29% worked in **pastoral-size** parishes (50-150 average Sunday attendance), with significantly smaller staff and more part-time rather than full-time positions. And 13% served smaller **family-size** parishes (less than 50 average Sunday attendance) – many with annual budgets under \$100,000. TiM alumni who began post-seminary as solo pastors served these congregations.

The vast majority of these congregations were predominantly Anglo/White congregations – only 5% of TiM alumni served in congregations where less than half of the congregation was White.

**Based on average Sunday attendance, what was the size of the congregation in which you were a TiM participant?**



**What was your best estimate of the operating budget for the church in which you were a TiM participant?**



## CONGREGATION-BASED RESIDENCIES

In congregation-based TiM residencies, the congregations were the base for the programs. Their direct supervisors functioned in instructional as well as employment capacities, often becoming mentors. Their peers were often directly involved in the same congregations and moving through the same residency programs. Congregation members were directly involved in providing training and feedback in line with residency goals. And the work within the congregation was often in line with learning and training aims.

Because of the intensity of involvement and investment by congregations, there were only 1-3 residents per year at any of these parishes, and there were fewer TiM residents than there were TiM peer program participants. Of about 218 TiM residents, 91 have responded so far to the survey.

### Supervisors

All TiM residents met with their supervisors regularly (88% weekly, 8% biweekly). Most of their time together was spent in reflection on ministry experiences and on planning. 77% of TiM residents said that their supervisors became mentors.

### Peers

90% of the TiM residents had peer groups as an integral part of their residency – but 10% did not. Of those who met in peer groups, 70% met at least weekly, followed by 11% who met biweekly, 15% monthly, and 4% quarterly. Most groups were composed of colleagues and peers in the residency program, but some groups mixed residents with congregation members or with peers from other churches. Groups spent most of their time and energy reflecting on ministry experiences – but also wrestled with difficult issues in the congregation and planned and prepared for various ministry efforts. Residencies differed in how much peer groups reflected on scripture and theology together. Groups did not spend much time in shared prayer and spiritual practices.

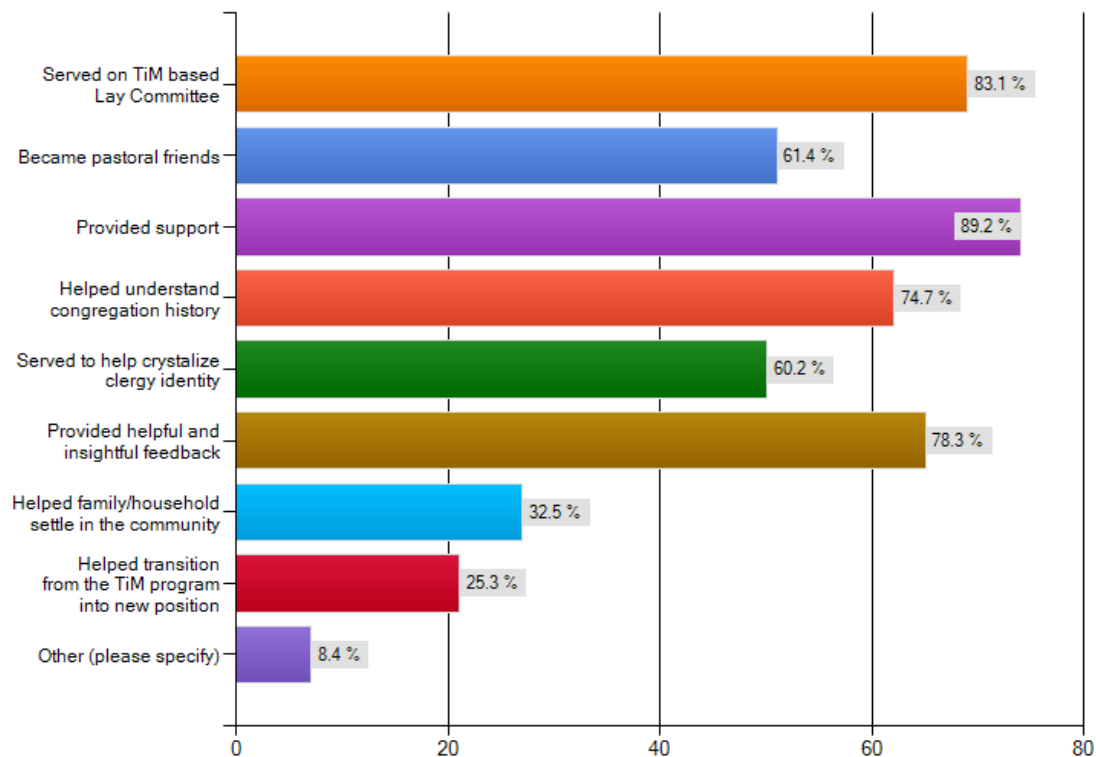
### Personal study, prayer, reflection

While much was clearly structured in the TiM residencies, with multiple interactive opportunities for learning and reflection, not all residencies built in an explicit focus on personal study, prayer, and reflection. 41% of TiM residents said that this was not stated as an expectation or even mentioned. 39% said that an expectation of personal study, prayer, and reflection was stated, but that there was little or no follow-up or reporting. 20% said that such personal development time was expected and reported.

### Congregation Members

83% of residents said there were congregants who served on a TiM Lay Committee (such meetings ranged from monthly to annually). They also met with congregants monthly in ministry task groups and governing bodies (usually monthly) and socially (often monthly, ranging from quarterly to biweekly). Congregants also were active with most residents in providing support, offering helpful and insightful feedback, and giving background and perspective on the history and dynamics of the congregation. For many, congregants contributed to the development of pastoral identity. Many became friends with members of the congregation. Some experienced support from congregants for their families and in the process of transition to their new positions after the residency. The chart below illustrates how much impact and interaction congregation had with residents.

