

Filling Pews vs. Filling Lives

By: David Burruss

There's something that's been tugging at my heart lately, and I think it's time to say it out loud. Hebrews 10:24-25 isn't just about going to church. It's about being the church. Here's how it reads:

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Now, for a long time, I thought this verse was mainly about making sure I didn't skip Sunday services. Maybe you've heard it used that way too. And yes, being physically present matters. But if that's all we take from these verses, we're missing something powerful.

The writer of Hebrews is pointing us to something deeper. It's not just about being in the room. It's about being present for each other, with our minds, our hearts, and our spirits. "Let us consider one another," it says. That word "consider" carries weight. It means to thoughtfully notice, to care enough to pay attention, to make someone else's needs part of your awareness. That's way more than sitting quietly in a pew.

And the purpose? "In order to stir up love and good works." That doesn't happen by accident. That's intentional, relational, often inconvenient kind of living. It's the kind of showing up that says, "You matter to me. Your burdens matter to me. Your victories matter to me too."

Some of the most miserable congregations I've seen aren't struggling because of bad preaching or outdated music. They're hurting because no one really shows up for each other. People clock in and out of service like it's a duty to fulfill. They smile, nod, maybe exchange a few pleasantries, but they're not invested. It's what I'd call "attendance syndrome." The body's present, but the heart stayed home.

And honestly, we've all probably been there at some point. I know I have.

But Hebrews is calling us out of that. It's calling us into community that stirs. Community that lifts. Community that exhorts, which simply means to encourage and urge one another toward what is good and true. That kind of church doesn't just happen once a week for an hour. It lives in coffee shop conversations, phone calls after hard days, shared tears in living rooms, and prayers whispered over text messages.

This is what it means to be the church. Not just a place we go, but a people we are.

So, here's the question that's been challenging me lately, and maybe it will challenge you too: Am I just showing up to church, or am I showing up for the church?

Because there's a big difference and the world needs more of the latter.