

# SHOPPING

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**Running Time:** Approximately 6 minutes.

**Theme:** Different personalities have different needs within the Body of Christ. If the needs are not recognized and met on a personal level, the door of the Church will forever be a "revolving door..." with many unsatisfied people leaving to look elsewhere for meaningful worship and relationships.

In the meantime, it is the responsibility for members of the Body to support each other in prayer.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 "With this in mind, we constantly pray for you ..."

**Setting:** Two friends accidentally meet in a shopping mall.

**Performance Note:** The twist at the end will leave the audience with a very somber feeling. Therefore ... the follow-up needs to give a positive, uplifting solution to the problem presented. We used this to set up the presentation of a pilot program for Small Group Development. The main thrust of the follow-up message was:

*To belong to a Big Church does not mean you can't be involved in a Small Group. Rather, it means you MUST belong to a Small Group, for without the intimacy of the small group encounters, the Big Church will eventually wither and die.*

**Cast:**

LAURIE – Middle-aged and vivacious. The life of every gathering; knows everybody and is well-liked by all.

HEIDI – Shy and somewhat reserved. Is sincere and likable but fades into the background when around more energetic personalities.

*(LAURIE enters from Stage Left, HEIDI from Stage Right. LAURIE carries many assorted bags and packages; HEIDI carries purse and one small sack. As they walk past each other, LAURIE glances up and sees HEIDI. )*

LAURIE: Heidi? Is that you?

HEIDI (*turning*): Oh; hi, Laurie.

LAURIE: I haven't seen you in ages ... and I don't think I've **ever** seen you in this mall before! How've you been?

HEIDI (*reserved*): Pretty good. What about you?

LAURIE: Wonderful! Never better.

HEIDI (*notices large number of LAURIE's packages*): Looks like you've been busy.

LAURIE (*laughs*): Oh, You know me; Blue Light Special, shop 'til you drop, (*sings*) 'One day only at the Bon Marche!' If there's a sale on, I'm there for it!

HEIDI (*laughs*): You haven't changed at all.

LAURIE: Well, I certainly hope not. After all, I have my health to consider.

HEIDI (*concerned*): Oh, Laurie, I'm sorry; have you been sick?

LAURIE: Of course not; I shop every day and shopping's therapeutic!

HEIDI: How's that?

LAURIE: Shopping makes me happy and happy people don't get sick! (*primly*) I know it's true because I read it in an article - once - somewhere; I think.

HEIDI (*laughs*): You're crazy.

LAURIE: Yeah, I know. But it works for me. Maybe you ought to try it more often. Spend a little - get a little; spend a lot - get a lot!

HEIDI: I wish I could. But you know, money's been a little tight since George lost his job ...

LAURIE (*grabs HEIDI'S arm - looks past her into S.R. audience*): Oh, look; there's Joan Hendricks. (*calls*) Joan! Over here! (*makes phone sign with hand*) Call me when you get home. I need to talk to you about the wedding. (*waves*) Okay!

(*to HEIDI*) You know Joan, don't you?

HEIDI (*doubtfully*): I think maybe I've seen her a few times.

LAURIE: She goes to my church. Her son's getting married and she's an absolute fruitcake! You would love her.

HEIDI: I'm sure I would.

LAURIE: Now, what were you saying about George?

HEIDI: Oh, just that he's between jobs right now. I'm sure something will turn up soon.

LAURIE: Of course it will.

HEIDI: He's put out a few "feelers" and we're pretty hopeful that ...

*(LAURIE pantomimes seeing "Dan" walking by)*

LAURIE: Hey, who do you think you are? Walking by me without saying, "Hi!"? *(teasing)* And to think I invited you and Mary over for **burnt** pizza! See if you ever get another invitation from me! *(laughs)* Oh, Dan, I'd like you to meet my friend, Heidi.

HEIDI *(shyly)*: Nice to meet you.