**In what way did congregation members contribute to your TiM experience? Check all that apply.**



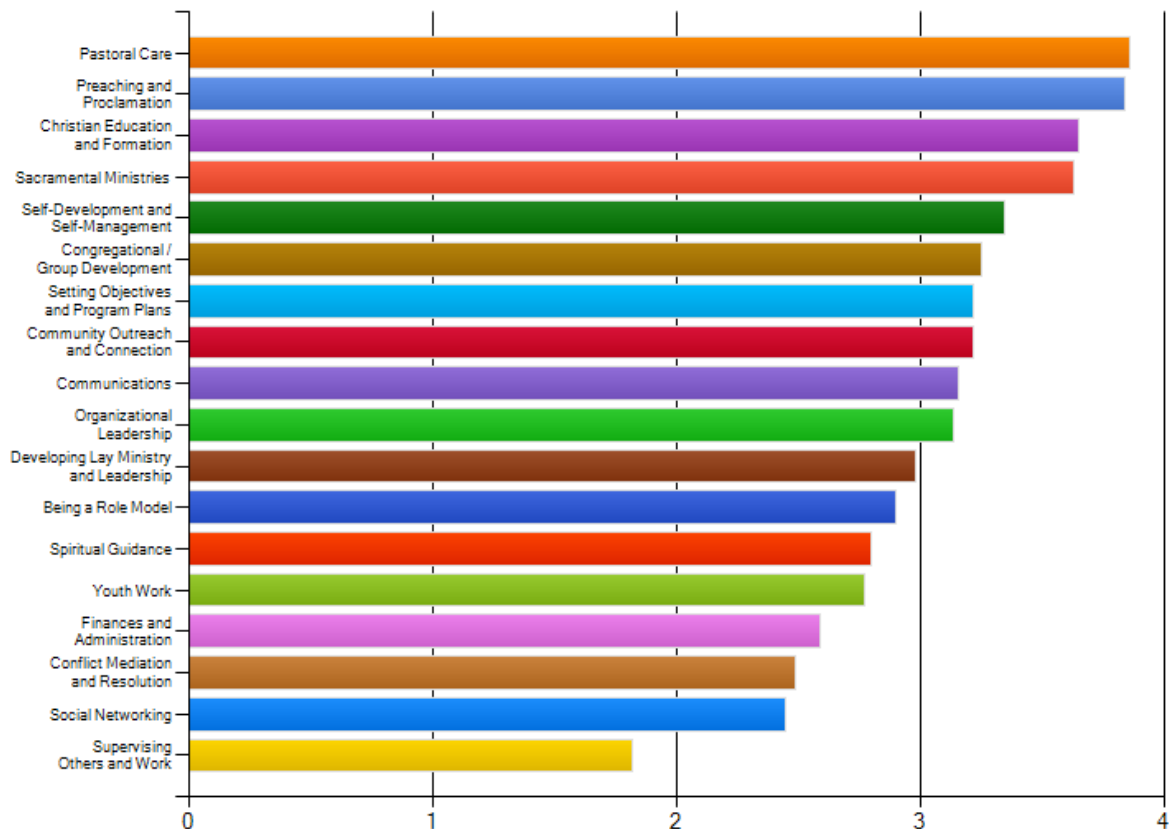
In addition, residents saw congregants as strong in their initial welcome, in general vocational encouragement, and in valuing residents' input and ideas.

### **The Work of Ministry**

Residents' strongest ministry exposure was to (1) pastoral care, (2) preaching, (3) worship and sacramental ministries, and (4) Christian education. The areas of ministry where they had the least exposure were (1) supervision of others and work, (2) conflict mediation and resolution, (3) finances and administration, and (4) work with and development of social networks. The chart below shows residents' ratings of time committed to 18 different areas of ministry.

Major challenges came up in ministry in the residencies, as reported by 64% of residents – in several cases, a major event that shaped the overall experience was the departure of the senior pastor/priest or the primary TiM residency director – in other cases, there were serious conflicts that arose between staff or clergy colleagues.

**EXPOSURE TO AREAS OF MINISTRY ---- Please estimate how much time you spent in work and training during your TiM residency in the following areas of ministry:**



The programs varied widely in terms of how much primary leadership residents were given to exercise in various areas of ministry. For some, there was no experience of primary leadership: *“The ability to be a generalist was a strength of the program, but the lack of primary leadership was a weakness.”* For others, the program provided opportunities for time-limited, focused leadership – usually in ministries of Christian education and social outreach. Some were given leadership for specific worship services or particular groups in the congregation. A few were able – and permitted – to develop substantial leadership portfolios. Here is one example that stands out:

*“The 1st year I was Director of Spiritual Care and sole chaplain to the Hospital, a small community hospital served by the church in outreach. I carried a pager, offered spiritual care to patients and families in the hospital, led clothing and magazine drives at the church for the hospital community, sat on the hospital ethics committee, led spirituality groups on the hospital’s many behavioral medicine units. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year I was responsible for ministry to children and families. I was charged with creating a summer educational program on diversity for children of all ages; I coordinated with the Christian Ed Committee to plan activities, events, worship leadership and fundraisers for children and families throughout the year; responsible for coordinating volunteers for Sunday School and prepping curriculum; started music time for small children. Also started a young adults ministry, with monthly fellowship opportunities.”*

Even in situations where residents were given leadership responsibility, about 48% of residents did not always sense that they had been granted the authority needed to lead effectively.

