



Donatos pizza box pledge inspires sermon

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— Some may say that pizza and church are foods for the soul. The two came together recently when one local minister stumbled onto the promise of one pizza chain and thought it would become a key ingredient for a great sermon.

Ed Bialon, minister of the Cumberland Church of Christ, was about to throw his Donatos Pizza box away one evening when he noticed the company's pledge printed on the box top.

It reads: "We believe in great pizza, which means we believe in only the finest and the freshest toppings used in abundance. And, we believe in getting those toppings in every bite. We believe in pizza making without shortcuts. Because great pizza is a passion, and we believe that passion is contagious. In turn, we believe great pizza can change the world. Yes, we believe in absolutely everything pizza should be. And we invite you to believe the same."

Those well-crafted words left an impression. "I didn't want to be outdone by a pizza company," quipped Bialon, who is well known for injecting every-day life into his Sunday sermons. "When I read those words I just knew I could incorporate them into a great sermon."

And he did, dishing out a heaping helping of pizza anecdotes in a sermon about Acts of Random Kindness to a congregation of more than 120 in early June. The sermon in its entirety can be seen at the church's Web site, www.cumber-landchurchofchrist.com.

Meanwhile, local Donatos franchisor Chuck Coldiron learned of the sermon and immediately delivered a copy of it to company founder Jim Grote in Columbus, Ohio.

"I was blown away," exclaimed Coldiron, who opened the Somerset restaurant in March 1998. "Our principles are not just words, and I believe Ed (Bialon) absolutely shared the essence of our principles. It's humbling that our values can be used for such a higher cause."

When Coldiron heard about the Acts of Random Kindness sermon at the Cumberland Church of Christ and the parallels the preacher shared about Donatos' mission, he was moved to act. Coldiron decided to serve Donatos Pizza to more than 150 churchgoers following Sunday morning worship service July 13.

Also there to help serve was company founder Grote and his daughter and current Donatos President and COO Jane Grote Abell. Both have a passion for their pizza principles but stop short of comparing it to Bialon's higher cause.

"We listened to his sermon," said the elder Grote. "He said he has a better product; and he does."

Donatos Pizza was founded in 1963 by a 19-year-old Grote on a promise "to make the best pizza and make your day a little better." Today, Donatos and its franchise partners operate nearly 175 stores throughout Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Alabama and North and South Carolina.

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Photos



From left, Donatos Pizza Founder Jim Grote, daughter and Donatos President and COO Jane Grote Abell, Cumberland Church of Christ Minister Ed Bialon and local Donatos franchisor Chuck Coldiron enjoy some pizza. Donatos served pizza to over 150 churchgoers after learning of a sermon inspired by their product.

http://www.somerset-kentucky.com/archivesearch/local_story_201212758.html