

St Thomas More Parish – Inner North Mass Survey Results  
(draft) - 4 June 2023

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## Background

The Parish priest from St Thomas More is responsible for two Masses at 9:30am. Currently there is an insufficient roster of priests to meet both obligations. The Parish Pastoral Council of St Thomas More Parish conducted a survey to gauge what Mass times would suit the majority of people who currently attend the 9:30am Mass at St Thomas More.

There are wider Inner North discussions taking place about the number of churches, Mass times and a general shortage of priests to cover all the current services. The PPC used the survey as an opportunity to profile current Mass attendees, gauge the attitudes of Parishioners to amalgamations of Parishes and their willingness to travel to alternate churches on a regular basis, as well as understand under what conditions non church going Catholics would consider attending Mass more often.

## Overview of Results

- 83 completed surveys were collected (57 online and 26 paper surveys)
  - Data was collected on 180 respondents
  - 123 respondents identify as STM parishioners
  - 101 respondents attend Mass at least monthly and regularly attend the 9:30 Mass at STM.
- 20 out of the 83 completed surveys came from families from St Thomas More's primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents preferred the Sunday 9:30am Mass. Depending on the subgroup being analysed, the next most popular time was Sunday at 10am or Sunday at 9am. Whilst 30-40% of people indicated they would attend a Saturday 5pm Mass, a similar percentage said they were unable or unwilling to attend Mass at 5pm on a Saturday.
- Most people had a preference for attending St Thomas More. About a third said they would be willing to travel to St Patrick's or St Bridget's but a similar number said they would be unable or unwilling to attend Masses at either of these churches. Other church options were less popular.
- 62.4% of St Thomas More parishioners who attend the 9:30am Mass would stop attending Mass or attend elsewhere if the Mass time was changed to what they regarded as an inconvenient time.

- 69.3% of people who regularly attend the 9:30am STM Mass are in favour of Liturgy of the Word services when a priest isn't available.
- ABS 2021 census has 1,167 Catholics in Campbell. The data is not publicly available by age group or other sub grouping which means none of the results presented here are weighted to population numbers.

## Profile of Respondents

About half of the people who responded to the survey lived in Campbell. The majority (68.3%) identified as parishioners of St Thomas More. All age groups were represented in the survey. The 50-64 year old group had the highest number of respondents (17.5%) and the 13-18 year old group the lowest (5.6%).

The majority of survey respondents attended Mass weekly (59.4%), and 75.6% attended the 9:30am Mass at St Thomas More. Approximately one third walked to Mass.

Graphical representations of the profile distributions of all respondents are shown in Appendix A: Distributions of All Survey Respondents.

*Table 1 Profile of survey respondents*

Demographic	All respondents		Respondents who identify as STM parishioners		Current STM 9:30am Mass attendees (at least monthly)	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Suburb</b>						
Campbell	90	50.0	71	57.7	60	59.4
Other	75	41.7	43	35.0	36	35.6
Unknown	15	8.4	9	7.3	5	5.0
<b>Parish</b>						
STM	123	68.3	123	100	97	96.0
Other	35	19.4			3	3.0
No Parish	22	12.2			1	1.0
<b>Age Group</b>						
6 and Under	15	9.0	8	6.6	6	6.1
7-12	30	16.9	22	18.2	14	14.1
13-18	10	5.6	6	5.0	3	3.0
19-34	18	10.2	11	9.1	11	11.1
35-49	35	19.8	20	16.5	15	15.2
50-64	19	10.7	14	11.6	12	12.1
65-79	31	17.5	25	20.7	24	24.2
80+	19	10.7	15	12.4	14	14.1

<b>Mass Attendance</b>						
Weekly/almost weekly	107	59.4	80	65.0	80	79.2
1-2 times a month	27	15.0	18	14.6	21	20.8
Sacramental	21	11.7	16	13.0		
Major church celebrations	14	7.8	9	7.3		
Never	11	6.1				
<b>Current Mass Time</b>						
STM 9:30	136	75.6	122	99.2	101	100.0
Other Mass	33	18.3	1	0.8		
Don't currently attend any Mass	11	6.1				
<b>Transport to Church</b>						
Car/Lift	113	62.8	75	61.0	62	61.4
Walk	59	32.8	48	39.0	39	38.6
N/A	8	4.4				

Profile of Surveys Associated with STM primary and Other Schools

Most of the surveys were completed by individuals/families with no school affiliation. 20 surveys indicated that at least one respondent attended St Thomas More’s Primary School. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses from schools and Table 2 profiles the surveys that were completed by families with at least one child at St Thomas More’s Primary.

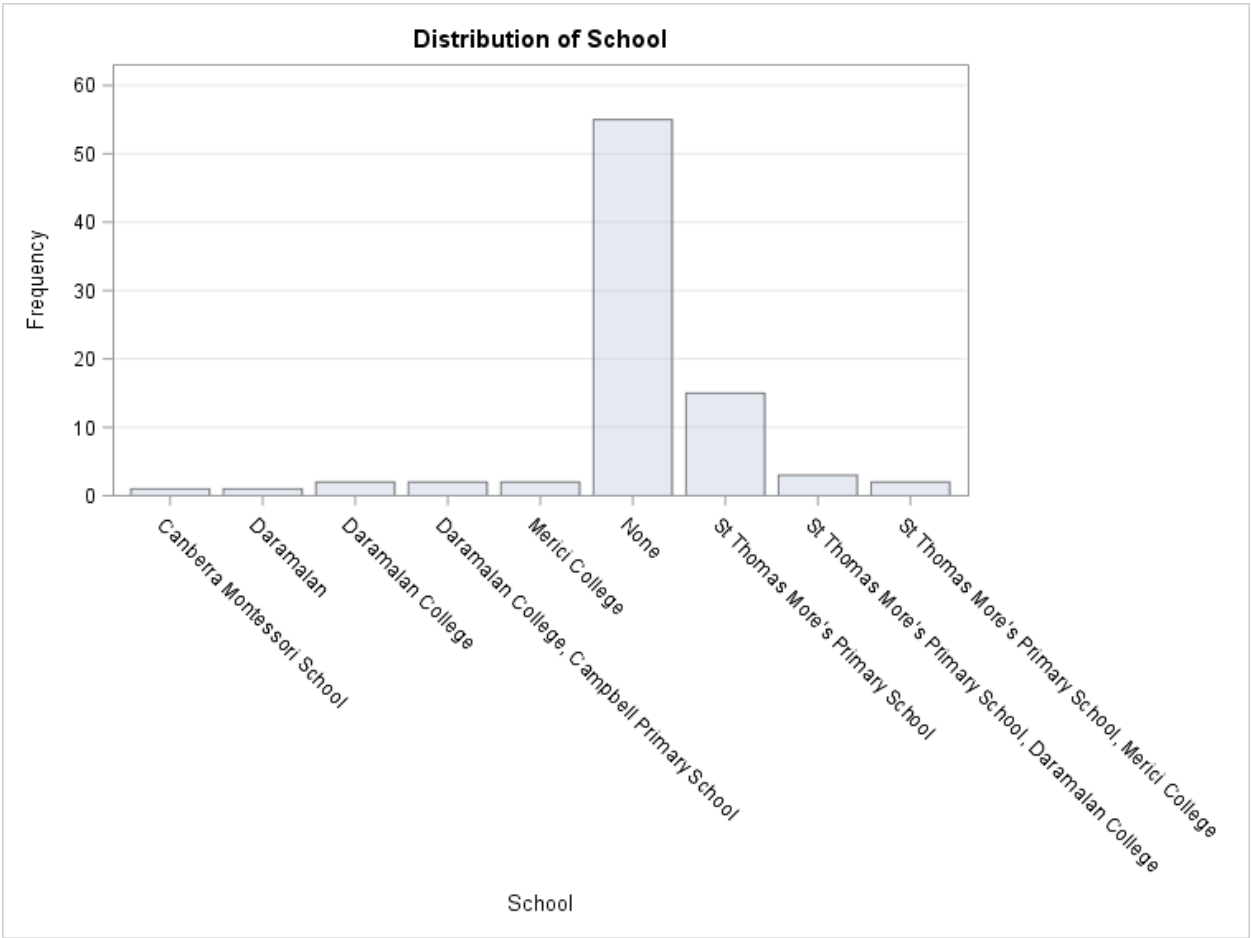


Figure 1 Number of survey responses associated with various schools

Table 2 Profile of surveys with STM's Primary Affiliations (n=20)

Demographic	All respondents	
	Count	%
<b>Suburb</b>		
Campbell	6	30.0
Other	8	40.0
Unknown	6	30.0
<b>Parish</b>		
STM	13	65.0
Other	2	10.0
No Parish	5	25.0
<b>Mass Attendance</b>		
Weekly/almost weekly	4	20.0
1-2 times a month	5	25.0
Sacramental	5	25.0
Major church	3	15.0
Never	3	15.0
<b>Current Mass Time</b>		
STM 9:30	16	80.0
Other Mass	1	5.0
Don't currently attend any Mass	3	15.0



## Mass Time Preferences

Figure 2 displays the percentage of respondents that said that would attend Mass at each of the Mass times listed in the survey. Respondents indicated all Masses that they could attend rather than choose just one preferred Mass time. Only 6 respondents indicated that they would *only* attend the Sunday 9:30am Mass. More detail about Mass preferences for subsets of respondents are shown in Table 3.

Similarly, Figure 3 displays the Mass times *least* preferred for all respondents with a breakdown of the percentages given in Table 4. These are the Mass times that people said they were unable or not willing to attend. Again, respondents could choose multiple Mass times.

For all respondents, 72.8% said they would attend the Mass at Sunday 9:30am followed by Sunday at 10am (51.7%) and Sunday at 9am (48.9%). The 4<sup>th</sup> preferred option was Saturday at 5pm (41.7%) (see Table 3). The least popular Mass time was Sunday 11am (46.7% would be unable to attend), followed closely by Sunday 8am (40.6%), Sunday at 10:30am (40.0%) and Sunday 5pm (39.5%) (see Table 4).

For STM Parishioners, the most popular Mass time was Sunday 9:30am (79.7 %) followed by Sunday at 9am (55.3%) and Sunday at 10am (48.8%). The 4<sup>th</sup> preferred time was Saturday at 5pm (41.5%) (see Table 3). The least popular Mass time was Sunday 11am (57.7% would be unable to attend), followed by Sunday at 10:30am (42.3%) and Sunday 5pm (42.3%).(see Table 4).

For current regular attendees of the 9:30am STM Mass, the most popular Mass time was Sunday 9:30am (81.2 %) followed by Sunday at 9am (60.4%) and Saturday at 5pm (48.5%). The 4<sup>th</sup> preferred time was Sunday at 10am (46.5%) (see Table 3). The least preferred Mass time was Sunday 11am (58.4% would be unable to attend), followed by Sunday at 10:30am (49.5%) and Sunday 5pm (46.5%) (see Table 4).

For all 3 cohorts, whilst people some people preferred the Saturday 5pm timeslot, almost as many said they would not attend a 5pm Mass on Saturday.