## PEER-BASED PROGRAMS

Peer program participants were a dispersed community, each person serving in a different congregation or organization. In peer-based TiM programs run by more broadly focused organizations, the most fundamental elements were connections with peers around support and shared learning, and personal spiritual and professional development. With a few exceptions<sup>1</sup>, the congregations that employed TiM participants did not have any obligations or direct involvement in the TiM programs – nor did these employing congregations necessarily see themselves as “teaching congregations.” And so, congregation members usually were not involved directly in a TiM-based system of developmental support and feedback – nor were supervisors. Supervisors (for those TiM participants who had them) focused more on employment and work-related matters than on instruction with their supervisees. And many peer program participants began their ordained ministries as solo pastors.

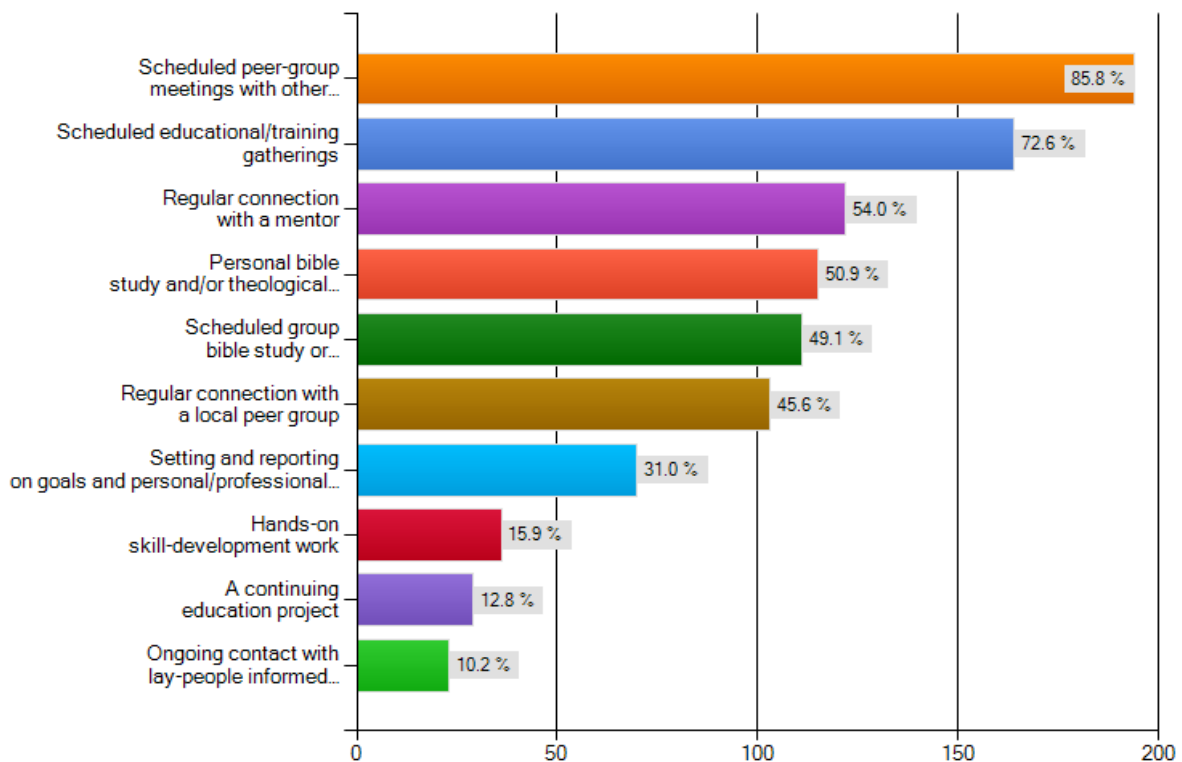
These programs worked with more participants at any given time than did the residencies. So, there were many more TiM peer program participants – over 600 across the different programs. Of those, 228 peer program participants have responded to the survey.

The peer-based programs were very diverse in their programs and efforts. The chart that follows shows how participants in these programs saw the primary emphases in these programs overall. What was most common across all programs was the focus on peer-based gatherings with other TiM program participants – 86% of TiM alumni from these programs said that scheduled peer-group meetings with fellow TiM participants was an expectation of their programs. Most programs also provided educational or training-oriented meetings. Not all programs provided or expected regular connection with a mentor or regular personal practices of Christian discipleship (such as bible study or prayer). Few programs provided or expected a continuing education project, hands-on skill development, or regular consultation with lay leaders.

---

<sup>1</sup> One notable exception is the hybrid program of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago – selected congregations served as first-position training sites, supervising clergy functioned a bit like residency program supervisors, and new clergy participants met in peer groups both with each other (like residents) and with broader-based peer groups. In 2010, a number of residency programs began to move toward hybrid-style programs that bring together the strengths of both residency and peer-based programs.

**How many of the following were an expected part of your TiM program? Please check all that apply.**



## Peers

Peer meetings were central to these programs. There were two distinct types of peer encounters – (1) among TiM program participants, and (2) with clergy outside the TiM programs.

93% of peer program participants had peer groups as part of their TiM programs – but 7% did not. Of those who met in peer groups, only 5% met weekly or biweekly. Most met monthly (30%), quarterly or biannually (42%), or annually (23%). For 82% of participants, these meetings were led by TiM mentors or leaders, or by external facilitators – but in 18% of the groups, peers led or facilitated sessions. Groups spent most of their time and energy reflecting on ministry experiences. They also periodically reflected on dealing with difficult issues in their congregations, discussed specific content-focused presentations together on scripture, or engaged in theological reflection or prayer and spiritual practices. The infrequency of peer sessions, as well as geographic distance between peers, created difficulties for the groups. But participants indicated that the groups were supportive, helped build skills and confidence, and provided opportunities for networking:

*“I began to recognize that what I had been going through and was going through was not unique to me. I heard others tell the same stories of struggle with their congregations in relationship to change and transition. I began to realize it was not me--but was part of the system of church. I knew this in my head but [the peer program] transferred it to my heart/my being. This helped me develop greater leadership and confidence as I began to lead less from anxiety and also would know that even when church members wanted to make things personal, 99% of the time they were not personal.”*

70% were also part of a peer group **outside** the TiM peer-based program. These groups ranged from local or regional denominational groups to ecumenical groups (only 9% of those in non-TiM peer groups identified them as established clergy associations). Meetings with these non-TiM peer groups were more frequent, with most meeting monthly (65%) or weekly/ biweekly (19%). Leadership in these groups was more frequently freeform or shared among participants (58%).

