

How it all began...

Songs of Praise is enjoying some of its highest viewing figures in its history, plus in the last few years there has been much more discussion and books written about happiness.

Social media has deceived the young into thinking they have many relationships, yet due to the lack of physically being in the presence of another the stats for loneliness and depression are scarily high.

Attending a presentation organized by Rix & Kay solicitors recently there were discussions around interviews with the elderly. The stats for our seniors, at times unwell, living on their own experiencing a huge sense of loneliness, were shocking.

I have been a Christian all my life – stumbling, falling and making horrendous mistakes along the way. But I have also experienced great joy, love, acceptance and peace.

I am definitely 'in communication with God' through Jesus, and able to talk about experiences that for some would trigger a call to tie me up in a white jacket.

When Latest TV was launched I was asked to put together a business programme under their scheme, 'You make it, we show it' – at the time I declined.

Then months later I woke up one morning and thought, 'why wouldn't I do it for God?' And so hatched the idea of Family, Faith and Fun... the happiness debate. I didn't look back; I bought the remaining equipment I needed, turning my lounge into a weekly studio.

**"17:00 Family, Faith And Fun**

**Sarah Hopwood presents the happiness debate, a show looking at a different emotion, and associated behaviours, every week and how they relate to family life, the Christian faith, and a sense of fun."** All of the episode can be seen here

<http://www.sarahhopwood.com/family-faith-fun-the-happiness->

[debate/](#)

Jason and David at Latest TV have been very supportive, coupled with biggest thanks to Paul Noble Photography and Brighton College. Paul has worked tirelessly editing for me and Sandy Chenery at Brighton supplied the opening and closing music. Sandy taught both my children and Paul has known my husband Paul and I from our dating days.

I have been asked how I define emotion so here is my understanding; **E - motion** is Energy and Motion.

The energy can be internal or external - and it causes movement or shift (physical or mental.) An emotion can cause a fight or flight response - and of course freeze or embrace. The Oxford dictionary says, "a strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others."

When planning Family, Faith and Fun I chose to keep the meaning as broad as I can and so believe each week I have chosen an emotion to discuss looking at the behaviour's associated with it. I agree some are near the line but do maintain I have kept them within that line. The feedback on the choice of music has been particularly good and so will keep that logic and connection to the programme content moving forward. I don't think I will sing again though, watching it back it felt too intimate.

Some of the prayers I read are from my children's library of books given to them when they were very young – all the bible readings are from the Application Bible.

If you have watched more than 5 of the 12 portions of FF&F to date then please know I would love your thoughts too. This project was always work in progress so you are helping me double check and make changes.

My intention was never to be on my own, rather access other talents so its full potential could be reached. Different age groups, children singing, interviews of all ages... but it is taking time for people to decide it is for them. As the title suggests the reach was always meant to be broad - it about family / community (mindful of those who don't have family) and the pursuit of happiness. There was never age, gender, social or any

other segmentation. The target audience is the same as the audience for Songs of Praise... every age, creed & colour. I believe God has no favourites!

It was a big ask of myself, and being on my own I, of course, have not been able to achieve all my goals yet. Not one to give up easily I believe with God's grace it is onward and upward. I plan to film the next series of 6 episodes in the next few weeks. If I can touch just one life and make it a little easier then my job is done. So to finish I would like to quote Laurence Elphick - host Juice FM's Breakfast, "if you enjoyed it then please spread the word, if you didn't then keep it to yourself." ☺

*Sarah*

[www.sarahhopwood.com](http://www.sarahhopwood.com)