

World Day of Prayer focuses on women of Chile

by [Chris Herlinger](#)

March 1, 2011

New York, March 1 (ENInews)--The potent symbol of bread will take pride of place this week as an annual common day of prayer focuses on the struggle of women in Chile.

This year's commemoration of World Day of Prayer, an annual event in which women across the globe observe a day of prayer on the first Friday in March, focuses on the "loaves and the fishes" passage from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 6, verses 30-44, in which Jesus feeds 5,000 persons.

This year, participants for the 4 March event are following women from Chile in prayer that organizers say will help women and their male supporters "enter a process that draws us into the bible, into the context of Chile and into the real situations" of those living in Chile.

The theme of this year's event is "How Many Loaves Have You" and those participating in ceremonies are being asked to carry a "panera," the Chilean term for breadbasket. "Bread is an exceedingly important part of life in Chile," Eileen King, executive director of the New York-based World Day of Prayer, told ENInews, adding that bread becomes particularly important in times of crisis.

The last few years have not been easy for Chile. Earthquakes rocked the country in 2010 and this year. The economy has also struggled. Chile has also tried to recover from the 1973-90 military rule of General Augusto Pinochet. The legacy of the Pinochet regime, in which prayer organizers said "thousands of women were among the victims who were tortured and killed," has also continued.

"The lingering effects of the brutality continue despite recent democratic governments in Chile," World Day of Prayer organizers said in a statement.

"It's in moments of crisis that we are called to ask, 'What do we have to offer?'" King told ENInews. "We recognize that our abundance comes from God, and that abundance is to be shared."

World Day of Prayer describes itself as "a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women of many faith traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer on the first Friday in March. Women -- and thousands of men -- pray together from sunrise to sunset. Through World Day of Prayer, women affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and that both have immeasurable influence in the world."