

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH

Omaha, Nebraska



THE GROW PHASE OF ANTIOCH'S DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

UBUNTU CARE & GROWTH

Living in Community

How we live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission
together

“I AM BECAUSE WE ARE.”

DISCOVER · CONNECT · ENGAGE · DECIDE ·

GROW

INTRODUCTION

ONE FRAMEWORK, FIVE INTERCONNECTED SYSTEMS

WHERE UBUNTU FITS IN YOUR JOURNEY

Every person at Antioch travels one discipleship pathway. **Ubuntu Care & Growth is the Grow stage** — where faith matures in community and the five systems in this guide come to life.



You are here — this guide unfolds the Grow stage.

At Antioch, we believe spiritual growth happens best in community. We call this **Ubuntu Care** — a comprehensive approach to how we live out Jesus' call to love God, love one another, and make disciples.

Ubuntu is more than a program or initiative. It is the foundational framework through which we pursue the Great Commandment and the Great Commission together.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:37–40

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.

Matthew 28:19–20

At Antioch, we live this out through five interconnected systems of care and growth. Whether you are brand new to Antioch, completing your orientation, or a longtime member ready to go deeper — these five systems describe how we grow spiritually, care for one another, and extend God's love into our community.

THE FIVE SYSTEMS OF UBUNTU CARE



From the inner life outward — care radiates from the individual into the world.

HOW TO READ THIS FRAMEWORK

Ubuntu Care is the **Grow** phase of Antioch's discipleship pathway — the intentional next step for anyone ready to move from attending to growing. Whether you are a non-member, considering membership, completing orientation, or a member ready to go deeper, this framework is for you.

You do not have to engage all five systems at once. Most people begin with one or two based on their current season of life. For most, the natural entry points are **Systems 1 and 2** — personal rhythms and group life. Let those anchor you first. Systems 3 through 5 will emerge as your needs and involvement deepen.

A companion *Personal Care & Growth Plan* worksheet helps you apply this framework to your specific season of life.

Ubuntu is not a checklist to complete. It is a way of life to embrace together.

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND OUR PRACTICE

UBUNTU: “I AM BECAUSE WE ARE”

Ubuntu is an African philosophy meaning: “*I am because we are.*” It stands as a direct counter to the predominantly individualized Western philosophy of personhood that says “I am because I think” or “I am because I achieve.” Instead, Ubuntu affirms that our identity, meaning, and flourishing are fundamentally relational and communal.

Ubuntu puts into practice what Scripture commands. Throughout the New Testament, we see this reflected in the **“one another”** commands — love one another, bear one another’s burdens, serve one another, encourage one another, pray for one another. These are not suggestions for optional community. They are the heartbeat of Christian discipleship.

We don’t grow alone. We grow in community. We don’t survive crisis alone. We survive it together.

WHAT UBUNTU MEANS IN PRACTICE

- Embracing connectedness and interdependence
- Choosing community over isolation
- Being present for others and letting others be present for you
- Living out the “one another” commands of Scripture

1

SYSTEM ONE

SELF-CARE & GROWTH

Personal spiritual and emotional growth through intentional rhythms



Self-care in the Ubuntu framework isn't self-indulgence — it's **stewardship of the life God has given you**. The rhythms you build personally become the foundation from which you serve, connect, and extend God's love to others. When you are spiritually grounded, you can fully show up for the community.

DAILY RHYTHMS

A sustainable daily rhythm doesn't have to be complex. Choose one practice and do it faithfully.

SCRIPTURE

Read and reflect on a passage of God's Word

PRAYER

Structured time of conversation with God

JOURNALING

Writing to process what God is doing in your life

DAILY SCRIPTURE RESOURCES

Quarter Daily Bread — A hard-copy daily devotional booklet distributed at church each quarter. Pick one up at the welcome table.

YouVersion Bible App — Follow Antioch's daily reading plan. Search for our plan or ask your deacon for the link.

WEEKLY RHYTHMS

Corporate worship is the rhythm that anchors everything else — the one moment each week where the whole Antioch community gathers around the Word of God together. It is also the front door of congregational care, open to everyone.

THE SERMON RHYTHM · PREPARE · REFLECT · RESPOND

PREPARE

Position your heart to receive before worship begins.

REFLECT

Engage actively during worship. Take notes. Ask God what He is saying.

RESPOND

In the days that follow, consider where God is calling you to act.

MONTHLY RHYTHMS

Monthly rhythms create space to pause, go deeper, and recalibrate — and connect your personal formation to the congregation's shared life.

Corporate Fasting. On the Wednesday before the first Sunday of each month, Antioch fasts together from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM. We fast alone, but we fast together — that shared posture of hunger and dependence on God is Ubuntu even in solitude. That evening, the fast gives way to our *Fast & Fellowship* gathering (see System 2).

- **Personal fasting & prayer** — fast on any day God leads you, not only on corporate fasting days.
- **Reflection or retreat time** — extended time with God outside your normal routine.