### Personal Study, Prayer, Reflection

Compared with the residency programs, the peer-based programs much more frequently had a clear expectation that participants would engage in personal study, prayer, and reflection. Only 20% of peer program participants said that this was not stated as an expectation or even mentioned. 42% said that an expectation was stated but that there was little or no follow-up or reporting. But 37% said that it was expected and reported, and 1% indicated that this was the sole purpose of the program.

### Supervisors

Not all alumni of peer-based TiM programs identified supervisors to whom they were directly accountable – for instance, some whose first call was as solo pastors did not have someone to whom they reported. Of those that did have supervisors, most met with them weekly (40%), biweekly (7%), or monthly (26%). Conversations focused on ministry experiences and on planning for the work of ministry. 39% said that their supervisors became mentors – a lower percentage than among residents, but still an encouraging percentage.

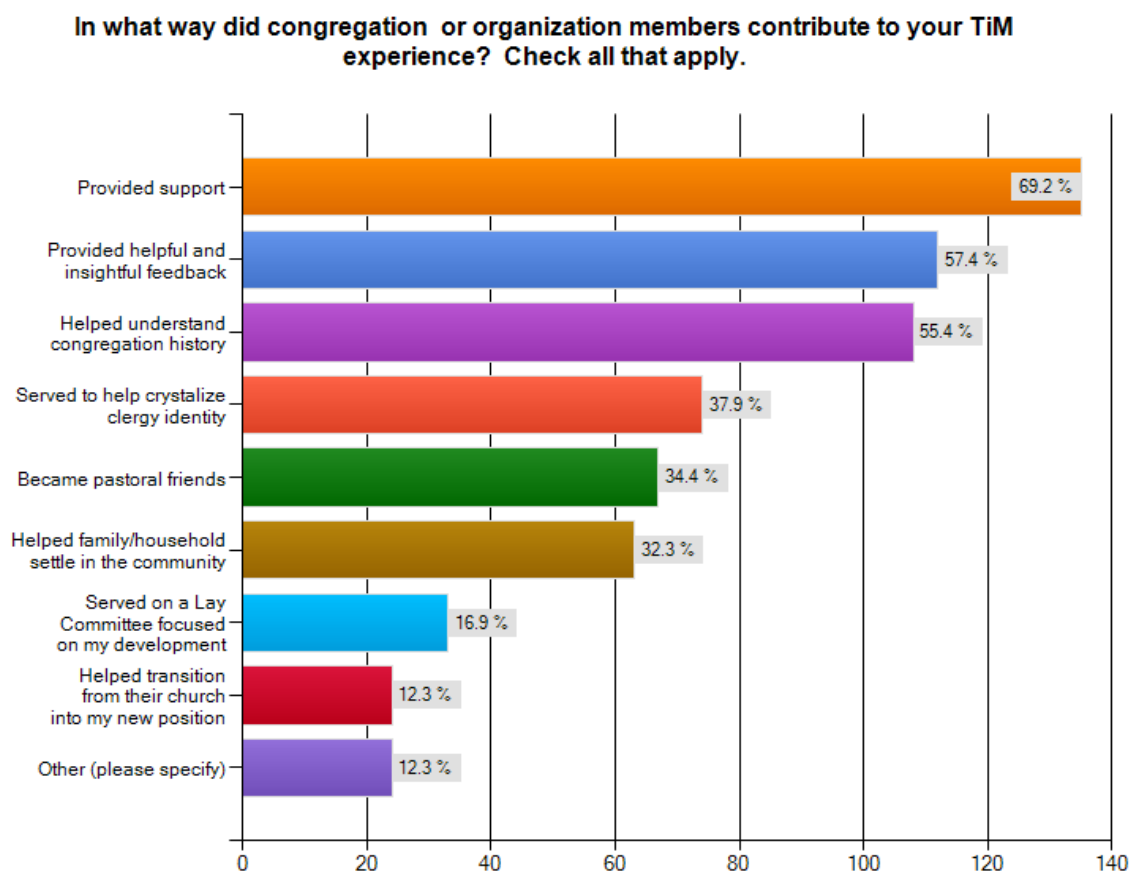
### TiM Mentors

Unique to many peer-based programs was the expectation that participants find (or be assigned) a mentor as part of the program. 57% were expected to find or were assigned a TiM mentor – and for most (67%), this was someone different than a supervisor. Meetings with these mentors were less frequent – monthly, semi-annually, or annually – and the content of conversations was somewhat different, not only focusing on ministry experiences but also dealing with difficult issues in the congregation. Only 21% of those with TiM mentors said that their TiM mentor became their most significant mentor. One alumna had this to say:

*“The TiM mentoring relationship had been much less defined than the mentoring roles in CPE. I would hope that can improve for future participants ... but for myself, I'm cultivating the kind of relationship I find most helpful from my mentors and appreciate that opportunity.”*

## Congregation Members

Peer program participants did not experience as great a sense of support as residency program participants did from their employing congregations or organizations. Only 17% of peer program participants said there were congregants who served on a Lay Committee focused on their vocational development (with meetings ranging from monthly to annually). Peer program participants noted their congregants as similarly supportive, but less often helpful in providing helpful and insightful feedback and in giving background and perspective on the history and dynamics of the congregation. Fewer became friends with members of the congregation. The chart below shows how peer program participants perceived their relationships with congregation members where they served in their first call. About 38% of peer program participants said that congregants contributed to the development of their pastoral identity.