Mass time preference by profiles are graphically reported in Appendix B: Mass Preference Times By Profiles

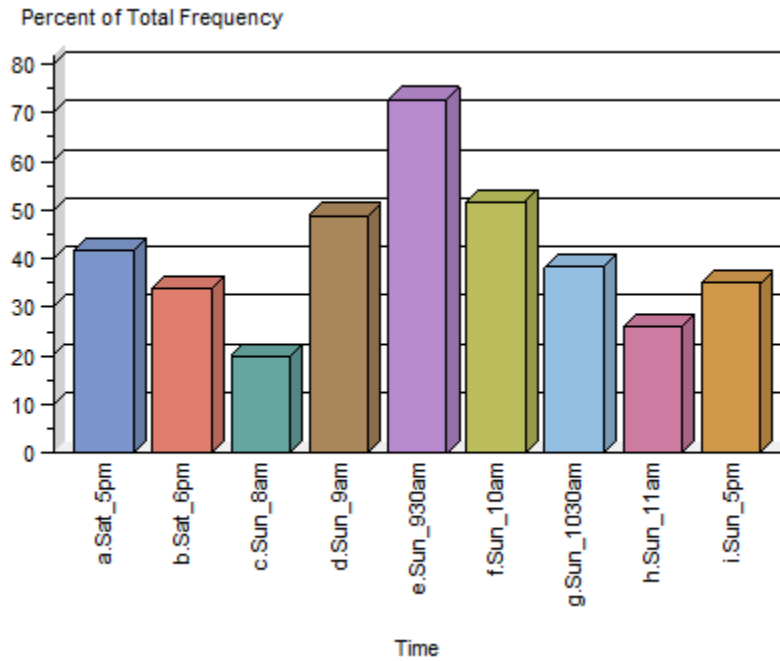


Figure 2 Bar Chart showing Mass time preferences for all respondents by percentage

Table 3 Mass times respondents said they would attend

	All respondents (n=180)		STM Parishioners (n=123)		Current regular 9:30 STM Mass attendees (n=101)	
Mass Time	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Sat 5pm	75	41.7	51	41.5	49	48.5
Sat 6pm	61	33.9	39	31.7	29	28.7
Sun 8am	36	20.0	21	17.1	18	17.8
Sun 9am	88	48.9	68	55.3	61	60.4
Sun 9:30am	131	72.8	98	79.7	82	81.2
Sun 10am	93	51.7	60	48.8	47	46.5
Sun 10:30am	69	38.3	45	36.6	32	31.7
Sun 11am	47	26.1	30	24.4	24	23.8
Sun 5pm	63	35.0	45	36.6	30	29.7

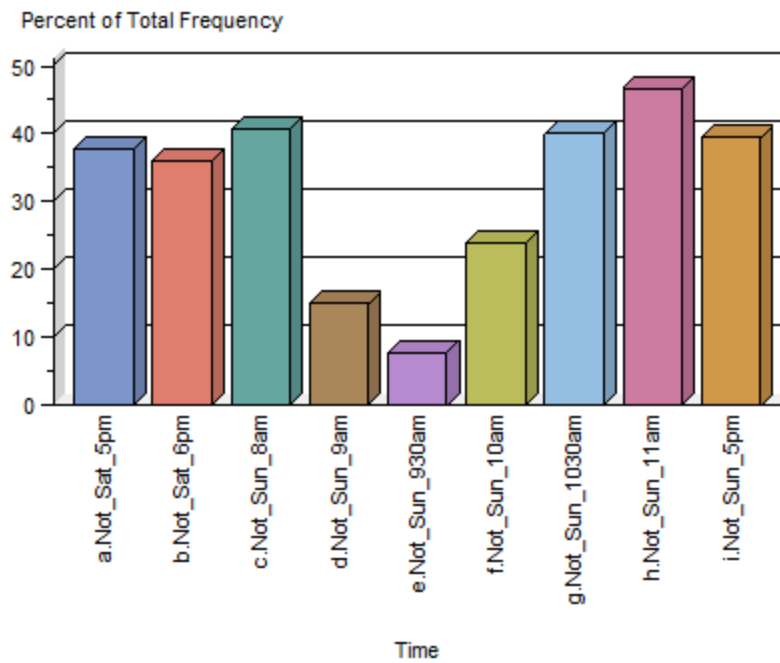


Figure 3 Bar chart showing the least favoured Mass times for all respondents by relative percentages

Table 4 Mass times that survey respondents are unable or unwilling to attend

	All respondents (n=180)		STM Parishioners (n=123)		Current regular 9:30 STM Mass attendees (n=101)	
Mass Time	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Sat 5pm	68	37.8	49	39.8	40	39.6
Sat 6pm	65	36.1	49	39.8	39	38.6
Sun 8am	73	40.6	47	38.2	30	29.7
Sun 9am	27	15.0	17	13.8	3	3.0
Sun 9:30am	14	7.8	3	2.4	0	0.0
Sun 10am	43	23.9	35	28.5	34	33.7
Sun 10:30am	72	40.0	52	42.3	50	49.5
Sun 11am	84	46.7	71	57.7	59	58.4
Sun 5pm	71	39.5	52	42.3	47	46.5

## Church Preferences

Figure 4 shows the percentage of all respondents willing to attend a given church. Figure 5 shows the percentage of all respondents *not* willing to attend the named church. These percentages are shown for subsets of survey respondents in

Table 5 and Table 6.

Across all respondents and subsets of respondents, almost all would attend St Thomas More Parish, with about one third willing to travel to St Brigid's, St Patrick's or Duntroon. 41.5% of STM parishioners indicated they would regularly travel to RMC Duntroon.

Most survey respondents would not travel to St Joseph's, Holy Rosary and the Cathedral.

Church preferences by profile group are graphically shown in Appendix C: Church Preference By Profiles.

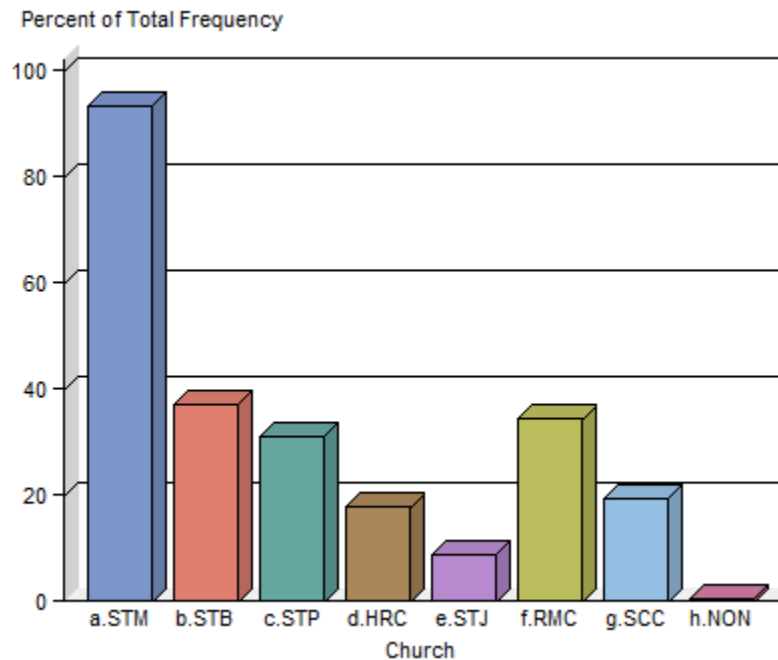


Figure 4 Percentage of respondents willing or able to travel to a given church

Table 5 Church preferences among survey respondents

	<b>All respondents (n=180)</b>		<b>STM Parishioners (n=123)</b>		<b>Current regular 9:30 STM Mass attendees (n=101)</b>	
<b>Church</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
St Thomas More	168	93.3	119	96.7	101	100
Saint Brigid's	67	37.2	44	35.8	31	30.7
Saint Patrick's	56	31.1	46	37.4	36	35.6
Holy Rosary	32	17.8	21	17.1	14	13.9
St Joseph's	16	8.9	6	4.9	5	5
RMC Duntroon	62	34.4	51	41.5	36	35.6
St Christopher's Cathedral	33	18.3	15	12.2	10	9.9
None of these churches	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0

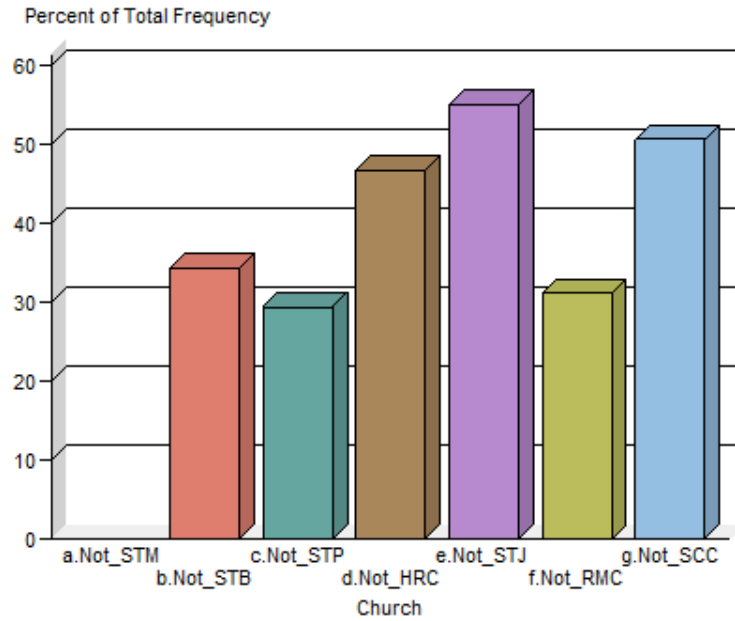


Figure 5 Percentage of respondents not willing or able to travel to a given church

Table 6 Churches that survey respondents are unable or unwilling to attend

	All respondents (n=180)		STM Parishioners (n=123)		Current regular 9:30 STM Mass attendees (n=101)	
Mass Time	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
St Thomas More	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Saint Brigid's	62	34.4	48	39	46	45.5
Saint Patrick's	53	29.4	42	34.1	37	36.6
Holy Rosary	84	46.7	63	51.2	56	55.4
St Joseph's	99	55	86	69.9	73	72.3
RMC Duntroon	56	31.1	30	24.4	26	25.7
St Christopher's Cathedral	91	50.6	68	55.3	56	55.4

## Responses to Other Survey Questions

### Mass attendance behaviour for 'Non Attendees' with a change in Mass times

Question 6 of the survey asked, 'if you attend Mass occasionally or never, would any change in Mass times encourage you to attend more regularly?'. It was designed to elicit whether the current Mass time was preventing people from coming, and a change could see them attend more regularly. 46 respondents indicated that they only attended Mass for Major celebrations, Sacramental programs or never. Table 7 shows their responses to question 6. Most are unsure if they would be more likely to attend more regularly should Mass times change (see Table 7).

27 respondents attended Mass 1-2 times a month and while 10 of them didn't think the question about attending more frequently was relevant, 8 said they would attend more regularly should the time change to one more favourable for them. (see Table 8).

