

THE DEFIANT MIDDLE

summer patio series 2023 | postlude

Connect with the members of your group

First, **go around and share a word that describes how you are feeling coming to small group tonight.**

Discuss the following questions (or pick the ones that resonate most!)

The postlude includes details of the author's familial history. **What do you know of your ancestors? What stories have been passed down to you? What stories of your life do you want passed down to future descendants?**

On page 159 the author writes that religion and faith are not the same thing. **Is there a difference to you? What are the differences?**

The author discusses the cost of holding organizations, institutions, faith communities accountable. **What have you sacrificed to be your authentic self, or to advocate for others?**

On pg. 160 the author writes: **"God also leads us to become our own mothers, which means giving birth to ourselves and re-creating ourselves, over and over again."** Have you experienced this "re-creating" work? Have you had to build and rebuild (and maybe destruct) your life and identity?

What did you underline or highlight? **What passage in this section stood out to you and why?**

The author closes the postlude with the following question: **"What are we going to do? what are we going to do to stop forcing women to fit into expectations of what we should be?" (pg. 163)** Do you have an answer?

Close your conversations with the following prompt:

"To be authentically me, I need to defy _____"

Then, **go around and share a word that describes your experience of the summer patio series. Was this time together what you expected? What did you appreciate? What do you wish went differently? Share any reflections, gratitude, or concerns with one another and hold them tenderly as you listen.**

Pray for your group

The following blessing is from Ordinary Blessings by Meta Herrick Carlson:

*Bless the space between friends
that shapeshift with time,
that recognizes necessary distance
and shares the labor of closing gaps
when presence is paramount.
It is so good to be known like this,
with depth that has been tried and empathy that weathers every joy and trial
with the whole season it deserves.
It is so good be loved like this,
with honest assurance that transcends
every insecure measured thing
for the sake of belonging that does not fail.*