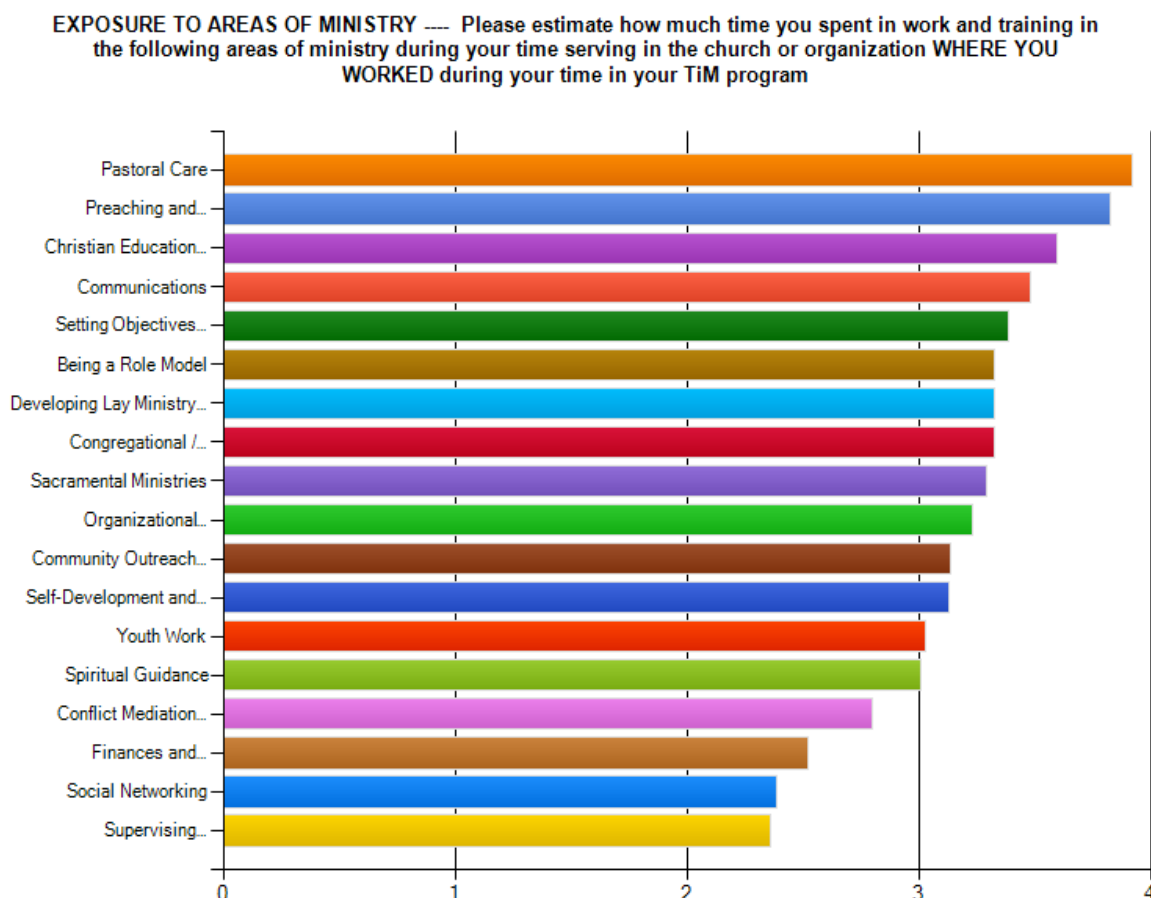


Like residents, peer program participants saw congregants as strong in their initial welcome, in general vocational encouragement, and in valuing residents' input and ideas.

Meetings with ministry task groups and governing bodies in the congregations or organizations were much more common, with most participants involved monthly or weekly in such meetings (58%) – but 24% never had such meetings with congregants. Social meetings and gatherings were more frequent (most often biweekly or monthly).

## The work of ministry

Peer program participants' strongest ministry exposure was to pastoral care, preaching, Christian education, communications, and developing lay ministry. Their lowest ministry exposure was to supervision of others and work, recognition and development of social networks, finances and administration, and conflict mediation and resolution. The chart below shows these new pastors' ratings of time committed to 18 different areas of ministry. The relative strengths and weaknesses of learning were remarkably similar between residencies and peer-based programs.



Peer program participants' ministry experiences were even more widely varied than those in TiM residencies. The programs were not able to provide directives to the congregations and organizations that employed their new clergy participants. Employing congregations and organizations varied widely in terms of how much primary leadership these TiM new clergy participants were given to exercise in various areas of ministry. For a few, there was no experience of primary leadership, as they occupied entry positions of learning within larger congregations. For others, their congregations or organizations provided opportunities for time-limited, specifically focused leadership, as they learned the "generalist" sense of overall ministry: *"Generalist ministry was my experience. Social Outreach, Leading Bible Study, and Visitation of the Sick and Homebound were the expected primary areas of focus."* Others assumed longer-term leadership of particular groups or areas of ministry in their congregations. But quite a few assumed full responsibility of many areas of ministry right out of the gate, as they took positions as solo pastors, senior pastors or rectors in smaller congregations. *"As a solo pastor I am responsible for most aspects of church life from finances, to worship and teaching, fellowship and communications."*

Like TiM residents, many peer program participants (46%) found that they were not always granted the authority needed to lead effectively even when they were given primary leadership responsibility for something.