PERSONAL EVANGELISM · PRAYER · CARE · SHARE

Personal evangelism is a dimension of mature discipleship — not a program you opt into. Through **Prayer · Care · Share**, every member chooses ONE person each month whom God has placed on their heart, and invests in that relationship through three intentional steps.

PRAYER

Pray consistently for your ONE — their heart, needs, and openness to God.

CARE

Take one meaningful step — a text, a meal, an act of service.

SHARE

Create an opportunity to share your faith, hope, or an invitation.

First Sunday: receive your bookmark, write your ONE's name, and join the congregation in a corporate prayer of commitment. **Month's end:** those who completed all three steps are invited forward during worship to celebrate God's work.

FOR REFLECTION

- Which daily rhythm do I need to establish or strengthen this season?
- What helps me engage deeply in corporate worship each week?
- Who is my ONE this month — the person God has placed on my heart?
- How do my personal rhythms enable me to show up more fully for others?

"I am because we are." Your personal rhythms don't just shape you — they shape what you bring to community.

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SYSTEM TWO

GROUP CARE & GROWTH

Mutual support, accountability, and growth in small communities



Group care happens when believers gather in smaller communities to learn together, support one another, and grow in specific areas of their faith. These groups become the places where you are **truly known, challenged, and encouraged** — where Ubuntu moves from philosophy to lived practice.

STUDY GROUPS — DEEPENING KNOWLEDGE

Two groups for learning God's Word deeply, both journeying through **God's Story** — our curriculum covering all 66 books of the Bible.

- **Wednesdays in the Word** — the God's Story journey in community. Wednesdays at 6:00 PM online (Facebook / YouTube). Open enrollment.
- **Adult Sunday School** — our in-person Sunday-morning Bible study class, meeting weekly for Scripture engagement and community formation. Open enrollment.

GOD'S STORY: A SELF-PACED JOURNEY — A RESOURCE, NOT A GROUP

Prefer to study on your own? Our app walks you through the same God's Story journey at your own pace, anytime. antiochgodsstory.base44.app/start

LIFE GROUPS — IDENTITY, COMMUNITY & PRACTICE

Smaller, relational communities where you are known by name and held accountable in love — deepening spiritual identity, relationships, and intentional practices together.

Women's Life Groups — bimonthly, in-person, open enrollment.

CARE GROUPS — GIVING & RECEIVING CHRIST-CENTERED CARE

This is where Ubuntu becomes a practiced skill, not just a shared value.

FAST & FELLOWSHIP

Antioch's monthly care gathering — four movements that build on each other

1. THE MEAL

We break the fast together. The meal creates belonging before a word of teaching is spoken.

2. LIFE SHARING

Unstructured time to share what is actually happening. No agenda, no fix — just presence.

3. CARE FORMATION

A 15–20 min lesson from the Foundations of Christian Care curriculum — an 18-lesson, ACPE-aligned series.

4. COMMUNION

We close around the Lord's Table — the anchor that reminds us why we care for one another at all.

Wednesday before the first Sunday · Fasting 6:30 AM–6:30 PM · Gathering 6:30 PM at the church · Open enrollment

CORPORATE EVANGELISM — REACHING OUT TOGETHER

What begins as a personal commitment in System 1 extends into corporate witness when the congregation acts together. Ubuntu means our evangelism is never only individual — we reach out as a body.

- **Friend and Family Day** — our primary annual corporate outreach event. Bring someone you've been praying for through Prayer · Care · Share.
- **Gospel on the Go** — our community evangelism initiative that takes the gospel into the streets and neighborhoods of Omaha, meeting people where they are.

FOR REFLECTION

- Where do I most need growth right now — knowledge, identity, community, or care skills?
- Which group resonates with where I am in this season?
- How can I contribute to a group's life — not just receive from it?

"I am because we are." Your growth in community equips you to serve others and extend God's love beyond these walls.

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SYSTEM THREE

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & GROWTH

Being welcomed, known, and cared for through the church family



Congregational care is Ubuntu in organizational form. It is the church's commitment that **every person who gathers with us is welcomed**, and that every member is known, prayed for, and supported by someone whose role it is to extend the care of the pastor across the congregation.

CORPORATE WORSHIP — OPEN TO EVERYONE

Worship is the front door of congregational care — open to everyone, member and non-member, first-time visitor and longtime friend alike. When you walk through the doors of Antioch, you are received by a community gathered around the Word of God. That is an act of care, whether you recognize it as such or not.

You do not have to be a member to experience the care of the congregation in worship. Presence is welcome. Questions are welcome. If you are not yet a member but have a care need beyond worship, reach out to Pastor Hawkins directly — non-members are welcome to receive up to three pastoral care sessions, with connections to community resources as needed (see System 4).