LAURIE: *(talks to Dan as he 'exits.')* We'll get together soon. Be sure and tell Mary, "Hi."

*(They watch "Dan" exit)*

*(to HEIDI)* Dan and Mary are a great couple. Their kids are kind of messed up right now, but I think they're starting to come around. I tell you, a lot of prayers have gone up for that family over the past few months.

HEIDI: Seems like a really nice guy.

LAURIE: Oh, he is; you'd like him. *(beat)* So, how are **your** kids?

HEIDI: Oh, you know; the usual colds and flu bugs.

LAURIE: Hasn't it been awful this year?

HEIDI: Yes. *(heavily)* It has. *(looks away quickly, fighting tears)*

*(HEIDI fumbles in purse, looking for a Kleenex)*

LAURIE: Heidi? Are you okay? *(takes Kleenex out of her purse)*

HEIDI: *(crying)* No; not really.

LAURIE: *(concerned)* What's the matter? *(gives her the Kleenex)*

HEIDI *(takes tissue)*: Thanks. I don't know. The kids are sick again and George is ... *(looks for the right word, then shakes head)*

I don't know. I guess maybe I'm kind of depressed or something. That's why I came to the Mall today; I just felt like I had to get away for a while.

LAURIE: Is there anything I can do?

HEIDI: You can pray.

LAURIE: *(puts her hand gently on Heidi's shoulder)* I will, Heidi. I will.

*(Pause - HEIDI wipes eyes as LAURIE waits)*

LAURIE: Listen, why don't you come to church with me this Sunday? We've got a great Pastor and I think you'd find his sermons are really helpful.

HEIDI *(shakes head)*: I don't know. I think your church is a little too big for me.

LAURIE: Don't be silly. It's just made up of people like you and me.

HEIDI: I know. But there's so many of them. I'm not like you, Laurie; it's hard for me to meet people.

LAURIE: It wouldn't be at my church. We're very friendly.

HEIDI: Look, I appreciate the invitation, I really do. But big crowds intimidate me; I get lost in them. I think maybe I need to find something smaller like a Bible study or a support group of some kind.

LAURIE: Trust me, you don't need anything smaller. It might take a little longer to get to know people in a big church, but if you give it some time, it'll happen.

HEIDI: I don't know how much longer I can wait.

LAURIE: *(a little offended)* Well, you can't expect it to happen overnight. Be fair about this, Heidi; don't write us off just because we're big. For goodness sakes, try us first and then see what you think.

HEIDI *(quietly intense)*: Laurie, I **have** tried your church.

LAURIE: When?

HEIDI *(with tears in eyes)*: Every Sunday for the past five weeks.

*(Silence as LAURIE stares at HEIDI, shocked)*

LAURIE: *(mortified)* You're kidding! I don't know what to say. I ... I never saw you there.

HEIDI (*wiping eyes*): I know. (*attempts to laugh*) I guess I'm the kind of person that just sort of "blends in."

LAURIE: Heidi, I'm so sorry.

HEIDI: It's okay. (*beat*) Hey; you've got a great church. The preaching is wonderful and the music is the best anywhere.

LAURIE: But ... you're not staying?

HEIDI: I can't, Laurie; I'm dying inside. I've got to find a place to fit in: a place where I can laugh and cry and ... and grow. A place where I can pray and talk with people who know me. I'm just so tired of feeling like an outsider.

*(Silence as both struggle with emotions)*

LAURIE: So, where are you going to go?

HEIDI: I don't know. I guess I'll have to do some ... (*smiles painfully*) "shopping." (*beat*) Let's keep in touch, okay?

LAURIE: Sure. I'll call.

HEIDI (*sadly*): Yeah. Me too.

*(HEIDI exits S.L. LAURIE watches her go as lights dim. She leaves shopping bags on stage and exits S.R. These articles act as a "touchstone" for the Pastor to refer back to in his sermon, and as a constant visual reminder of the sketch's message.)*