*Table 7 Frequency of people likely to start attending Mass more regularly if Mass times change (n=46)*

	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>No</b>	6	13.0
<b>Yes</b>	10	21.7
<b>Unsure</b>	20	43.5
<b>N/A</b>	10	21.7

*Table 8 Frequency of responses for monthly/bimonthly Mass attendees (n=27)*

	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>No</b>	4	14.8
<b>Yes</b>	8	29.6
<b>Unsure</b>	5	18.5
<b>N/A</b>	10	37.0



## Actions Following Changes to Inconvenient Mass Times or Churches

Question 14 asked ‘ If the time of the weekend Mass you most regularly attend changed to a time that was inconvenient, would you...’. It was designed to understand what implications choosing an unpopular Mass time would have on the Parish. According to the survey results 62.4% of current attendees of the 9:30 Mass would stop attending Mass at STM.

*Table 9 Responses to question about actions following an inconvenient Mass time change*

	<b>All respondents (n=180)</b>		<b>STM Parishioners (n=123)</b>		<b>Current regular 9:30 STM Mass goers (n=101)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Attend Mass at current church anyway	23	12.8	18	14.6	21	20.8
Attend Mass at an alternate church at a better time	60	33.3	39	31.7	33	32.7
Be less likely to attend Mass altogether	47	26.1	42	34.2	30	29.7
Undecided	27	15.0	17	13.8	14	13.9
N/A	23	12.8	7	5.7	3	3.0

## Attitudes towards Liturgy of the Word Services

About half of all respondents indicated they would be open to attending a Liturgy of the Word service when a priest was unavailable. 69.3% of respondents who currently attend the 9:30 Mass said they would support a Liturgy of the Word service.

*Table 10 Responses regarding Liturgy of the Word Services*

	<b>All respondents (n=180)</b>		<b>STM Parishioners (n=123)</b>		<b>Current regular 9:30 STM Mass goers (n=101)</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	98	54.4	79	64.2	70	69.3
No, I would attend Mass elsewhere	39	21.7	26	21.1	20	19.8
No, I would not attend Mass that day	17	9.4	12	9.8	9	8.9
N/A	26	14.4	6	4.9	2	2.0

## Important Features of a Mass

Respondents were asked to identify the most important factors in choosing a Mass to attend. Figure 6 shows the relative importance of each factor by all respondents, STM parishioners, current 9:30 Mass attendees and the subgroup of people that attend Mass less than monthly (n=46). *Convenience (time and location)* and *sense of community* were highlighted as most important by most respondents.

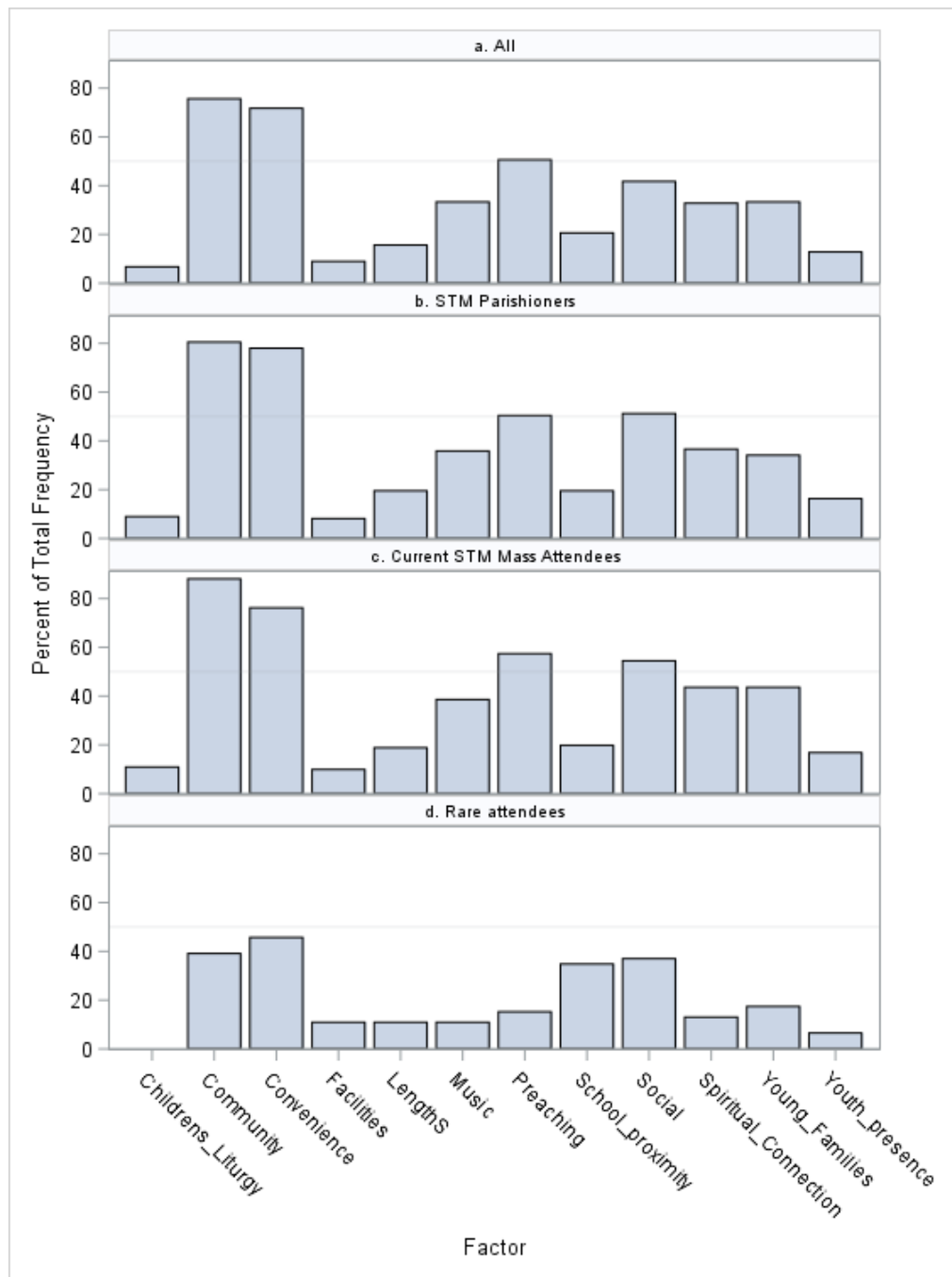


Figure 6 Things that are most important to survey respondents when choosing a Mass to attend

## Comments made in Survey

Question 16 in the survey asked for any other comments regarding Mass times. The comments are written below.

*Thanks for organising this sounding. We are very keen to keep the Sunday 9:30am mass at St Thomas Moore if at all possible, thank you. We are very grateful to Father Emil for the masses and way he has manages the Parish.*

*The. Music at St. Stomas More is essential to me*

*I think young families should be given a voice in these proceedings, thank you for the opportunity and*

*First holy communion an important consideration this year to be close to school  
I think young families should be given a voice in these proceedings, thank you for the opportunity and*

*I think it is important to communicate with the other north Canberra parishes. Ideally it would be good to establish an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council to work together with the Archbishop to plan future of parishes.*

*My first preference will always be Sunday morning but sometimes I have other commitments so it's essential there is a Saturday and Sunday evening alternative. It would be ideal to have services spread out across these times in the Inner North.*

*Why not utilise the priests at Duntroon?*

*The use of former priests who are now married would have alleviated this problem*

*Thank you for asking. Could more lay people including women be trained to be deacons to assist the priest .*

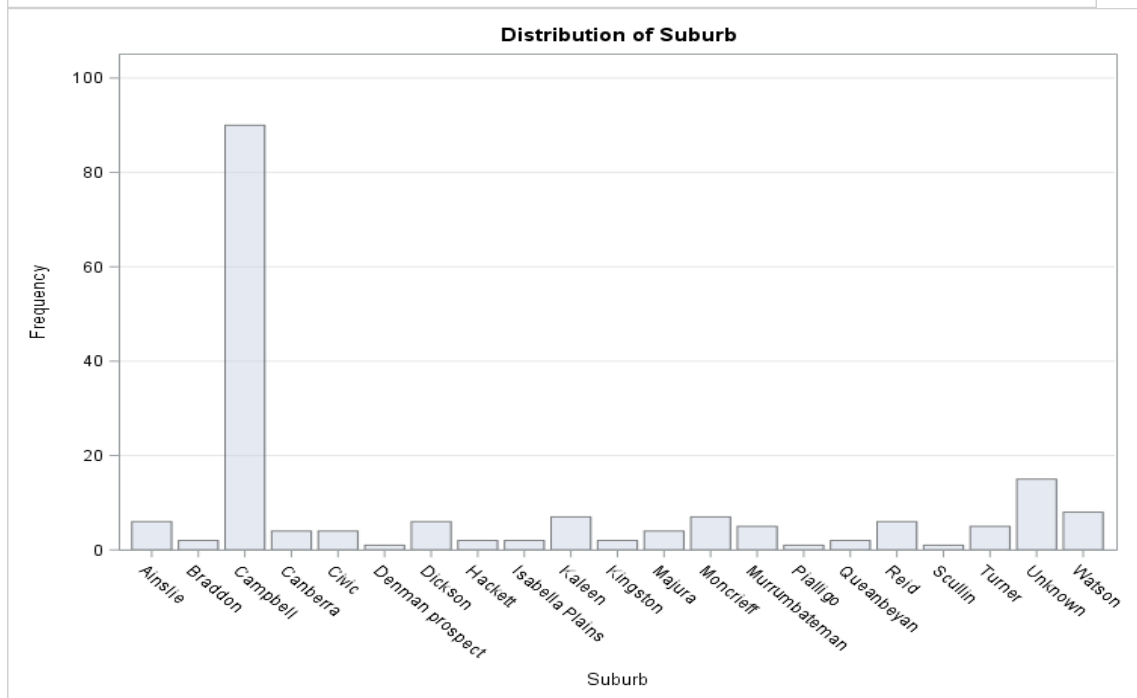
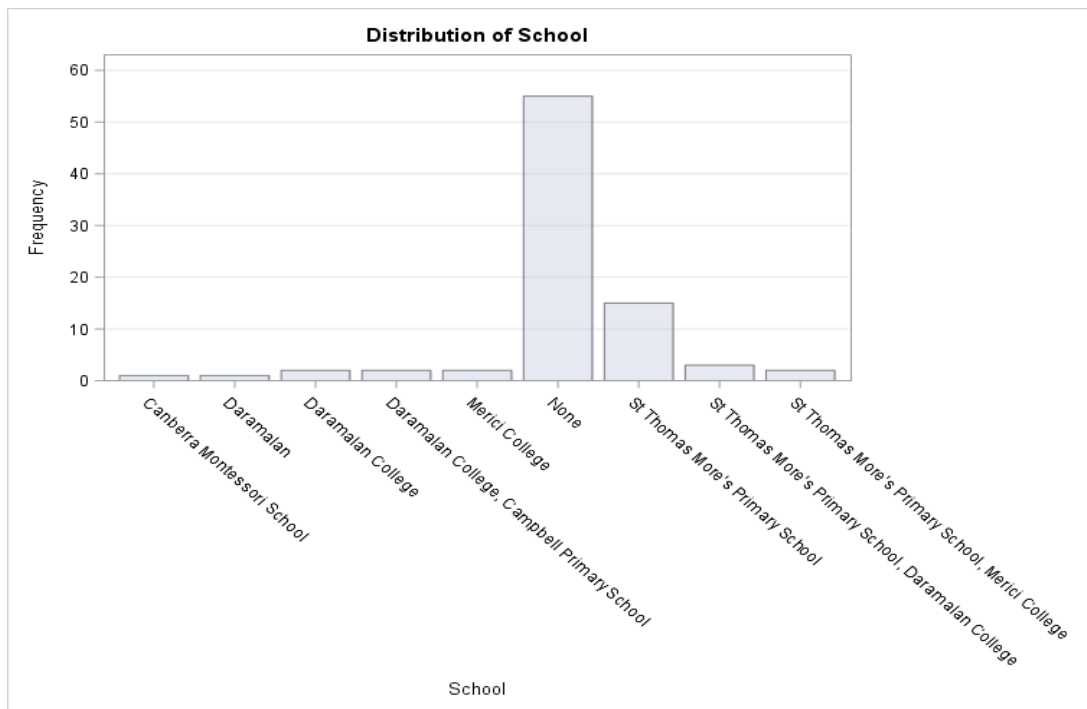
*Its not just about mass times but about catholic formation. what formation is available for parents, newlyweds, grandparents to help them in their vocations.*