Major challenges in first years of ministry were also reported by peer program participants (51%) – but in their cases, the major challenges were less focused on internal leadership struggles (although that topic also surfaced) and instead more focused on pastoral crises and challenges in the community and in personal life. Below are some examples:

*“I came to a rural congregation with serious financial issues. No one told me what to look for when I accepted this position, and I probably wouldn't have gone there had someone (denominational folks) been more honest with me about the financial issues.”*

*“New senior pastor and associate (me) at the same time after a 22-year pastorate with no real interim. It was a time of great struggle about the vision, direction, leadership, and culture of the church.”*

*“Personal crisis - A baby (ours) died mid-term within the first 6 months. National Crisis - 9/11/01 occurred within the first 3 months.”*

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE?

### WHAT DID WE LEARN AND DEVELOP DURING OUR TiM EXPERIENCES?

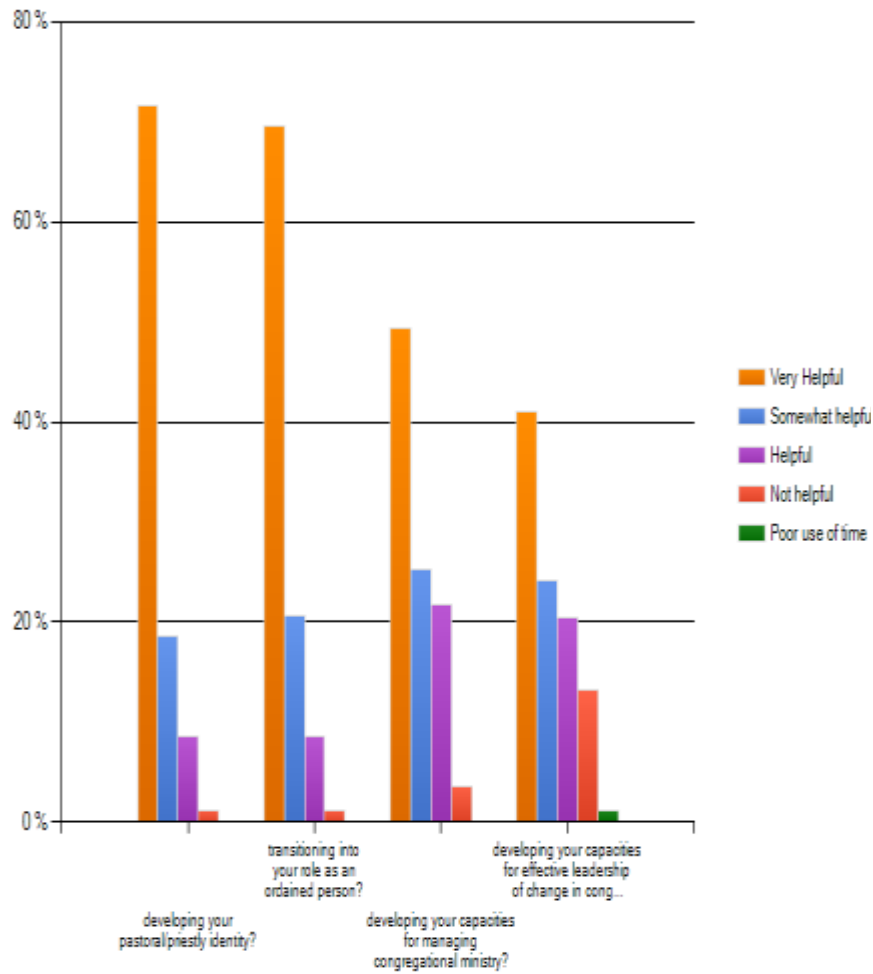
What was most helpful in the residencies and peer-based programs? The following pages show similarities and differences in what residents and peer program participants experienced.

The charts on the next page show how residents and peer program participants responded to four questions of impact. For both residents and peer program participants, the greatest impact was in the development of a newly ordained person's pastoral identity and in the transition into a new role as a pastor or priest. But in terms of learning effective management of the ongoing ministry and work in a congregation, residents and peer program participants alike found the programs less helpful – although still somewhat helpful. And these TiM alumni indicated that the programs were least helpful (but still helpful for some) in developing capacities for effective leadership of change in congregations and organizations.

Overall, residents were much more positive than peer program participants about their TiM programs. They were much more likely to say that the residencies were “very helpful” in all levels of their development as pastoral leaders.

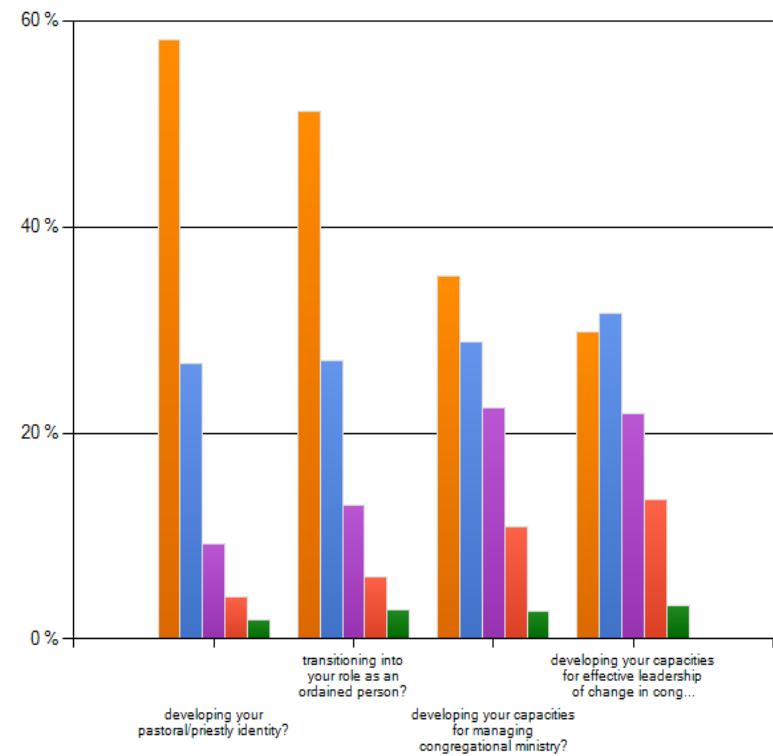
## TiM RESIDENTS

Overall, did you find the TiM experience helpful in --



## TiM PEER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Overall, did you find the TiM experience helpful in --



This overall pattern in what was most helpful in the TiM programs was echoed in another major question we asked. TiM alumni ranked the level of impact that their TiM programs had in 32 different dimensions of pastoral leadership development.

