

Study Questions - Christine Chakoian

#1 Many of Chakoian's stories are about eating with other people, whether of her own faith or other faiths.

- What role do shared meals play in your faith community?
- What eating-centered rituals do you have?
- How do you eat in less formal settings?
- What stories in your tradition focus on food and eating?
- If you are comfortable, share a meaningful experience of a meal shared.

#2 Chakoian says, "Most of us have traditions, practices of our faith to which we have grown accustomed. Often they're comforting to us, in part because they are simply so familiar. We've participated in them so many times it feels like home. But sometimes are practices can become rote and stale and somewhat flat. Yet, as I discovered, they do not have to be."

- What practices in your faith tradition do you think of as "feeling like home"?
- What practices in your faith tradition or community do you think of as rote or stale?
- How might you reinvigorate the practices that seem stale?

#3 Chakoian says, "I still love communion served on trays with little, tiny pieces of cut-up bread, and grape juice in tiny glasses passed along rows. And I enjoy communion shared by intinction as we tear a piece of bread off the loaf and dip it in the cup. But because of bread broken at table with Muslims and Jews, I experience communion in a fuller, richer way than I could have ever known without them. Back in eighth grade it would never have dawned on me that I could grow closer to Jesus Christ by sitting at table with people of other faiths. Who knew? It makes me wonder what more I can learn from them. My guess is, plenty."

- Have you shared meals with people from other faith traditions? If so, did that change anything in you?

#4 Sherre Hirsch asks Chakoian about dealing with "dark moments" in her tradition.

- What "dark moments" exist in your tradition or faith community?
- Do you deal with them openly, or do you pretend they didn't happen?
- If you do deal with them openly, how do you do that?
- What can result if these are not addressed openly?
- In what ways might it be helpful to your faith community to deal with them?

#5 Chakoian, Hirsch, and Patel spend some time discussing the power of parents' examples.

- If you are a parent, what example do you set for your child or children, when it comes to questions about the beliefs and practices of your faith?

- If you are not a parent, what example do you set for youth in your faith community?
- What example do you set for youth outside of your tradition?

#6 Chakoian speaks briefly about the sacredness of time and the importance of not squandering time.

- How is sacred time recognized and structured in your faith tradition? How is it measured? Does this make you treat all time differently? If so, how?