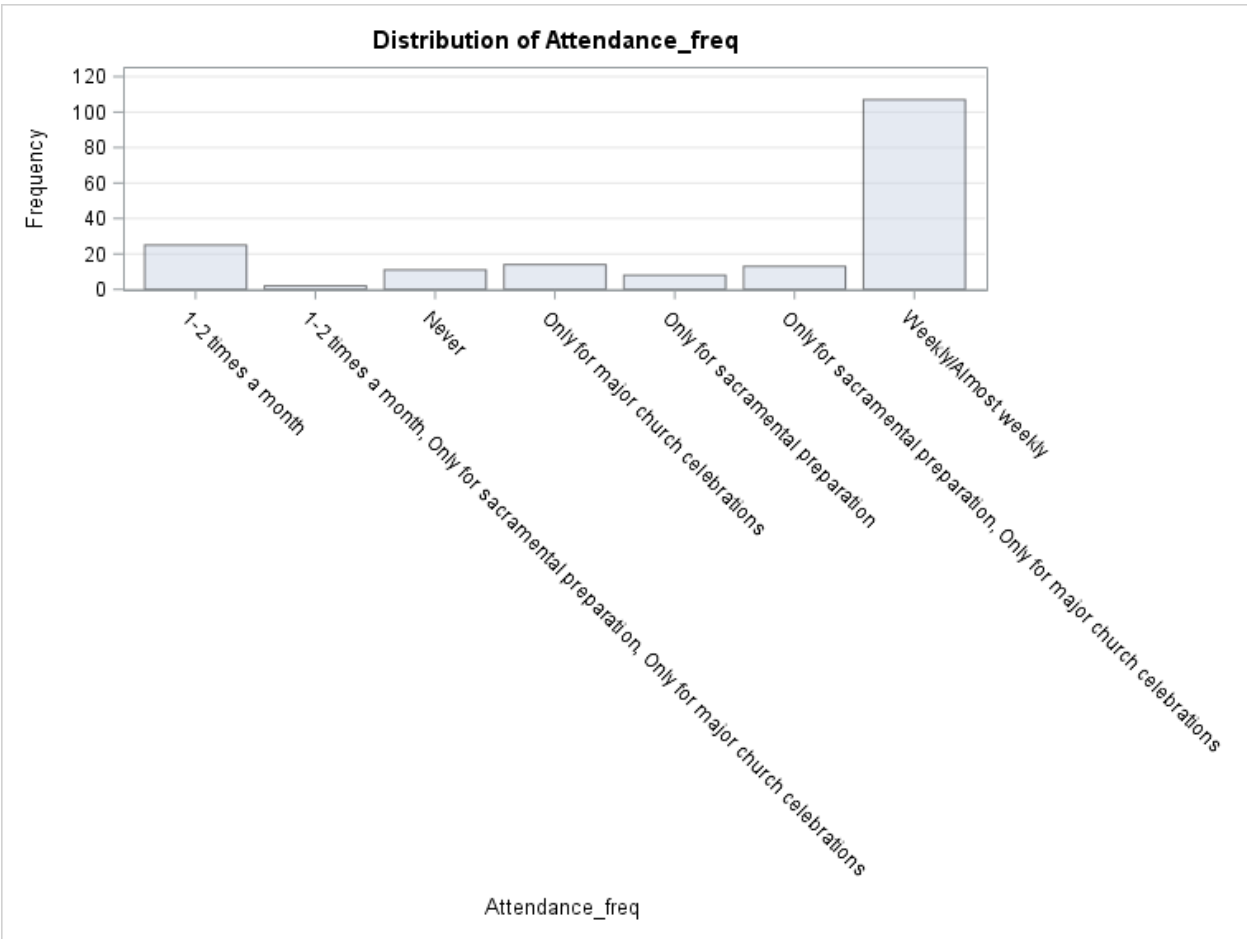
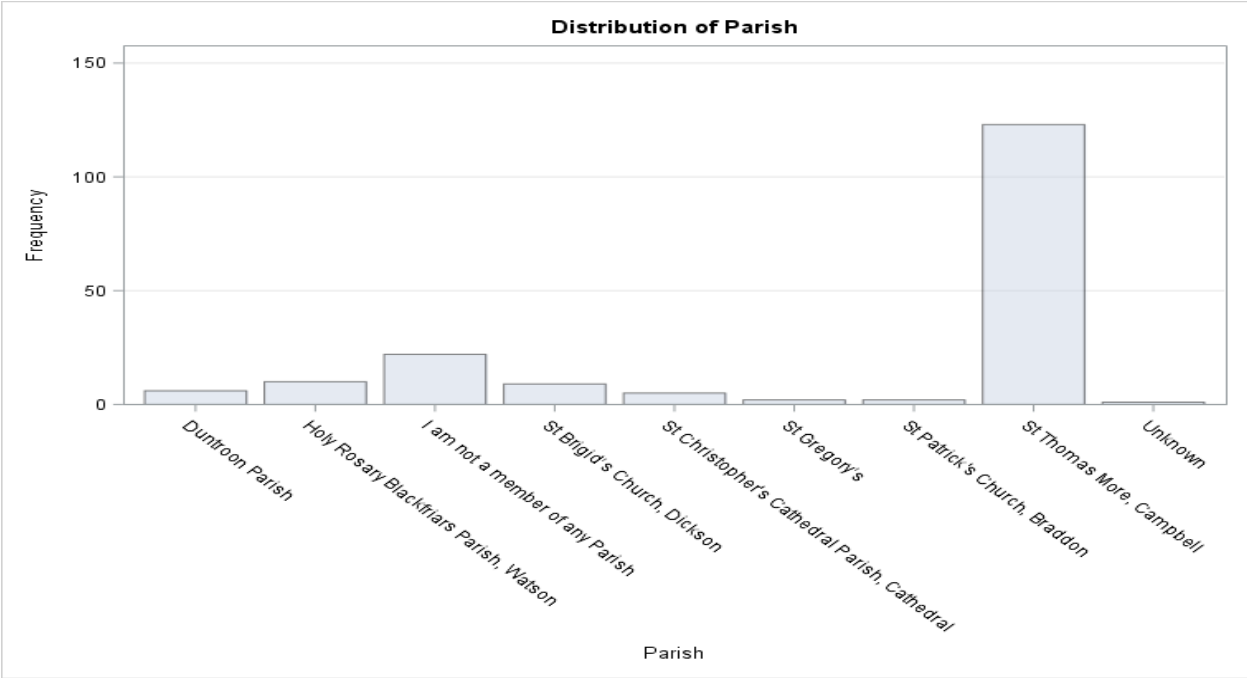
*Communion to those unable to attend Mass*

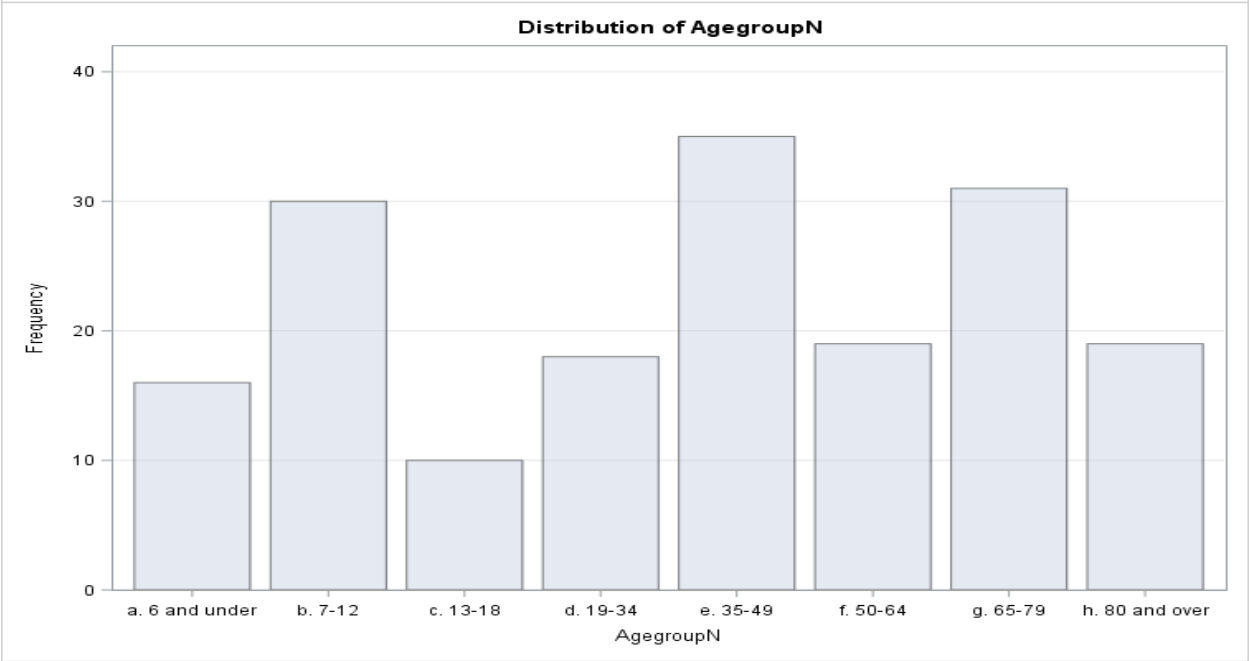
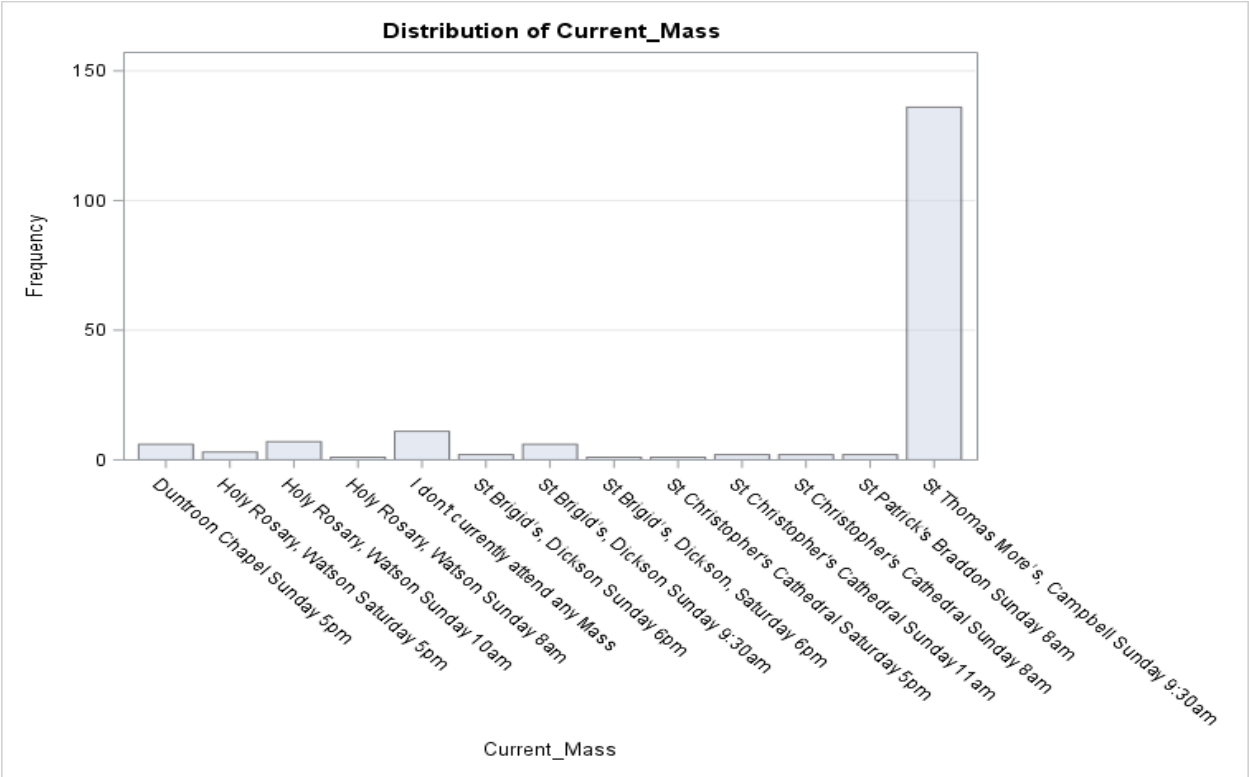
*Sense of community is very important at STM. Sunday morning Masss brings family*