**Greatest learnings** from these programs, according to TiM alumni, were the following (in descending order):

- ❖ Own and live into my calling as a pastor/priest
- ❖ Live an authentic life as a Christian leader
- ❖ Function in a paid position on a church staff
- ❖ “Read” and learn congregational culture
- ❖ Preach with greater clarity and strength
- ❖ Find confidence in my own theological voice
- ❖ Reflect on God’s work in situations we face
- ❖ Step back and take perspective on situations

**Weakest learnings** (and “non-learnings”) from these programs were the following (in ascending order from lowest):

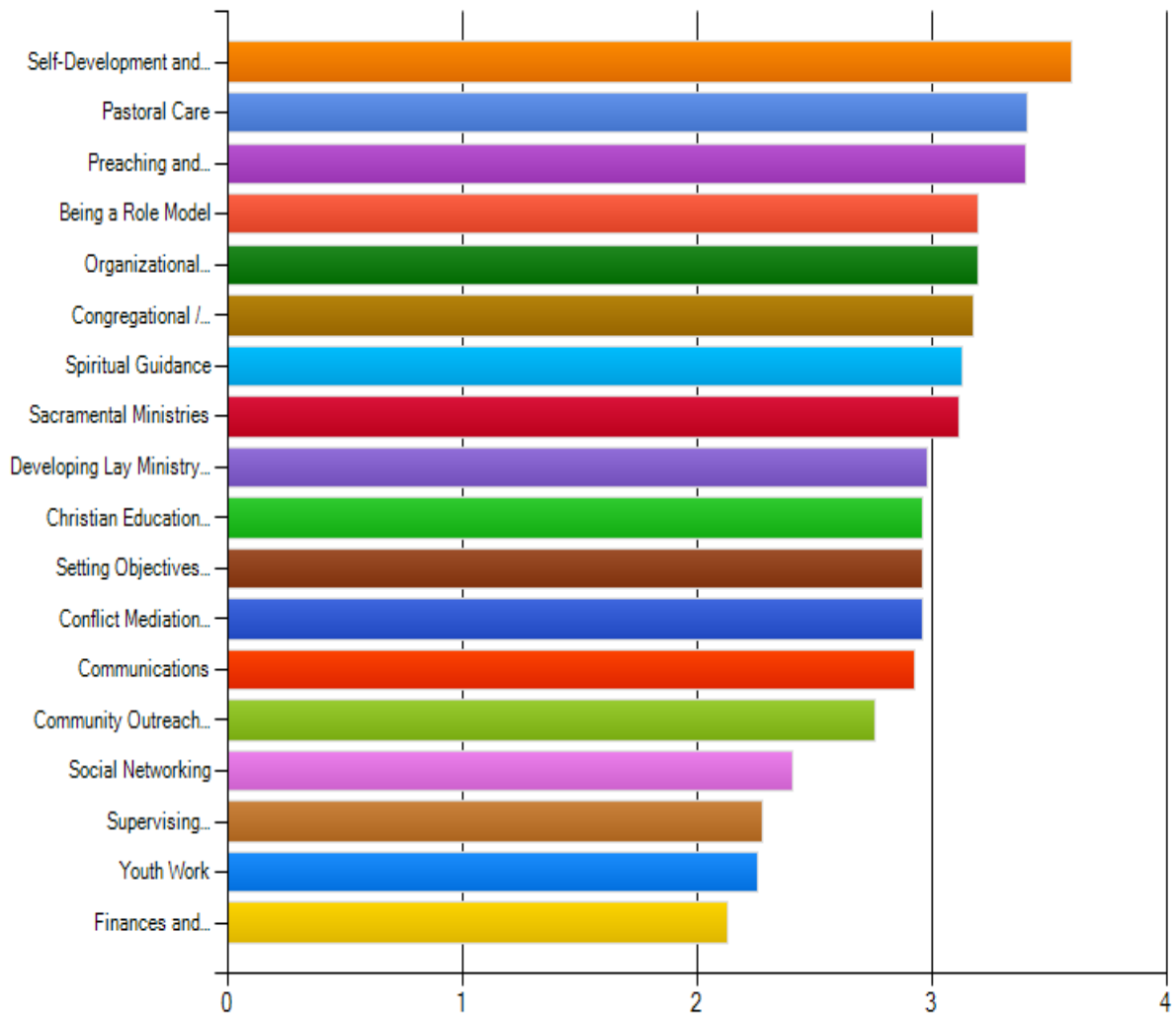
- ❖ Manage and oversee church’s finances
- ❖ Plan and coordinate services for weddings, funerals, and baptisms
- ❖ Interact with people of different ages
- ❖ Plan, direct, and lead Christian education
- ❖ Build networks with and among people
- ❖ Mobilize and strengthen people’s capacities and gifts (i.e., develop lay leadership)
- ❖ Use communication strategies effectively to reach people
- ❖ Help others take responsibility in decisions of the church

The impact of the TiM programs was **strongest** in affirming and securing new clergy’s pastoral identity, developing confidence and voice (particularly in preaching), digging deeper into personal Christian discipleship, living and attempting to model a committed Christian life, and being present with people. These are matters of personal and vocational identity and of basic pastoral functions.

