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Harvard study: People who attend religious services significantly less likely to die from ‘deaths of despair’



New research led by Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health shows that people who attend religious services at least once a week are significantly less likely to die from “deaths of despair,” including deaths related to suicide, drug overdose, and alcohol poisoning.
Moreover, the study showed that the association between service attendance and lower risk of deaths from despair was somewhat stronger for women than for men.

According to researchers, “… Despair is something that can confront anyone dealing with severe difficulties or loss. While the term ‘deaths of despair’ was

originally coined in the context of working class Americans struggling with unemployment, it is a phenomenon that is relevant more broadly, such as to the health care professionals in our study who may be struggling with excessive demands and burnout, or to anyone facing loss. As such, we need to look for important community resources that can protect against it.”

The study was published online in JAMA Psychiatry last week.

The Orthodox Church, true to its millennia-long tradition, is a prolific source of comfort and ministry to the faithful.

For instance, the brotherhood of monks of the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi, on Mount Athos, under the spiritual guide and pastoral direction of the Elder Ephraim, the Abbot of the venerable monastery, continue to pray uninterruptedly towards the Holy Protector of the monastic community, the Panaghia, the Virgin Mary, for humanity’s deliverance from the pandemic.