*Women can do Liturgy of the Word services*

## Appendix A: Distributions of All Survey Respondents

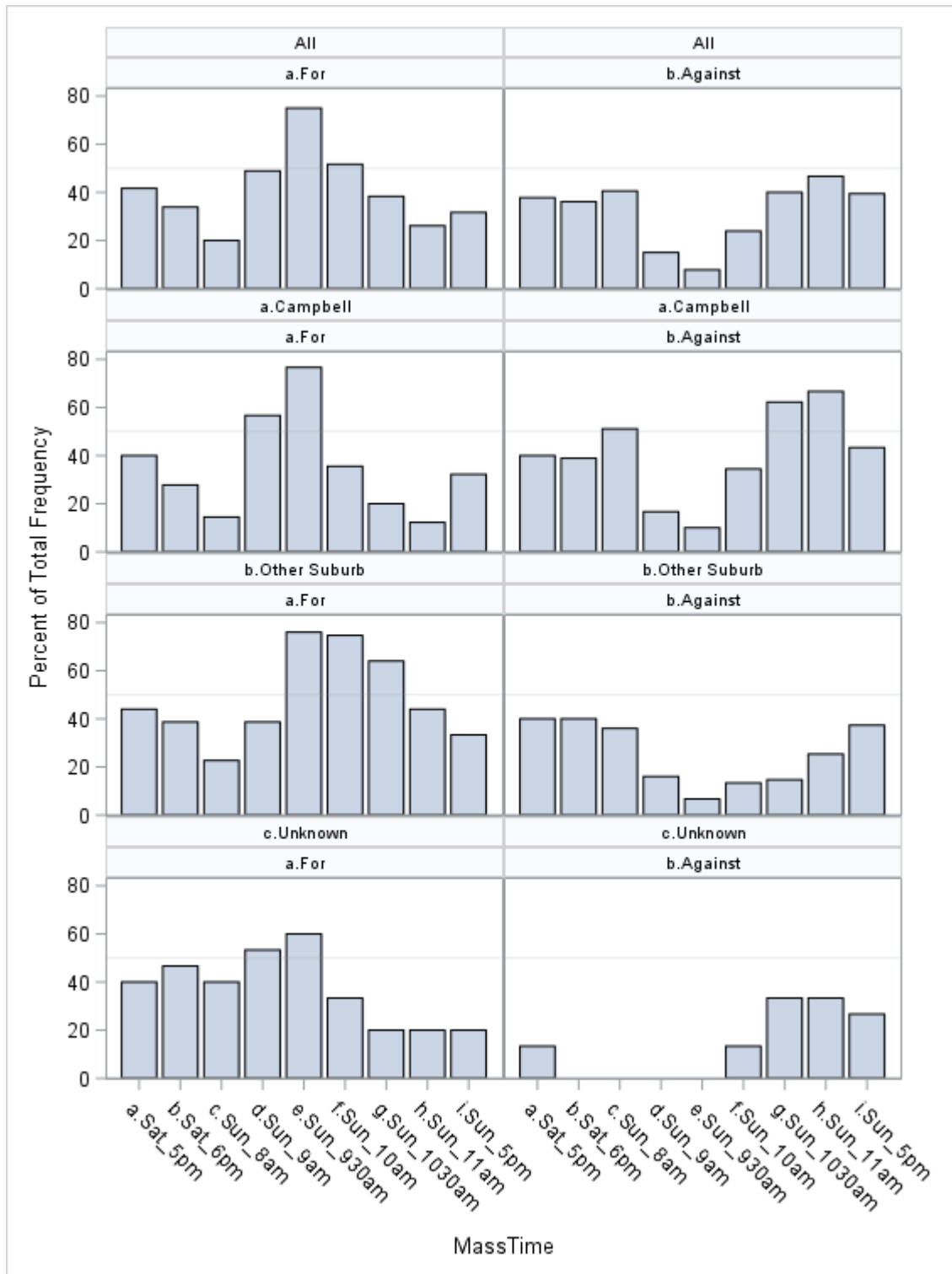






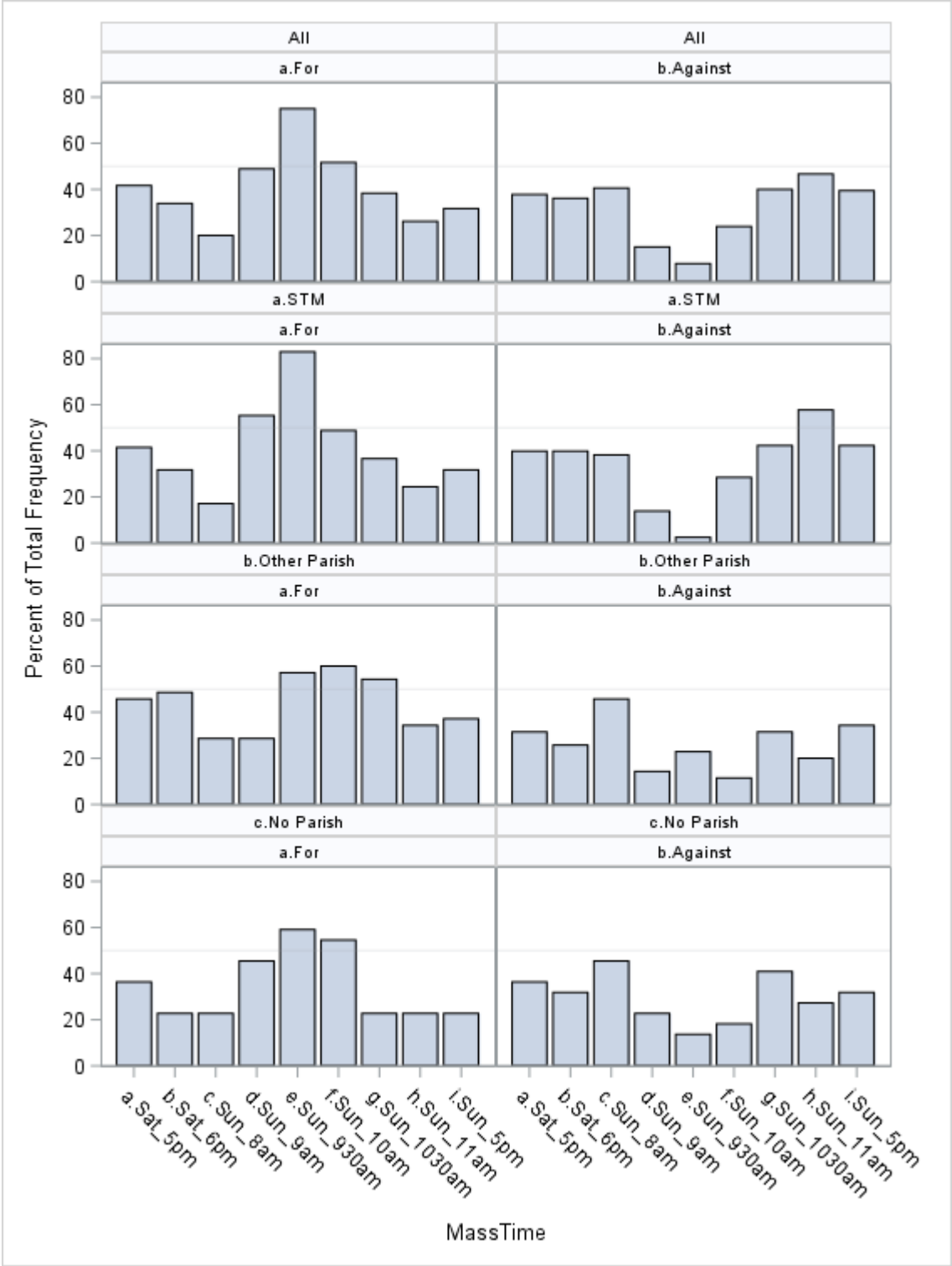
## Appendix B: Mass Preference Times By Profiles