MEMBERSHIP — A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

Membership at Antioch is not a status upgrade from attending — it is an entry into a covenant relationship. When you become a member, you make mutual commitments to this community, and this community makes mutual commitments to you.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Known and held to your commitments in love

MUTUAL EXPECTATION

The community expects your participation; you can expect its care

DIACONATE

Connected to a deacon who cares for you and your family

THE DIACONATE — UBUNTU IN STRUCTURE

The deacon is not an administrator — the deacon is a pastoral presence who extends the care of the pastor into the daily lives of God’s people. When the congregation says “I am because we are,” the diaconate is the structure that makes that real.

WHAT YOUR DEACON PROVIDES

- Regular check-ins & prayer support
- Carrying the pastor’s care into daily life
- Connection to groups, services, or support
- Crisis support and a bridge to deeper care

WHAT YOUR DEACON NEEDS FROM YOU

- Respond to check-ins, even briefly
- Share honestly what is happening in your life
- Ask for help — don’t wait for a crisis
- Pray for your deacon — cover them in prayer

FOR REFLECTION

- How well do I know my assigned deacon? Have I responded to their recent contact?
- What is happening in my life that my deacon should know about?
- Am I ready to move from attending into the covenant of membership?

“I am because we are.” Congregational care is Ubuntu made structural — the church’s promise that no one walks alone.

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SYSTEM FOUR

PASTORAL CARE & GROWTH

Specialized support during transition, crisis, or discernment



Pastoral care offers **confidential, professional-level support** for complex life situations that require additional expertise, time, or spiritual authority. This is not just a conversation with your pastor — it is clinically informed care grounded in both biblical foundations and CPE-trained professional practice. Your deacon is often the bridge to this system; if your needs have grown beyond a periodic check-in, your deacon can help initiate the connection.

WHEN YOU MIGHT NEED PASTORAL CARE

You don't have to be in crisis to reach out. Pastoral care is available for any season that requires more than a periodic check-in.

- Premarital or marital support
- Spiritual direction and discernment
- Questions about calling and purpose
- Grief and loss
- Conflict resolution
- Major life transitions

HOW IT WORKS

INFORMAL CARE ENCOUNTERS

Ongoing pastoral presence through conversations, visits, and spiritual guidance.

FORMAL CARE SESSIONS

Members receive up to 5 individual or 7 marital sessions; non-members receive up to 3 sessions with community-resource connections.

FOR REFLECTION

- Are there areas of my life where I need pastoral support right now?
- What prevents me from seeking help when I need it?
- Am I ready to explore my calling and purpose at Antioch?

"I am because we are." The caregiver's role is to care, not cure — we give care, but only God gives cure.

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SYSTEM FIVE

COMMUNITY CARE & GROWTH

Extending care beyond church walls through partnerships and outreach



Ubuntu does not stop at the church door. Community Care recognizes that some needs require resources and partnerships beyond what any congregation can provide alone. We **extend care into the community** and connect people with the support they need to keep growing spiritually and personally. We collaborate with local nonprofits, government programs, other churches, schools, healthcare systems, and civic organizations to maximize our impact.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS & REFERRALS AVAILABLE

- Employment assistance
- Financial counseling
- Healthcare navigation & legal aid
- Addiction & recovery referrals
- Housing resources
- Educational support
- Food security & homeless services
- Trauma, abuse & mental-health counseling referrals

FOR REFLECTION

- What additional supports do I need that my church cannot provide alone?
- How can I serve in our broader community?
- How does engaging community care deepen my own faith?

“I am because we are.” Ubuntu extends beyond these walls — into the neighborhood, the city, and the world.

MOVING FORWARD

MOVING FORWARD WITH UBUNTU

You have been introduced to how Antioch pursues the Great Commandment and Great Commission through five interconnected systems of care and growth. This is not a program to complete — it is a way of life to step into, one system at a time, in community with others.

START WHERE YOU ARE

You don't have to do everything at once. Engage what feels most relevant to your season.

ALL FIVE MATTER

You won't experience them all at once. Let them emerge naturally as you grow.

COMMUNITY IS CENTRAL

Ubuntu reminds us: you are not meant to navigate this alone.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

1

Complete your Personal Care & Growth Plan — the companion worksheet that helps you identify where to begin and make a concrete commitment for this season.

FOR EVERYONE

2

Share your plan with someone — your deacon, a group leader, a friend, or a family member. Let them walk with you.

FOR EVERYONE

3

Connect with your deacon or ask about membership to enter the full covenant of congregational care.

NEW TO ANTIOCH

4

Begin the God's Story Bible journey — individually, in community, or both.

FOR EVERYONE



GROW WITH ANTIOCH

Ubuntu Care is the Grow phase of Antioch's discipleship pathway. To explore all of our Next Steps and resources:

mailchi.mp/weareantiochomaha.org/grow

God's Story self-paced study — antiochgodsstory.base44.app/start

"I AM BECAUSE WE ARE."

Growing together in community — your growth matters not just for you, but for all of us.