There is **weaker** impact of these programs, according to TiM alumni, in the development of skills and capacities for management and leadership. Programs were not as strong – nor as focused – on developing capacities for change-leadership, fostering lay networks and leadership, managing and directing overall programs (including budgets), and learning to work with people of different ages.

The pattern was further amplified in how TiM alumni rated their TiM-related learning and development in various areas of ministry (see next page).

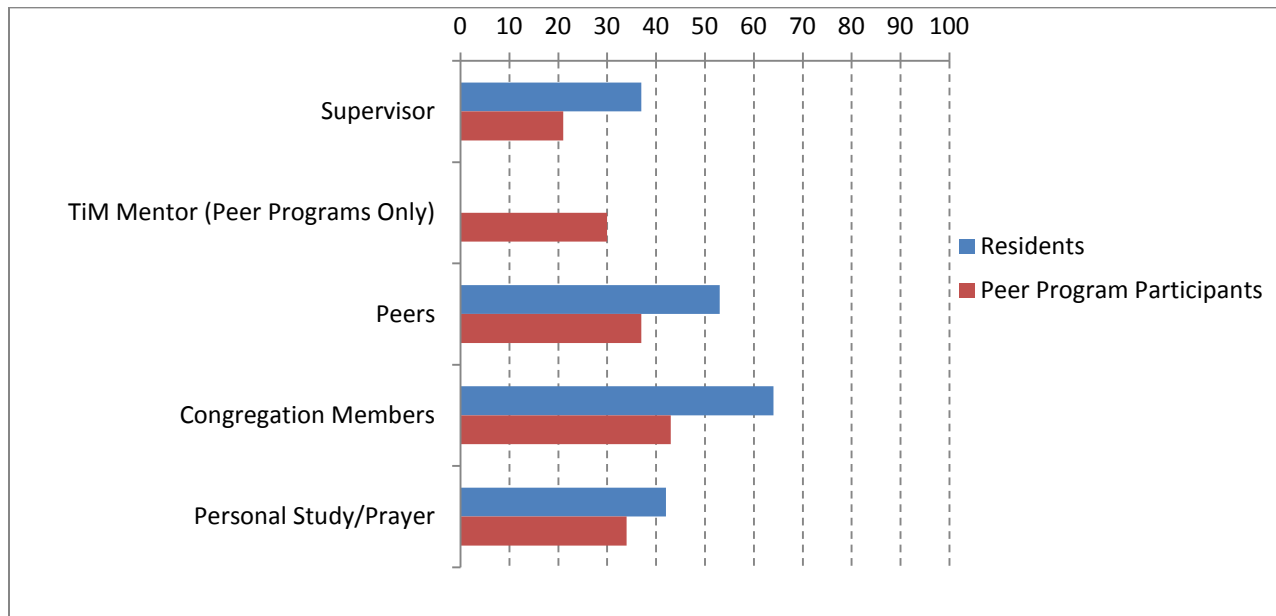
**How much did your TiM experience prepare you for each of these areas of ministry?**



## WHAT MADE THESE PROGRAMS WORK?

Here is how residents and peer program participants rated the importance of different elements of their experiences during their first years of ordained ministry while in their TiM programs:

**% OF TiM ALUMNI SAYING \_\_\_\_\_ WAS “ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL” IN THEIR PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT DURING TiM PROGRAM**



For all groups, the interactions with congregation members were the most influential – even in those congregations with no direct connection to TiM programs. And supervisors had the least impact overall. But the intensity of the TiM residencies is shown in how strongly residency alumni mark the impact of all levels of interaction. It is surprising that peer impact was not stronger in the peer-based programs – especially since, in another question, all TiM alumni judged peer interactions as deeper and more useful than interactions with supervisors and congregation members. Overall, the interactions offered TiM participants support, but not challenge.

## SO, IN THE END, WERE THE TiM PROGRAMS A GOOD THING?

One TiM alumnus put it well:

*“The TiM program provided templates and some experiences/context to draw from that provided useful in my first call. Without that two year time, I would have floundered more in my first call and would have had no frame of reference for so many aspects of pastoral ministry. By being in the TiM program for two years, I was able to observe, take mental notes, and participate in ministry, with experienced mentors and models, without the pressure of being the (or one of the) primary leaders.”*

**90%** of TiM alumni said they recommend their TiM program to new clergy or new seminary graduates.

**71%** of TiM alumni said their congregation would be interested in participating in a TiM program if such a program were available through their denomination or in their region or city.

When asked how they have used their TiM experience to help other new clergy in their own transitions into ordained ministry and leadership, many said, “I have not had that opportunity yet.” But many others have found opportunities to help other new clergy:

- ❖ “by emphasizing the value of relationships of mutual support, care, and attention.”
- ❖ “by serving on two internship committees and using my experiences in this process to help those transitioning into ministry.”
- ❖ “by offering encouragement and mentoring as appropriate to new clergy and taking the opportunity to supervise pastoral interns.”
- ❖ “by entering into a coaching relationship with new clergy starting their ministry.”
- ❖ “by reminding them to develop a peer group with whom they can unwind and be authentic.”
- ❖ “by sharing my understanding that the Bible and our thoughts about it are the most important things that the pastor has to offer.”

Only time will tell if the TiM programs have an impact in the ongoing ministry of their alumni. But for some, the experience has helped shape how they direct devoted Christians into deeper discipleship and ministry.

*“I have helped my youth pastor transition into divinity school and move towards ordination by helping him to reflect on God's call, being a ‘sounding board’ for him as he engages other aspects of congregational ministry, and have encouraged him to monitor his ‘burn out’ feeling (encouraging him to take a rest when needed). I have also pushed him to think theologically about what he does in his leadership areas, and provide him skills that are helpful in those areas.”*