### By SUBURB

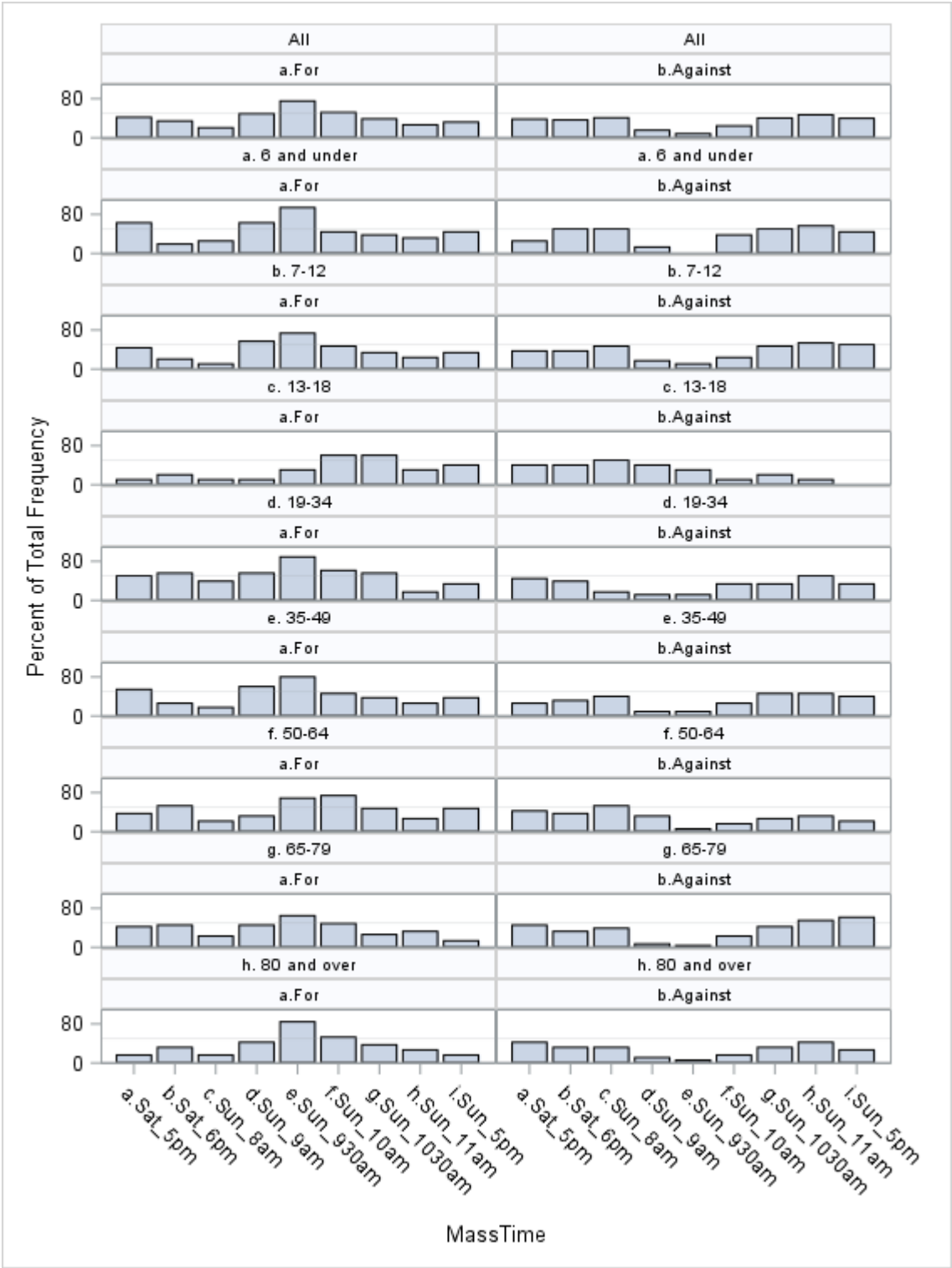




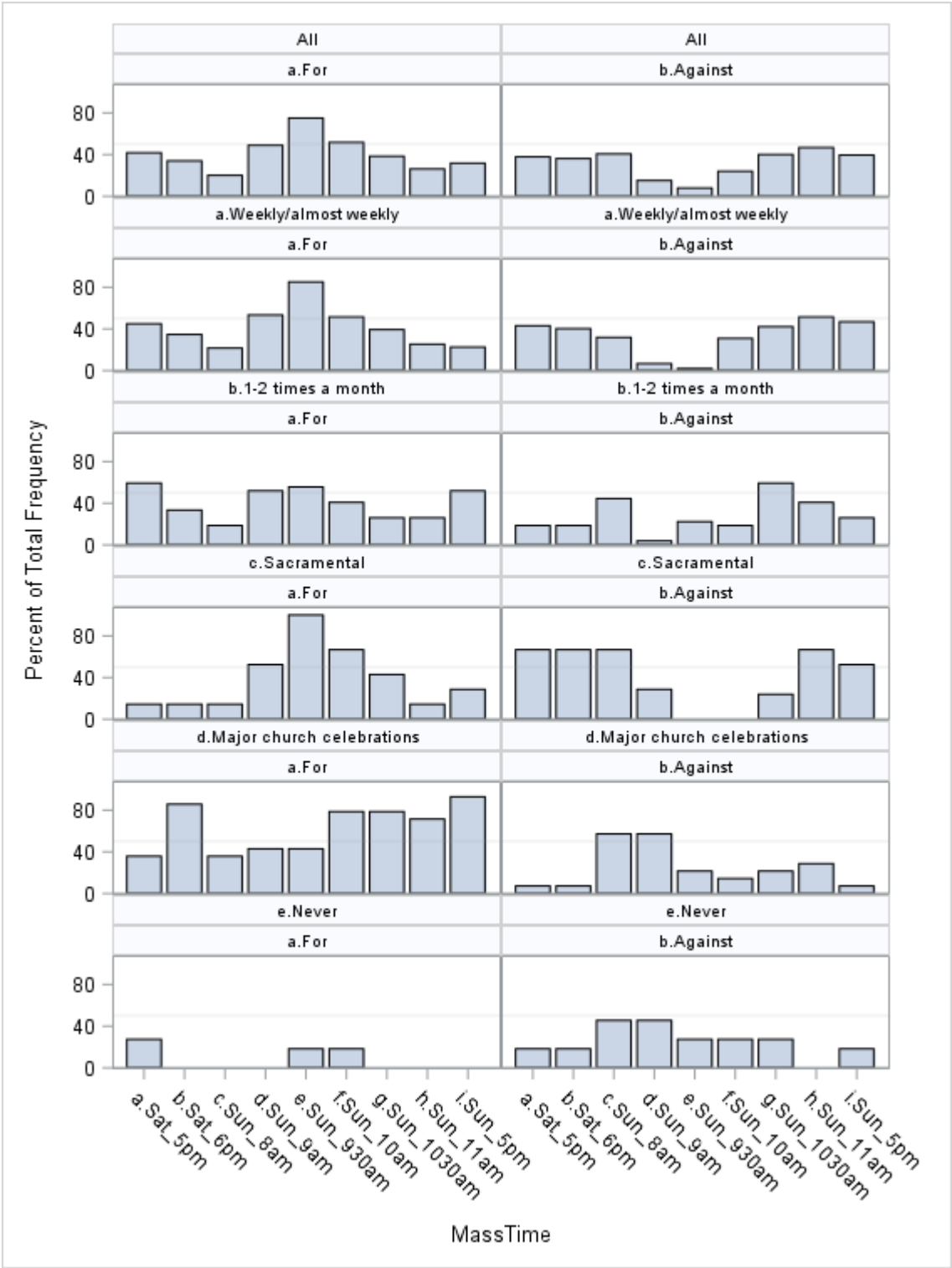
By PARISH



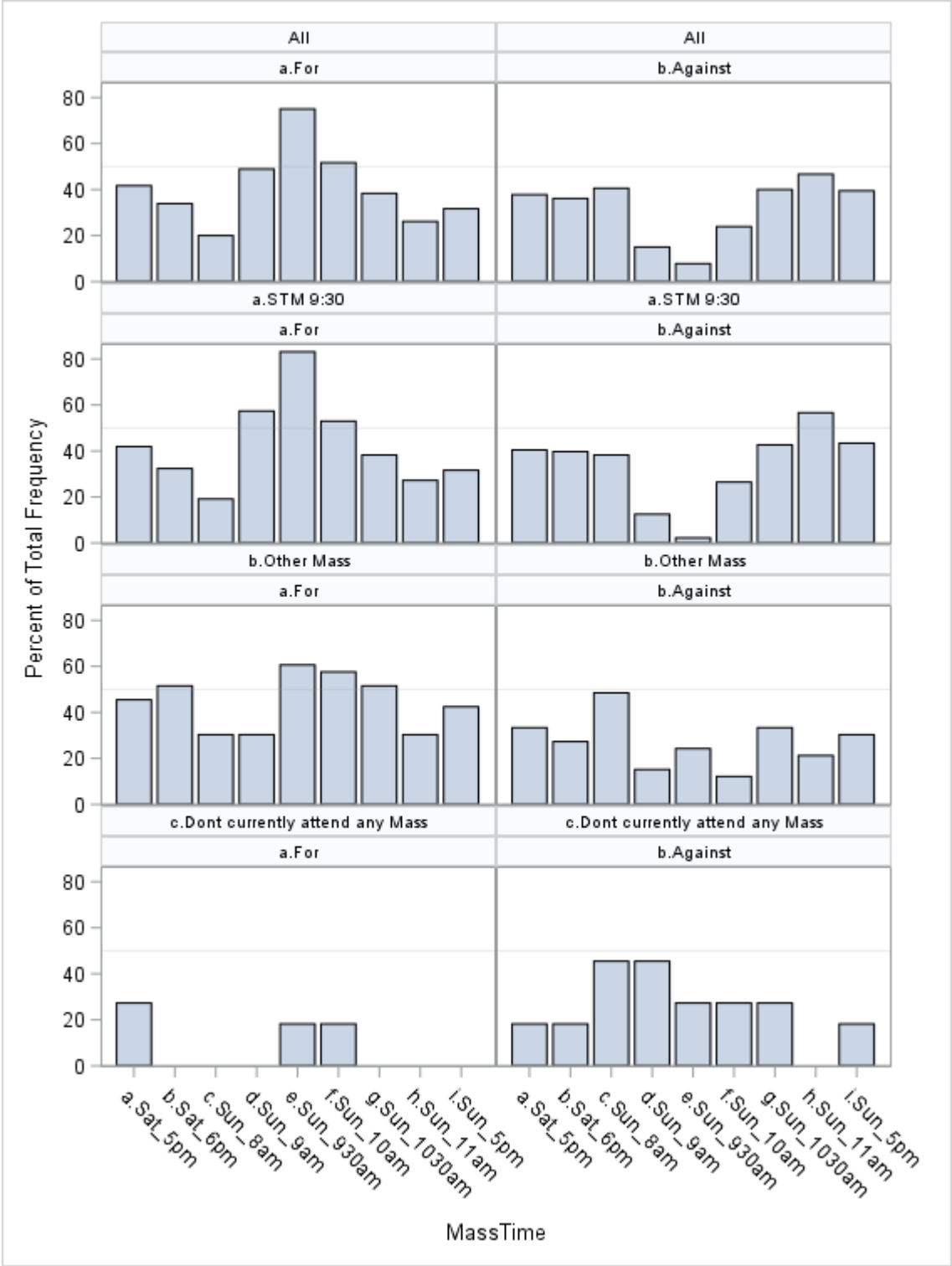
By AGEGROUP



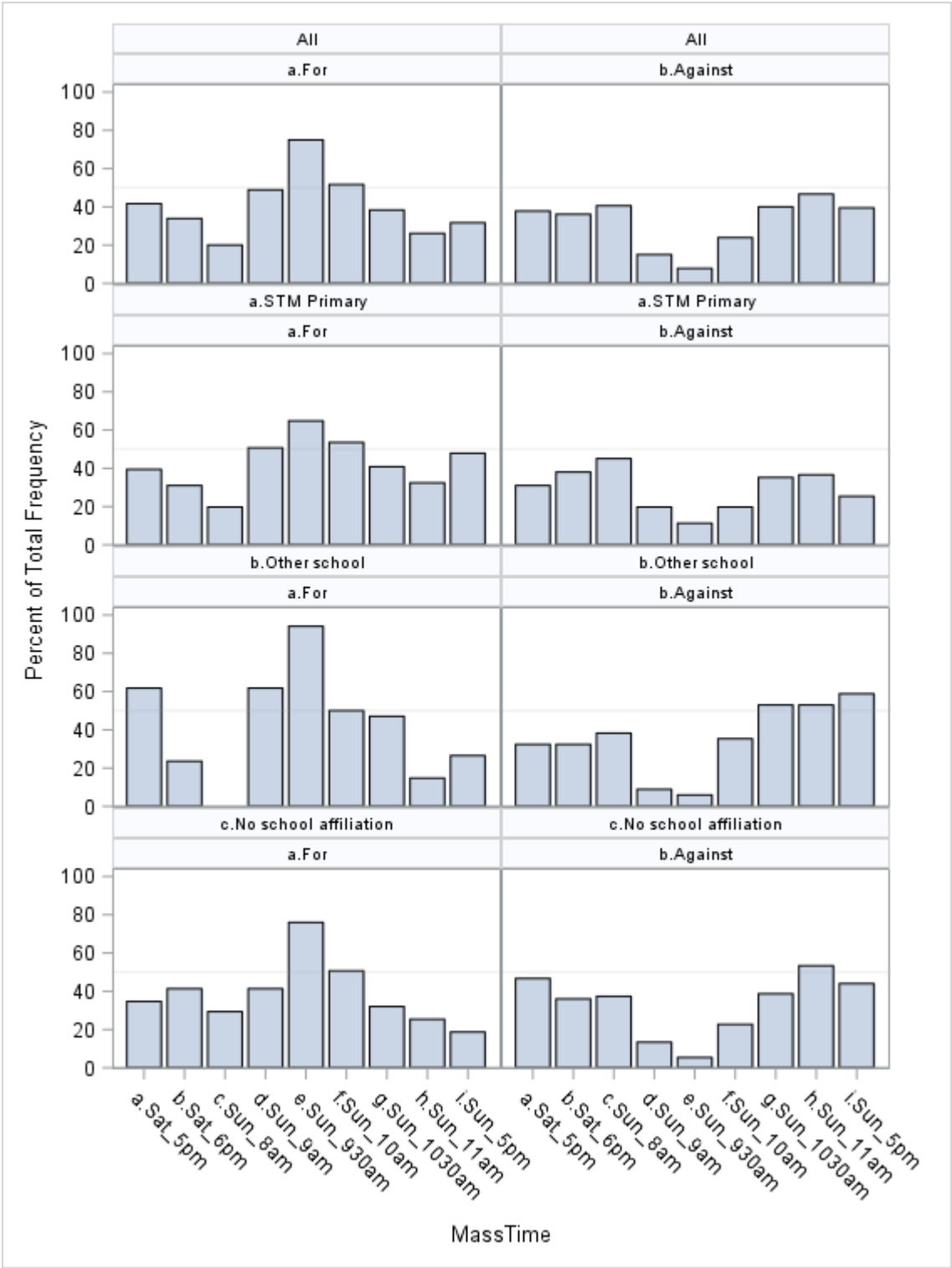
By MASS ATTENDANCE



By CURRENT MASS

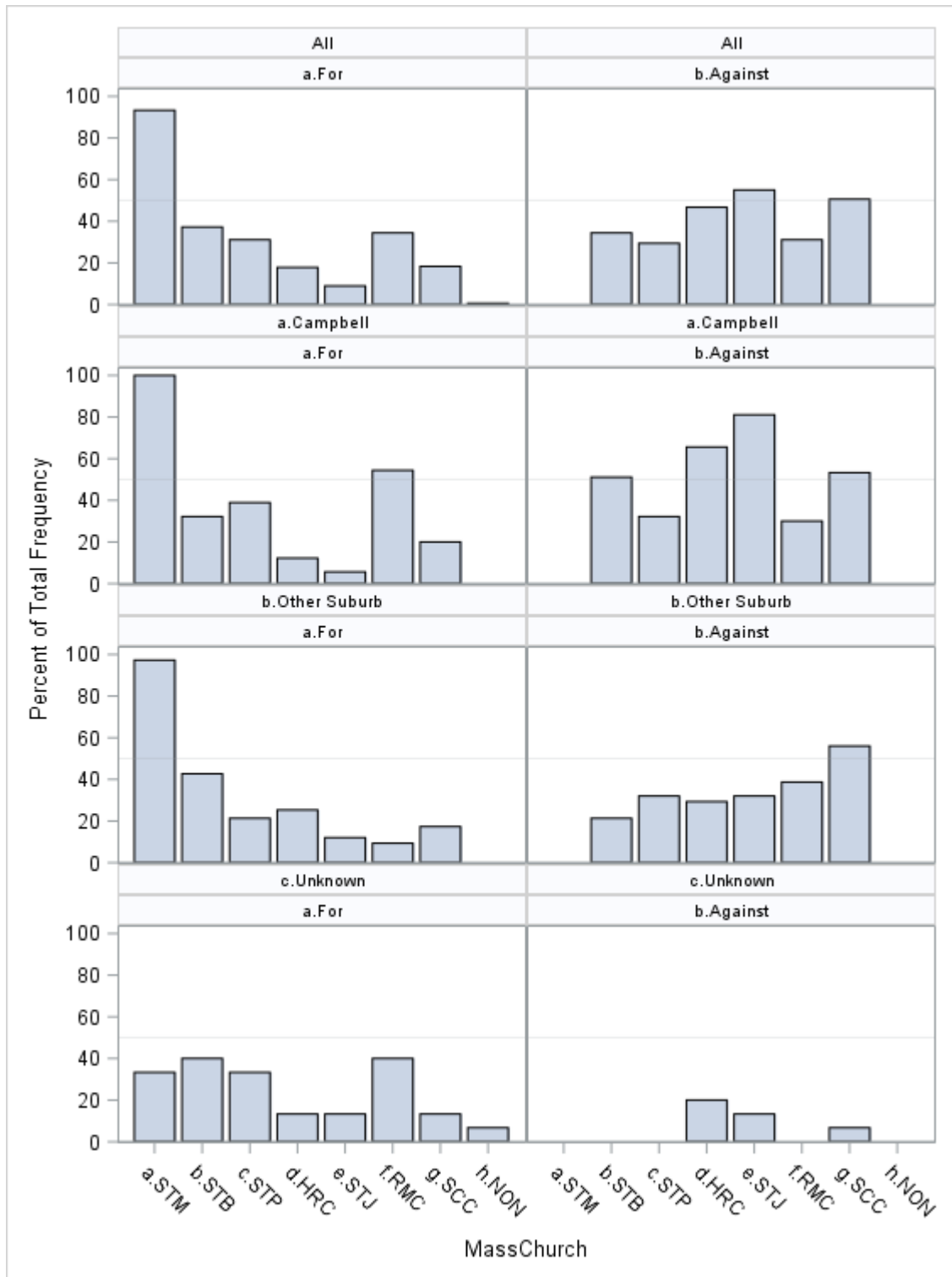


By SCHOOL AFFILIATION

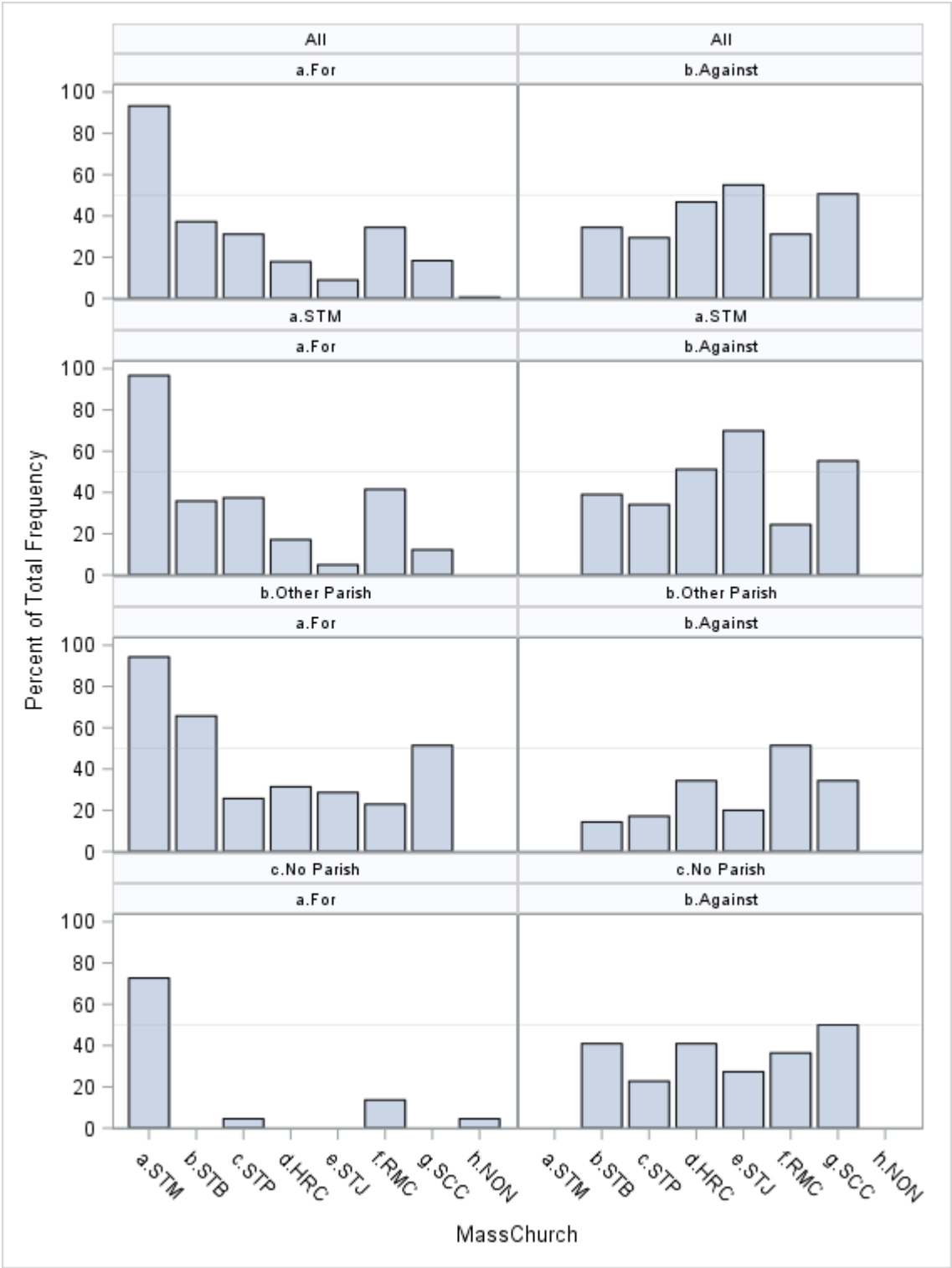


## Appendix C: Church Preference By Profiles

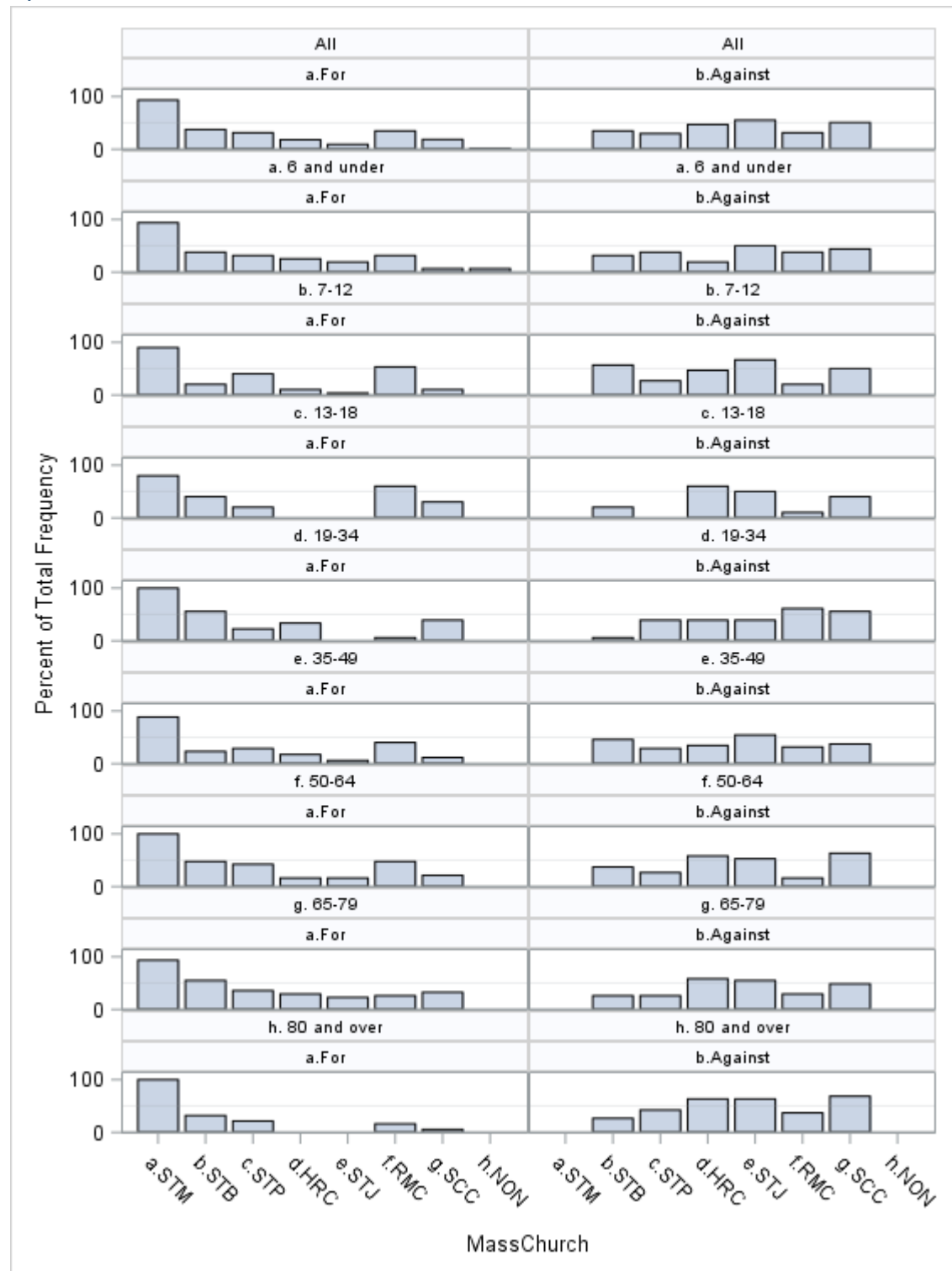
### By SUBURB



By PARISH

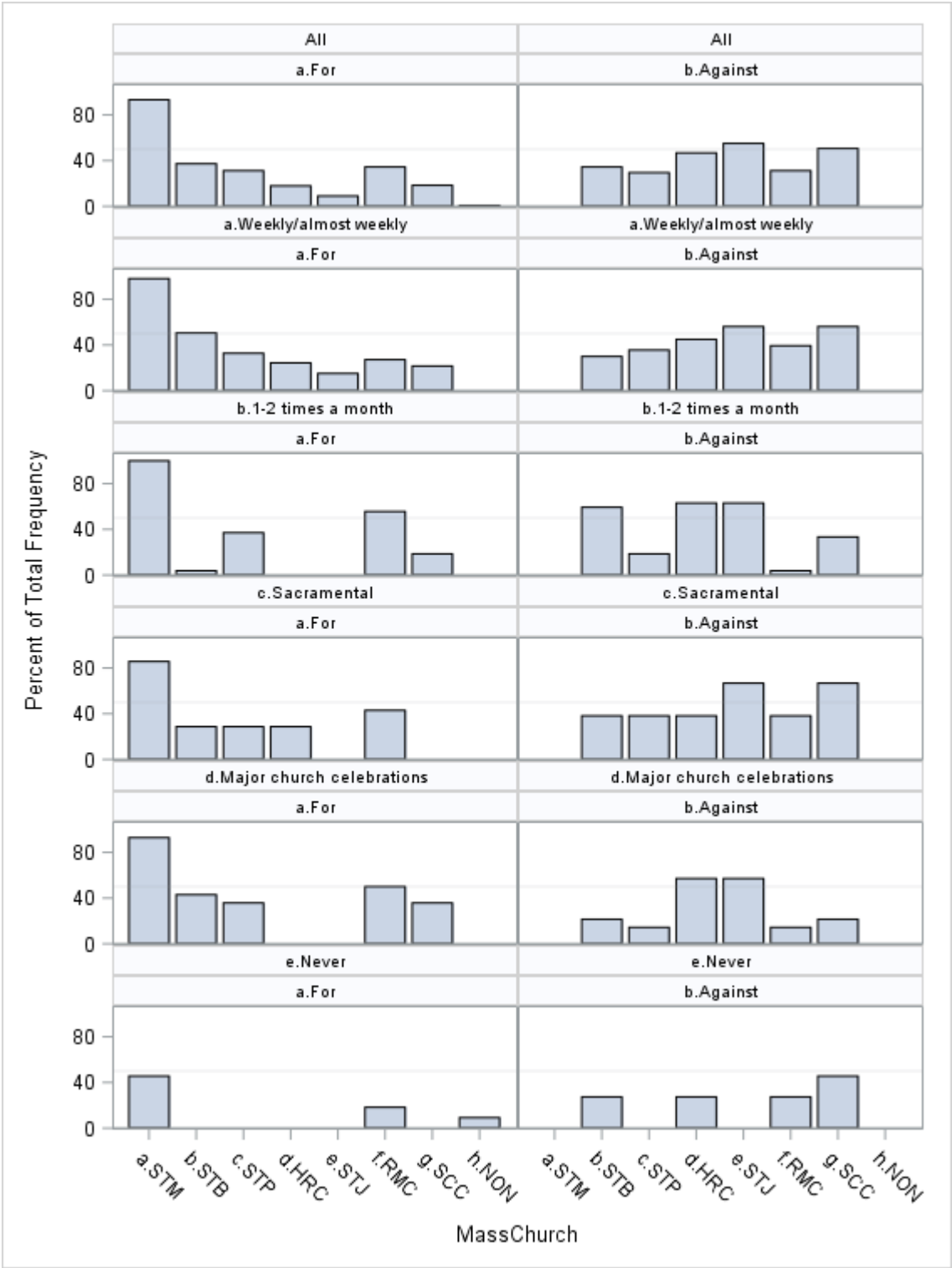


By AGEGROUP

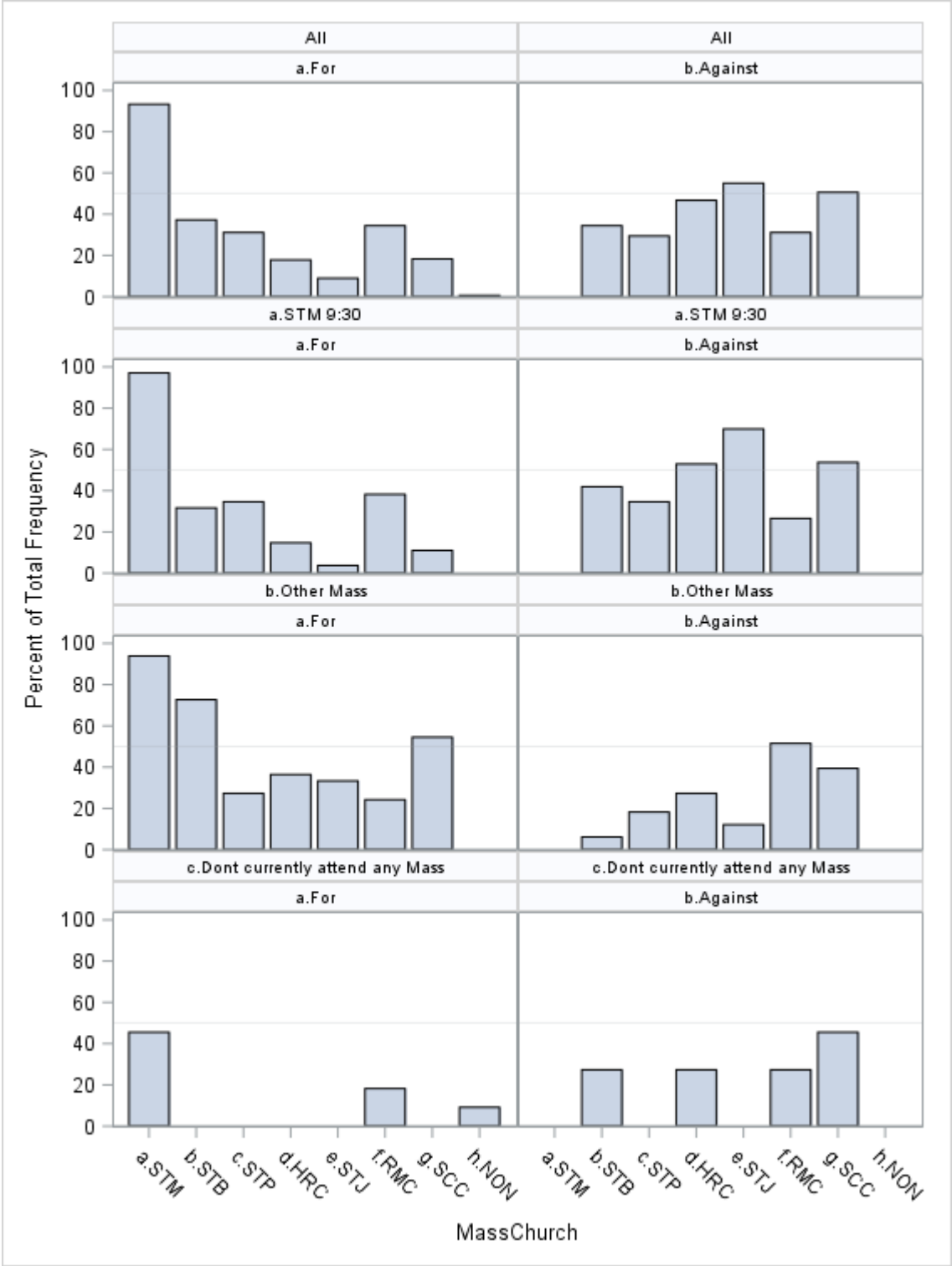




By MASS ATTENDANCE



By CURRENT MASS



By SCHOOL AFFILIATION

